

Contents

Summary of Key Findings

Background	1
Purpose of the Surveys	1
Summary of Results and Conclusions	1
Research Methods	2
Student, New Workers Job Seekers Survey	2
Questionnaire Design and Distribution	2
RESULTS	2
Overview of Respondent Demographics	2
Stay or Leave Alaska?	3
What Motivates Leaving Alaska?	3
Motivating Barriers: Rural vs Urban	4
Methods of Looking into Careers and/or Job Opportunities	5
Future Choices: Conclusions	9
	10
Acknowledgements	10

Attachment 1: Respondent Demographics

Attachment 2: Barriers Perceived by Respondents

Attachment 3: Chi-Square Tests – Motivating Barriers: Rural vs Urban

Attachment 4: Chi-Square Tests – Methods of Looking at Careers and Thinking of Leaving Alaska

Attachment 5: Chi-Square Tests – AKCIS and Methods of Looking at Careers/Jobs

Attachment 6: Student Survey Respondent Comments

Promotional Flyer

Go to AlaskaWorkforceAlliance.org to review attachments.¹

¹ Student survey comments are confidential and are not posted on the website.

Report of Student Survey: Summary of Key Findings

Young Alaskans are the key to Alaska's workforce tomorrow. With 50% of them leaving and half of those not returning, understanding the factors associated with this phenomenon is the first step to retaining them. The Alaska's Workforce Future Student Survey examines some of the factors in that relationship.

- For survey design/distribution methods and respondent demographics, see the full report.
- 65% of high school students surveyed report thinking about leaving Alaska. AKDOL data show 50% of high school graduates actually do leave each year, and half do not return.
- Young Alaskans who should become the future workforce may have limited awareness of the formal job and career pathways offered in the state, including job fairs, job centers, elective courses, apprenticeships, internships, counseling, school to work, AKCIS, and the military. This lack of exposure to *existing* career planning methods represents a *failure to communicate*. Among young Alaskans, it is associated with a desire to leave the state.
- Respondents report that when they look for career and training/education information, only two pathways are used by more than 50%: the Internet (55%) and asking family members (54%). The respondents are far less likely to use the more formal pathways to explore their options. Conversely, the survey shows those students in the minority who are aware of or engaged with the formal career pathways are less likely to think about leaving Alaska.
- Only 10% of respondents use the Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS) to find career information, with most relying on information from family, friends, and school counselors. In part, this may be because, although AKCIS is free, it requires the user to set up an account before accessing its features and it not well promoted. Increased utilization may be achieved by deploying a new *open access* career website, such as the Colorado model (<https://www.mycoloradojourney.com/industries>) and/or by converting AKCIS to open access.
- Respondents identify 14 perceived barriers to their advancement on a career path in Alaska: finances (51%), need scholarship/loan (32%), uncertainty (30%), need other training/skills (29%), housing (24%), transportation (22%), need employer (13%), no support (13%), need mentor (12%), can't find training (12%), no application assistance (11%), no internet (10%), no internship (10%), and no apprenticeship (8%).
- While 61% of all respondents report thinking about leaving Alaska, only 33% of those in apprenticeship programs and 31% of those in technical training programs report such thoughts.
- Several significant differences are seen between rural and urban respondents. Rural respondents are more likely to see lack of housing as a barrier to employment. Rural residents are less likely to have internet access, less likely to have experienced a job fair, and less likely to have taken a career course or experienced school to work.
- When asked where they want to be one year from now, only 38% of all respondents said "still in Alaska." Those planning to be in Alaska one year from now tend to see themselves as involved in apprenticeship (45%), Dual Credit programs (50%), technical school (44%), or employed full time (55%) or part time (57%).

Alaska's Workforce Future

Report of Student Survey

Background

Alaska faces a workforce challenge. The Alaskan working age population is declining, and young Alaskans who could step in to fill the job openings are leaving the state. New workers cannot be reliably recruited from the Lower 48 because most other states also face labor shortages.

There are more than 20,000 posted and unfilled jobs in Alaska today. The economy is growing. An additional 5,400 new jobs will be created in 2024 and more than another 5,000 in 2025. Alaska is expected to have in excess of \$20 billion in new infrastructure and resource development projects by 2030. To complete those projects, another 20,000 new workers may be needed. Immigration alone cannot solve Alaska's potential need for up to 40,000 new workers or compensate for the chronic outmigration of younger Alaskans. Moreover, immigration is not under State control.

