



Education & Workforce Development Summary

Strengths *Internal attributes that contribute to success*

Businesses, Organizations, & Government

- Strong high school programs, trade schools, and pre-college programs
- High school-based trade programs and apprenticeship programs are working well
- Military bases offer employment, including civilian jobs
- University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) and its many affiliated programs, including the Pipeline Training Center Education & Workforce
- FNSB has a higher labor participation rate than Alaska
- Trade and apprenticeship opportunities available across industries

Weaknesses *Internal barriers to success*

Natural Resources & Environment

- Winter driving conditions as a barrier to employment for military households who are uncomfortable with the 20–30-minute commute

Education & Workforce

- Distance learning challenges, especially for disadvantaged youth
- Female workers have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic due to child care and caregiving roles
- High costs and limited availability of child care, unreliable school bus service create challenges for working parents
- Lack of awareness of existing career and training programs
- Licensing barriers and challenges in many industries
- Rapidly aging workforce with many older workers retiring

Funding & Markets

- Financial costs to access postsecondary education
- Seasonal jobs often do not pay a living wage

Infrastructure

- Limited public transportation

Opportunities *External forces that contribute to success*

Education & Workforce

- An increasing number of jobs can be done remotely

Funding & Markets

- Federal funding opportunities for new infrastructure through the American Rescue Plan Act, COVID-19 relief funds, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and more will create increased employment opportunities
- Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) and DoD have resources to cover child care costs for family members who watch the children of relatives

Infrastructure

- Increased deployment of broadband

Threats *External forces that could be barriers to success*

Businesses, Organizations, & Government

- Delays in background checks causing problems in some industries by delaying hiring (e.g., child care)
- Ongoing impacts from the Alaska Department of Health & Social Services data breach continue to negatively impact administration of child care programs, causing delays in payment and processing of new families and providers

Education & Workforce

- Evolution of work habits during the pandemic and permanent changes to worker preferences and priorities
- Nationwide workforce shortages mean FNSB is competing with other facilities across the country

Funding & Markets

- Growth of the gig economy impacting availability of workers
- High cost of living, housing, energy, internet
- Poor retirement benefits for teachers and public employees
- State budget challenges and uncertainty resulting in cuts to schools, workforce programs, and secondary education institutions such as UAF

Where We Are	What measurements can we use to track progress? Where do we want to be in 5 years?	2027 Targets
72% (2019)	Labor Force Participation Rate – Percentage of FNSB population 16 years and older who are in the workforce. <i>This number has remained steady over the past 5 years</i>	77%
\$68,697	Average Earnings Per Job – Sum of wages, salaries, earnings divided by # of people employed. <i>This has grown 7% since 2014; FNSB’s number is slightly lower than Alaska’s average of \$71,106</i>	\$72,131

Sources: Labor Force Participation Rate from U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey; Wages from Bureau of Economic Analysis



Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Fairbanks

“Some local employers treat workers as disposable, as ‘warm bodies.’ We need to change how our community thinks about workers, even entry level workers.”

“People are working differently now. They want more independence, flexibility. Employers and trainers need to figure out how to adapt.”

“Workforce development partners have been working on getting people, such as school counselors, re-trained with refreshed professional development since jobs have changed so much.”

“Educating workers is great, but we need to convert it into employment.”



Education & Workforce Development Objectives – Long term improvements and changes we want to see in five years or more



1. FNSB residents will have the education and skills needed for meaningful employment, benefits, livable wages, and a high quality of life.



2. Employers will have access to a skilled workforce that meets their unique, long-term hiring needs.

“Child care cost and availability prevents many parents from working.”

“We should be building in natural resources curricula into high school. For example, kids need to understand where minerals come from and how they are used. Minerals are a part of our modern world. I think it’s really important for upcoming generations to understand that. To accept mines, people they need to make the connection between their daily lives and what mines produce.”

“We need to introduce pathway opportunities such as apprenticeship even earlier and help students navigate to programs with the best fit.”

Strategies & Actions – Activities we will implement over the next five years to accomplish objectives & targets. See Chapter 3 for a detailed action plan.

Icon Key: Capital Project Military-related

1. **Support Industry-Specific Employment Needs** – Continue to develop relevant career and technical education training programs to fill industry gaps and improve recruitment for existing programs. *(Objectives 1, 2)*
 - a. Priority employment gaps include educators, health care professionals, renewable energy technicians, oil and gas workers, mining workers, telecommunication workers, utility operators, agriculture workers, leisure and hospitality employment, construction workers, and aviation.
 - b. Expand the availability of local training and employment events (including job fairs) for residents, university students, and incoming military families to learn about education, training, and employment opportunities available in FNSB.
 - c. Support implementation of Alaska’s five workforce development plans, including the Maritime Workforce Plan, Teacher Education Plan, Oil & Gas Workforce Plan, Mining Workforce Plan and Health Workforce Plan.
 - d. Build more robust feedback mechanisms in place so that training pipelines are adaptable and flexible to meet the evolving needs of the future.
 - e. Better integrate industry perspectives into UAF courses so students see relevant opportunities outside of academia.
 - f. Support comprehensive child care industry reform to increase the availability and affordability of child care.
 - g. Conduct employer outreach with information on how to retract and retain workers.
2. **Increase Educational Foundations** – Increase support of quality public education from birth to age 18. *(Objectives 1, 2)*
 - a. Continue to expand science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) education.
 - b. Expand career and technical pathways programming in middle and high schools.
 - c. Advocate to increase K-12 education funding.
 - d. Increase the teaching of critical soft skills in schools.
 - e. Support art and creative programming in schools.