For nine consecutive years, more people left Alaska than moved to the state, and for eight of those years, Alaska's total population declined. Alaska's population slipped from 742,876 in 2016 to 734,823 in 2021, a result of combined factors that include lower birth rates as well as outmigration. This was the longest stretch of net outmigration in Alaska since World War II. A slight rebound occurred in 2023, but the gain was only 130 residents due to a slightly higher birth rate and slightly lower death rate at the close of the pandemic. So the gain did not impact the working age population.

What draws particular focus is Alaska's loss of residents aged 20 to 65, the working-age population. Alaska's working-age population peaked in 2013 at about 479,000 and fell to about 452,000 by 2021, a 5.6% *decline*, compared to a national rate of 2% *growth* during the same period, according to Eric Sandberg, a demographer with AKDOLWD Research and Analysis. Only West Virginia and Wyoming, with 8% and 6% declines, have seen higher losses in working-age populations.

Alaska has a choice. Either stem the flow of young Alaskans from the state, skill them, and create a climate of employment that will enable them to become the workforce of tomorrow – or face perpetual labor challenges. Making this transformation requires a new kind of workforce development plan that triggers changes in Alaska's educational institutions, the roles of employers and local communities, how communications are managed, and in the pathways and incentives available for the new workforce.

Purpose of the Surveys

To examine potential barriers to workforce transformation, as well as to probe some institutional capacities and assess their impacts, two surveys were conducted. One survey sampled Alaska high school youth along with new workers and job seekers; the other sampled a wide range of employers of all sizes and economic regions across nearly all major industries in the State of Alaska. Both surveys are cross-sectional studies; that is, an observational study analyzing data from a population at a single point in time.

Summary of Results and Conclusions

In brief, the surveys reveal that some resources for skilling and upskilling Alaskan youth for the Alaskan workforce of tomorrow may have a positive impact when used, but all are likely underutilized, unevenly available, and not well marketed or communicated to Alaska's youth or employers.

Most high school students and other survey respondents had not been exposed to existing career options through traditional career development methods such as job fairs, career counselors, career courses, and school to work. This suggests that job and career information may not be easily or uniformly available.

At the same time, survey responses from employers of all sizes and economic regions in 23 major industries show 74% of employers disagree or strongly disagree that high schools provide work-ready employees;

80% report moderate to extreme difficulty recruiting new employees; 66% cannot find qualified workers, 57% report moderate to extreme difficulty retaining new employees, and 76% agree that siloed information in the private and public sectors is difficult to acquire and use (see Report of Employer Survey, Appendix 1).

Based on these results, to reduce barriers and improve resource use, much of the *existing* activity for skilling/upskilling workers and for meeting employer workforce demands should be communicated widely, with *feedback mechanisms* and results measured across the board on an ongoing annual basis, as is now recommended in the Alaska's Workforce Future Plan. Several existing state programs, such as those in Colorado and Oregon, are making significant strides in applying these strategies and should be examined for applicability to Alaska, where staffing and budgetary issues for schools constrain how much more can be done. A coordinated effort would be needed to address the barriers employers report to hiring new workers, which include skills gaps, housing issues, childcare, transportation, and local training facility options.

To address the apparent lack of broad access to career pathways and career information for students and employers, it is recommended that career programs be *informally interconnected* by a third-party workforce intermediary whose responsibilities include upgrading communications and feedback among all players, especially young people and employers. It is crucial to move quickly with innovative open access websites such as Colorado's open access website, My Colorado Journey (mycoloradojourney.com/industries) as a function of the workforce intermediary.

Research Methods

Both surveys rely on a correlational research design with supplemental Chi-square analysis and ANOVA to examine relationships among selected factors impacting student and employer knowledge, beliefs, and experiences that may weigh on their workforce choices. The aim of a correlational study is not to measure changes, but to suggest alignments that impact outcomes so that potential areas of change can be identified. A correlation reflects the strength and/or direction of the relationship between two or more variables. Correlation does not imply causation. The direction of a correlation may be positive or negative. Correlation studies can help suggest change and offer a baseline for future comparisons. Questionnaire design and sampling methods are discussed in each report.

Student, New Workers, and Job Seekers Survey

This survey is designed to capture the perspectives and experiences of young Alaskans within the broad school to career pathways. It examined correlates that identify the relationship among workforce education and training opportunities in Alaska, the barriers faced by young Alaskans seeking employment or training, and any expressed desire to work in Alaska or to leave, now or in the future.

Questionnaire Design and Distribution

The questionnaire was designed with input from subject matter experts in workforce development and education and reviewed by the Industry Advisory Council. It is believed to be the first such effort by a third party to survey young Alaskans. The survey was distributed statewide over a 6-week period via the Alaska's Workforce Future website and via flyers given out at job fairs and to workforce organizations and educators.

RESULTS

Results of the Student Survey are presented in four sections: *Overview of Respondent Demographics, Stay or Leave Alaska, What Motivates Leaving, and Methods of Looking into Careers and/or Job Opportunities.*

Overview of Respondent Demographics

Three hundred fifty-four surveys were completed by respondents representing all six economic regions in a wide range of locations: Aleutians West, Bethel, Juneau, Denali, Dillingham, Fairbanks North Star, Kenai Peninsula, Ketchikan, Kodiak Island, Kusilvak, Lake and Peninsula, Matanuska-Susitna, Anchorage, Skagway, Nome Census Area, Northwest Arctic Borough, Prince of Wales-Hyder, Southeast Fairbanks Census Area, and Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area. Personal identifiers were not collected. Only zip codes were captured to identify respondent locations (Attachment 1).

Age and gender were collected. The mean age of the respondents is 21, with a median age of 17. For analysis, a few surveys from respondents under 13 years old and over 65 years old were excluded. Age and gender distributions are shown in tables in Attachment 1. Gender included 171 male, 161 female, and 14 other (Gender was collected in free form.)

Respondents' school or work status includes 74% high school students, followed by high school graduates or GED completers, as shown in the table in Attachment 1. Some respondents belong to more than one category; for example, some high school students or college students are also interns or in dual credit programs, and a number of the high school graduates are also "not in school." In general, a fair cross-section of respondents, with the desired emphasis on high school students, was obtained (Attachment 1).

Stay or Leave Alaska?

Each year more working age people leave Alaska than move here for work. More than half of high school graduates leave and most do not return. Determining who among the current and future working age population want to leave and why is a key factor in building a workforce plan to stem outmigration. In this study, survey respondents were asked if they have thought about moving to other states or countries. A significant majority, 61% of all and 65% of high school students, say yes, as shown in the table below.

Thought About Moving to Other States or Countries

	HS Student	Apprentice	Intern	HS		College Student	College Graduate	Tech Train Student	Tech Train Graduate	Not in School	Other	Total
				Dual Credit	Graduate or GED							
STAY	90	8	1	6	23	13	13	11	2	7	4	178
LEAVE	170	4	8	10	27	16	16	6	3	7	6	273
Total	260	12	9	16	50	29	29	17	5	14	10	451
% Leave	65%	33%	89%	63%	54%	55%	55%	35%	69%	50%	84%	61%

Note: the total count exceeds the 352 respondents because some selected more than one category. For example, a number of respondents are high school students and also enrolled for dual credit. Likewise, some are college graduates are also tech training students.

These results show that many of those now in the early talent pipeline are contemplating the exit path. Those hoping or planning to leave named these destinations in rank order: Washington, California, Oregon, Colorado, Hawaii, Utah, Pennsylvania, Japan, Montana, Texas, Virginia, New York, Illinois, Arizona, Minnesota, Military, Michigan, Nevada, France, Florida, New England, West Coast, Germany, Any Other State. If even a portion of these respondents follow up on their considerations, it will exacerbate the drain on Alaska's future workforce.

What Motivates Leaving Alaska?

Typically, people move when opportunity is perceived to be greater elsewhere. For this survey we polled respondents on perceived barriers to achieving a desired job or career path in Alaska, which might influence a decision to depart the state.

Respondents identify these 14 barriers to their advancement on a career path in Alaska: FINANCES (51%), NEED SCHOLARSHIP/LOAN (32%), UNCERTAINTY (30%), NEED OTHER TRAINING/SKILLS (29%), HOUSING (24%), TRANSPORTATION (22%), NEED EMPLOYER (13%), NO SUPPORT (13%), NEED MENTOR (12%), CAN'T FIND TRAINING (12%), NO APPLICATION ASSISTANCE (11%), NO INTERNET (10%), NO INTERNSHIP (10%), and NO APPRENTICESHIP (8%) (Attachment 2).

Does any barrier correlate directly with respondents' reported consideration of moving to ANOTHER STATE OR COUNTRY? Yes. FINANCES, as a barrier, is significantly correlated with a respondent's expressed interest in moving to ANOTHER STATE OR COUNTRY (p=0.029). Further, correlates of FINANCES show strong linkages to other barriers. For example, nearly 38% of respondents listed NEED SCHOLARSHIP/LOAN as part of their financial barrier (p=0.000). Likewise, TRANSPORTATION (p=0.000), NEED EMPLOYER (p=0.000), HOUSING (p=0.000), NO SUPPORT (p=0.014), CAN'T FIND TRAINING (p=0.021), UNCERTAINTY (p=0.019), NO APPLICATION ASSISTANCE (p=0.004), NO INTERNSHIPS (p=0.004), NEED MENTOR (p=0.004), NO SUPPORT (p=0.007), and NEED OTHER TRAINING/SKILLS (p=0.034) all were linked with respondents' FINANCES barrier.