- f. Expand early childhood programs and universal pre-K throughout the FNSB and advocate for public funded pre-K program.
- g. Advocate for improved benefits for teachers and public sector workers to improve retention.
- h. Increase one-on-one career counseling with high school seniors.

3. Remove Barriers to Employment – Address barriers to employment. *(Objectives 1, 2)*

- a. Remove barriers obtain occupational licenses, including in health care; this could include establishing a nurse licensure compact. 📄
- b. Coordinate with the Department of Defense (DoD) to supplement existing information sharing with Air Force and Army families before they arrive in the area. 📄
- c. Encourage FNSB-located Job Centers, workforce development program representatives and large employers to participate in welcoming programs. 📄
- d. Prior to departure, conduct debrief/departure interviews or focus groups with military families regarding experience with FNSB employment and workforce development. 📄
- e. Expand access to affordable child care services for military households. 📄
- f. Better promote the rideshare program to help DoD household members commute to job centers. 📄

Other Relevant Resources



Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Fairbanks

- **Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Strategic Plan.** FNSB School District. December 2019. [View here.](#)
- **Eielson Regional Growth Plan.** Fairbanks North Star Borough. 2018. [View here.](#)
- **UAF Strategic Plan 2027.** University of Alaska Fairbanks. November 2021. [View here.](#)
- **Alaska Workforce Development Plans (includes Health, Maritime, Mining, Educators and Oil & Gas).** University of Alaska. [View here.](#)

Education and Workforce Development Action Plan

See Appendix A for a list of acronyms.

Strategy #1: Support Industry-Specific Employment Needs – Continue to develop relevant career and technical education training programs to fill industry gaps and improve recruitment for existing programs.

Capital Project?	Action	Lead	Support	Estimated Resources	Target Completion
	a. Develop programs to fill employment gaps in the following industries: educators, health care professionals, energy technicians, mining workers, telecommunication workers, utility operators, agriculture workers, leisure and hospitality employment, construction workers, and aviation.	FNSB School District	UAF, Alaska Works Partnership, Alaska MEP, Foundation Health Partners, TCC, FNA, industry trade groups, Alaska Job Center, GFCC	Varies	Ongoing
	b. Expand the availability of local training and employment events (including job fairs) for residents, university students, and incoming military families to learn about education, training and employment opportunities available in FNSB.	FEDC, SBDC, UAF, FNSB School District	Eielson Airman & Family Readiness Center (A&FC), Alaska Job Center, GFCC		
	c. Support implementation of Alaska’s five workforce development plans, including the Maritime Workforce Plan, Teacher Education Plan, Oil & Gas Workforce Plan, Mining Workforce Plan and Health Workforce Plan.	University of Alaska	GFCC; other support varies by sector	Varies	Ongoing
	d. Build more robust feedback mechanisms in place so that training pipelines are adaptable and flexible to meet the evolving needs of the future.	Varies	FNSB School District, UAF, Alaska Works Partnership, Alaska MEP, Foundation Health Partners, TCC, FNA, industry trade groups, Alaska Job Center, GFCC	Varies	Ongoing
	e. Better integrate industry perspectives into UAF courses so students see relevant opportunities outside of academia.	UAF	Varies	Varies	Ongoing
	f. Support comprehensive child care industry reform to increase the availability and affordability of child care.	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
	g. Conduct employer outreach with information on how to retract and retain workers.	TBD	GFCC, SBDC		

Strategy #2: Increase Educational Foundations – Increase support of quality public education from birth to age 16.

Capital Project?	Action	Lead	Support	Estimated Resources	Target Completion
	a. Continue to expand STEAM education.	FNSB School District	GFCC	TBD	Ongoing
	b. Expand career and technical pathways programming in middle and high schools.	FNSB School District	GFCC	TBD	Ongoing
	c. Advocate to increase K-12 education funding.	FNSB, FEDC	GFCC	TBD	Ongoing
	d. Increase the teaching of critical soft skills in schools.	FNSB School District	GFCC	TBD	Ongoing
	e. Support art and creative programming in schools.	FNSB School District	GFCC	TBD	Ongoing
	f. Expand early childhood programs and universal pre-K throughout the FNSB and advocate for publicly funded pre-K education.	FNSB, FEDC		TBD	Ongoing
	g. Advocate for improved benefits for teachers and public sector workers to improve retention.	State legislators	FNSB School District	TBD	Ongoing
	h. Increase one-on-one career counseling with high school seniors.	FNSB School District		TBD	Ongoing

Strategy #3: Remove Barriers to Employment – Address barriers to employment (identified in the Eielson Regional Growth Plan).

Capital Project?	Action	Lead	Support	Estimated Resources	Target Completion
	a. Remove barriers to obtain occupational licenses, including in health care; this could include establishing a nurse licensure compact.	State legislators	FNSB, FEDC, health care providers, GFCC	TBD	Ongoing
	b. Coordinate with the DoD to supplement existing information sharing with Air Force and Army families before they arrive in the area.	FEDC	DoD	TBD	Ongoing
	c. Encourage FNSB-located job centers, workforce development program representatives, and large employers to participate in welcoming programs.	Alaska Job Network, SBDC, FEDC, UAF	Large employers, GFCC	TBD	Ongoing
	d. Prior to departure, conduct debrief/departure interviews or focus groups with military families regarding experience with FNSB employment and workforce development.	FEDC		TBD	Ongoing
	e. Expand access to affordable child care services for military households.	DoD	Thrialaska, Alaska Child Care Assistance Office	TBD	Ongoing
	f. Better promote the rideshare program to help DoD household members commute to job centers.	DoD	Transportation providers, FNSB	TBD	TBD