Move to Another State or Country	
Finances	0.1159
p-value	0.029

Possible barriers that are not significant in this sample of young respondents are CHILD CARE, ELDER CARE, INTERNET ACCESS, and NO APPRENTICESHIP. CHILD CARE AND ELDER CARE may not be perceived as barriers in this group due to their mean age of 21.

Correlates of Finances Barrier

	<i>Need Scholarship/Loan</i>	Child Care	Elder Care	No Internet	No Internship	Transportation	Can't Find Employer	Housing
Factor	0.38	0.05	0.08	0.07	0.15	0.26	0.19	0.28
p-value	0.000	0.399	0.115	0.205	0.004	0.000	0.000	0.000

	<i>No Apprenticeship</i>	No support	Can't find training	Uncertainty	No Application Assistance	Need Mentor	No Support	Need Other Training or Skills
Factor	0.05	0.13	0.12	0.12	0.15	0.15	0.14	0.11
p-value	0.397	0.014	0.021	0.019	0.004	0.004	0.007	0.034

Motivating Barriers: Rural vs Urban

There are no significant differences between rural and urban respondents on 11 of the 16 selected barriers. However, proportionately more urban than rural respondents did report perceived financial difficulties (p=0.000), as shown in the Chi-square result at right. In this test, an assumption of no difference between perceived financial barriers in the urban and rural groups is hypothesized and "expected" values are computed to compare against the "actual" values found. In this case, FINANCES is reported by 57 urban respondents and 70 rural respondents. If there were no difference between groups, then 37 urban respondents, not 57, would be expected and 89 rural respondents, not 70, would have been expected. Thus, urban respondents are more likely to perceive FINANCES as a barrier than are rural respondents (Chi-square p=0.000). Similar findings with urban respondents emerged for CHILD CARE (Chi-square p=0.000), INTERNET (Chi-square p=0.0062), CAN'T FIND EMPLOYER (Chi-square p=0.0341), and NEED MENTOR (Chi-square p=0.0204) (Attachment 3).

		Finances Are a Barrier		
		YES	NO	
URBAN	Actual	57	45	102
	Expected	37.55	110.26	
RURAL	Actual	70	173	243
	Expected	89.45	153.55	
p =0.000		127	218	345

One barrier reported more often by rural respondents is HOUSING. The expected equal probability was 34 for the urban and 81 for the rural. The actual results are 90 for the rural (Chi-square $p=0.0383$). Housing in rural Alaska is a long-term chronic issue which affects not only education and training but workforce hiring and deployment, as confirmed in the Alaska's Workforce Future Employer Survey.

		Need Housing		
		YES	NO	
URBAN	Actual	26	76	102
	Expected	34.30	67.70	
RURAL	Actual	90	153	243
	Expected	81.70	161.30	
p =0.0383		116	229	345

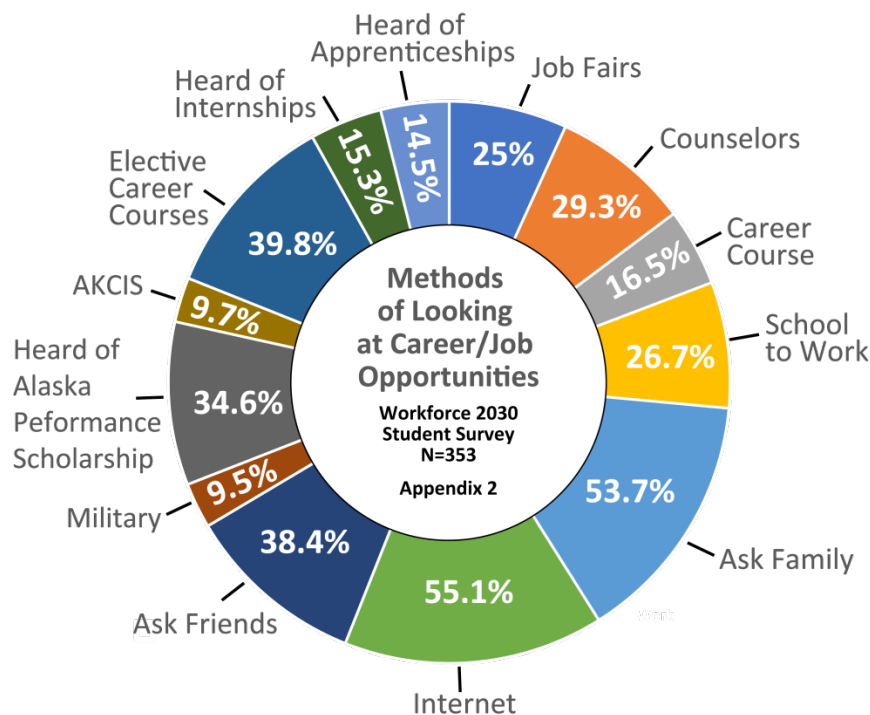
		Internet Access		
		YES	NO	
URBAN	Actual	68	34	102
	Expected	56.47	45.54	
RURAL	Actual	90	153	243
	Expected	134.53	108.47	
p =0.0062		191	154	345

Another significant difference between rural and urban is Internet access. Using INTERNET for career-based information is significantly lower among rural respondents, only 66% of expected (Chi-square $p=0.0062$). This issue may see some resolution in the nearer term with the IJA "Internet For All" process now underway.

If respondents perceive these barriers, it may be reasonable to see why they may want to seek opportunities elsewhere. But what about the support options from Alaska's many career services? Do young Alaskans avail themselves of these services but find them inadequate? Is there some combination of these factors along with other issues that need to be considered to address the barriers that make respondents consider leaving the state?

Methods of Looking into Careers and/or Job Opportunities

Like many states, Alaska has long developed and encouraged institutions, programs, and other methods designed to guide students, new workers, and job seekers through conduits to workforce skilling, upskilling, and reskilling designed to transition individuals into the workforce. To the extent that young Alaskans are aware of these methods and can use them, they are theoretically given reason to stay in the state. Unfortunately, respondents in this survey report underutilization of these available resources and seem to be unaware of most.



Only INTERNET (55%) and ASK FAMILY (54%) are used to look into careers and/or job opportunities by more than 50% of respondents. The other methods used, in rank order, are: ELECTIVE CAREER COURSES (40%), ASK FRIENDS (38%), HEARD OF ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP (35%), SCHOOL/CAREER COUNSELING (29%), SCHOOL TO WORK (27%), JOB FAIRS (25%), CAREER DEVELOPMENT COURSE (17%), HEARD OF INTERNSHIPS (15%), HEARD OF APPRENTICESHIPS (15%), AKCIS (10%), and MILITARY (10%).

Among formal methods of career exploration, ELECTIVE CAREER COURSES is the one most often reported by respondents (40%). Methods of career exploration positively associated with ELECTIVE COURSES are JOB FAIRS (p=0.002), COUNSELORS (p=0.000), SCHOOL TO WORK (p=0.000), and AKCIS (p=0.000). These are considered positive drivers of career choice and are broadly seen as essential methods in career preparation. However, foremost among the negative correlates of ELECTIVE CAREER COURSES is high school status. Being a high school student is negatively correlated with taking an elective career course (p=0.000), meaning student respondents do not get career courses in high school. In addition, there is no significant negative or positive association between ELECTIVE COURSES and thinking about a move to ANOTHER STATE OR COUNTRY (p=0.312).

Urban and Rural N=344	School to Ask										Other State or Country
	Job Fairs	Counselors	Work	Family	Internet	Friends	AKCIS	HS Student	Apprentice	Intern	
CAREER COURSE	0.17	0.21	0.23	-0.13	0.06	-0.01	0.20	-0.20	0.10	0.07	0.06
<i>p-value</i>	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.017	0.315	0.929	0.000	0.000	0.083	0.187	0.312

By examining the correlates of use of these career planning methods with current high school status in the table below, we see no correlations with JOB FAIRS, COUNSELORS, SCHOOL TO WORK, AKCIS, APPRENTICESHIP, OR INTERNSHIP. Unfortunately, we do see a correlation with thinking about moving to ANOTHER STATE OR COUNTRY. In essence, the lack of exposure to these career planning methods appears to be associated with a desire to go elsewhere, to look for an opportunity in another place. We also see a high correlation of high school status with ASK FAMILY (p=0.000), which would suggest that many respondents may rely on what their family members say about careers. Finally, there is a significant negative correlation with APPRENTICESHIP, which means high school students are unlikely to be apprentices.

Urban and Rural N=344	School to Ask										Other State or Country
	Job Fairs	Counselors	Work	Family	Internet	Friends	AKCIS	Career Course	Apprentice	Intern	
HS STUDENT	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.30	-0.13	-0.09	-0.09	-0.20	-0.27	-0.02	-0.19
<i>p-value</i>	0.139	0.166	0.193	0.000	0.019	0.116	0.123	0.000	0.000	0.672	0.001

Overall, some traditional methods of career selection do not appear to impact respondents *if and when they are exposed to them*. For example, there is no positive or negative correlation between gathering career information from JOB FAIRS, COUNSELORS, CAREER COURSES, AKCIS, HEARD OF ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP, ELECTIVE COURSES in high school, or HEARD ABOUT INTERNSHIPS and APPRENTICESHIPS and thinking about moving to ANOTHER STATE OR COUNTRY. (The negative correlation between SCHOOL TO WORK and moving to ANOTHER STATE OR COUNTRY, suggests SCHOOL TO WORK respondents as a group do not want to move to another state or country.)

Urban and Rural N=344	Alaska Performance							School to Work
	Job Fairs	Counselors	Career Course	AKCIS	Scholarship	Heard about Internships	Heard about Apprenticeship	
Move to other state or country.	-0.0407	0.0210	-0.0830	-0.0447	0.0216	-0.0448	0.0021	-0.1293
<i>p-value</i>	0.446	0.695	0.119	0.402	0.686	0.402	0.969	0.015

Because use of these career path methods by survey respondents is so minimal, Chi-square tests are used to compare actual and *expected* outcomes for each method with the stay/leave choices. These comparisons are in Appendix 4. To illustrate, the stay/leave choice associated with participation in each of three career path methods is presented on the next page: APPRENTICESHIP, TECHNICAL TRAINING, and ASK FRIENDS.

Registered apprenticeship is a proven system of workforce training that helps employers meet their workforce needs and employees meet their career goals. Survey respondents who HEARD OF APPRENTICESHIPS while in school are about 17% less likely to report thinking about moving from Alaska compared with respondents who did not hear about apprenticeships in school (Chi-square $p=0.019$).

		Heard about Apprenticeships in School		
		YES	NO	
STAY	Actual	40	185	225
	Expected	32.70	192.30	
LEAVE	Actual	10	109	119
	Expected	17.30	101.70	
p=0.019		50	294	344

If we accept that HEARD OF APPRENTICESHIPS in school has a mitigating effect on young Alaskans thinking about leaving Alaska, then it is important to take some additional steps to ensure more Alaskans students, new workers, and job seekers hear about apprenticeships. Apprenticeship is for all genders and most ages. A majority of apprenticeship programs employ people over age 16 while some require 18 or older. For youth under 16, there may be pre-apprenticeship or youth apprenticeship options available. There are hundreds of apprenticeable occupations in Alaska in a wide variety of fields including medical, information technology, construction, and more.

Participation in apprenticeship or technical training. Beyond hearing about apprenticeship in school, actual participation in APPRENTICESHIP or in TECHNICAL TRAINING are both associated with being less likely to

	School/Training		Total
	Apprentice	Tech Train Student	
STAY	8	11	178
LEAVE	4	6	273
Total	12	17	451
% Leave	33%	35%	61%
	p=0.057	p=0.037	

think about moving to ANOTHER STATE OR COUNTRY. At left, part of the table from page 3 shows respondent education and/or employment status by thoughts of staying or leaving Alaska for apprentices, technical training students and a total for all respondents. As was discussed then, overall 61% of respondents reported thoughts of leaving Alaska, compared with 33% of those in apprenticeship programs and 35% of those in technical training programs. For apprentices, actual

likelihood of reporting “stay” versus “leave” is about 60% greater than among all respondents (Chi-square $p=0.057$). And for technical training students the actual likelihood of “stay” versus “leave” is about 62% greater (Chi-square $p=0.037$) (Appendix 4).

These programs seem to be associated with an increased likelihood of not thinking about leaving Alaska. However, only 15% of respondents (50 of 344) report HEARD OF APPRENTICESHIPS in school, so the message is not being received. The result may well be a perceived barrier to career opportunity that leads students or job seekers to be more likely to report a desire to leave Alaska to find better opportunity elsewhere.

Ask Friends. Finally, friends are a strong influence on lower intent to move to ANOTHER STATE OR COUNTRY. Those who asked friends about careers are 10% less than expected to think about ANOTHER STATE OR COUNTRY (Chi-square $p=0.039$). This may point to a need to ensure all Alaskans are informed about career opportunities in Alaska: job fairs, apprenticeship, AKCIS, career counseling, career courses, and opportunities for school to work. Peer to peer communication could help reduce outmigration.

		Ask Friends		
		YES	NO	
STAY	Actual	59	71	219
	Expected	49.91	80.09	
LEAVE	Actual	75	144	130
	Expected	84.09	134.91	
p=0.039		134	215	349

The respondents now in Alaska's formal career pathway programs are less likely to be correlated with thinking about leaving the state. However, fewer than half of respondents report participating in any of these programs. This results in a significant number not seeing a pathway to a career in Alaska. A major part of reducing Alaska's outmigration of students, new workers, and job seekers depends on improving communications about existing career path resources, and there is a lot of room for improvement. Staffing and budgetary issues for schools constrain how much can be done. But it seems crucial to move quickly to improve access with innovative websites such as Colorado's usable information about jobs/careers and pathways in that state: mycoloradojourney.com/industries as a function of a workforce intermediary.

Urban vs Rural Career path methods presented so far have focused on results throughout the state. Rural areas have unique challenges, and it is important to recognize observed differences which may impact program success in rural areas (Appendix 3).

Job Fairs are a bedrock in career planning and recruitment. Earlier we saw how they fit into the array of methods correlated with survey respondents who are less likely to consider moving from Alaska. Here we see that if JOB FAIRS are evenly distributed among urban and rural areas, we would have expected 61 to be reported among our rural respondents. The actual number is 41. This means many rural respondents are deprived of the job fair experience.

		Job Fairs		
		YES	NO	
URBAN	Actual	40	62	102
	Expected	25.87	76.13	
RURAL	Actual	47	194	241
	Expected	61.13	179.87	
p=0.000		87	256	343

		Career Courses		
		YES	NO	
URBAN	Actual	27	75	102
	Expected	16.85	85.15	
RURAL	Actual	30	213	243
	Expected	40.15	202.85	
p=0.001		57	288	345

Career Courses in school or extracurricular are associated with overall successful career planning and recruitment that mitigated thoughts of leaving Alaska. CAREER COURSES are also part of a group of methods directly correlated with respondents who are less likely to consider moving from Alaska. If CAREER COURSES were evenly distributed in urban and rural areas, 40 would have been expected in rural

areas. The actual number is 30. This places rural respondents at a disadvantage that could be corrected by offering more career courses.

School to Work is the only correlate of the career path methods directly showing a significant relationship to lower than expected thoughts about leaving the state. If SCHOOL TO WORK opportunities were evenly distributed, we would have expected 65 reported for our rural respondents. The actual number is 58.

		School to Work		
		YES	NO	
URBAN	Actual	35	67	102
	Expected	27.4957	74.5044	
RURAL	Actual	58	185	241
	Expected	65.5044	177.496	
p=0.046		93	252	343

		AKCIS		
		YES	NO	
Urban	Actual	15	87	102
	Expected	10.0522	91.9478	
Rural	Actual	19	224	243
	Expected	23.9478	219.0522	
p=0.050		34	311	345

The Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS) is a comprehensive Personal Learning & Career Plans (PLCPs) resource for discovering national and Alaska-specific education and career opportunities. In this survey, AKCIS users are only about 10% of overall respondents (N=34), so its scope of use is severely limited. Even so, rural users are underrepresented comprising only 19 of the 34 users of AKCIS when 23

were to be expected. It is recommended that an effort be undertaken to communicate, promote, and

evaluate use throughout the state. It is difficult to assess AKCIS because users must register as students, parents, job seekers, etc., as it is not open access.

If we accept that AKCIS may impact young Alaskans to stay in Alaska, then steps are needed to ensure that more Alaskan students, new workers, and job seekers – both urban and rural – are exposed to it. Analysis shows respondents' attending JOB FAIRS (p=0.003), taking CAREER COURSES (p=0.000), using SCHOOL COUNSELORS (p=0.022), and HEARING OF APPRENTICESHIP in schools (p=0.000) are associated with likely to have used AKCIS. Since these methods are used by fewer than 30% of respondents, it makes sense to encourage more use of these options to promote AKCIS and potentially diminish thoughts of leaving Alaska, in both rural and urban settings (Attachment 5.)

		Ask Family		
		YES	NO	
URBAN	Actual	42	60	102
	Expected	54.4	47.6	
RURAL	Actual	142	101	243
	Expected	129.6	113.4	
p=0.034		184	161	345

Ask Family is a negative correlate, with respondents who ASKED FAMILY being more likely to consider leaving Alaska. Rural respondents place more reliance on family advice for career planning. In the rural areas, 142 reported relying on family advice whereas only 129 were expected. This reliance on family advice may occur because other methods are absent.

Perhaps there is a need for career option outreach to families in Alaska. If families were advised via Internet, flyers, radio, TV and school counselors about job fairs, apprenticeships, AKCIS, career counseling, career courses, and school to work, the resulting family communication may reduce outmigration.

Internet is the primary means reported by respondents for carrying out career planning (55%). Unfortunately, it is correlated with thoughts of leaving Alaska. Equal probability yields expected rural utilization of the Internet for career information at 133, when the actual is 123. But, in fact, what is needed is not a reduction in Internet access, but an increase in online Alaska career information.

		Internet		
		YES	NO	
URBAN	Actual	66	36	102
	Expected	55.88	46.12	
RURAL	Actual	123	120	243
	Expected	133.12	109.88	
p=0.016		184	161	345

The State and associations, unions, community organizations, and others need to step up and provide more Alaska career path information for online consumption. Organizations must also work on presentation so that the information is *uniformly* available and easily understood – another reason to engage a workforce intermediary to coordinate communications and make information accessible to all players.

Future Choices: Conclusions

Near the end of the survey, respondents were asked where they wanted to be one year from now (Q21), using the same options offered in the current status question (Q11). The options included STILL IN ALASKA. Only 38% said STILL IN ALASKA. At least 62% of respondents did not commit to staying in Alaska a year from now. The good news is these can be called the undecided and there is hope they can be persuaded to stay – if the necessary communications and support are provided to convince them of opportunities here.

Filtering these respondents by current status, such as HS student, apprentice, intern, dual credit student, HS graduate or GED, college student, college graduate, tech training student, or tech training graduate, employed full time, employed part time, or seeking a job, reveals that the respondents' year-from-now aspirations impact on their likelihood of staying in Alaska.

Some of this effect is seen in areas we have previously noted, such as planning to be in an apprenticeship one year from now (45%) or in Dual Credit programs (50%), or being a technical school graduate (44%), or being employed full time (55%) or part time (57%).

If, at one year out, they are in an apprenticeship or are technical school graduates, or have a job as expected, will they still want to leave for better opportunity elsewhere? Who knows? But more likely not.

For example, among those survey respondents who expected to be employed one year from now, 42 said they are likely to remain in Alaska compared with 31.7 expected, reducing expected departure rates to 41% (p=0.022) of those respondents as shown in the chart at right.

Committed to Stay in Alaska 1 year from now					
		YES	NO		
WILL	Actual	42	35		
HAVE JOB	Expected	31.68	45.32	77	
ALL	Actual	130	211	341	
	Expected	140.32	200.68		
p=0.008		172	246	418	

Completed or Will Complete Training in AK					
		YES	NO		
LEAVE	Actual	80	135	215	
	Expected	105.63	109.38		
STAY	Actual	89	40	129	
	Expected	63.38	65.63		
p=0.000		169	175	344	

Also, some evidence is seen when comparing the respondents who plan to or have completed training or education in Alaska with those who have not or do not intend to do so. The actual number who say they are thinking about leaving is 80. The expected is 105. This lowers “leavers” from 62% to 47%.

Thus, providing opportunity and meeting expectations could reduce departures of young Alaskans by 5% to 15%. Among high school graduates, about 6,000 per year, this could mean 300 to 1,200 fewer high school graduates departing the state each year. Or, on a broader basis, Alaska currently has about 89,986 youth and young adults between the ages of 15 and 24 years old (Census Bureau infoplease.com), which could mean 4,500 to 13,500 fewer young adult departures over the next few years. These could be the young workforce of Alaska’s tomorrow. It all depends on more effectively marketing and communicating the *existing* resources to show these individuals that they do not have to leave Alaska to have a good life.

Conclusion

This report is based on analyses of data collected from 354 self-selected students, new workers, and job seekers. It is a cross-sectional study showing a snapshot in time and representing a wide swath of the targeted population, many of whom have never been heard from before. The Alaska’s Workforce Future Student Survey is thought to be the first such survey of young Alaskans conducted by a third party. We cannot claim our results are all encompassing and exhaustive. We can claim they provide food for thought and valuable insights, especially given the meager resources invested in this effort. What is needed is an ongoing effort to conduct periodic survey of students and other young Alaskans, using statistically valid sampling strategies, to monitor progress as the Alaska’s Workforce Future Plan advances. In the spirit of advancing the discussion on this topic, we will also make the raw data file for this survey available for other researchers who may want to see what they can discern in this data. Most important, we strongly recommend that surveys of this type be conducted routinely on a periodic basis as part of the planned communications campaign to show these individuals that they do not have to leave Alaska to have a good life.

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