



State of Alaska
 Department of Labor & Workforce Development
 Division of Business Partnerships
 1016 West 6th Avenue, Suite 205
 Anchorage, Alaska 99501
 907-269-4551 \ 907-269-0068 fax



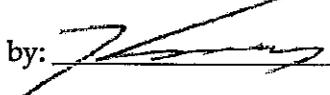
**Denali Training Fund Youth Program
 Final Progress Report FY 11**

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Funds for this project are provided by the Denali Commission and managed, in partnership, by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. This report is due at project end or *no later than 30 calendar days* after the period of performance for this grant.

Name of Organization:	Avant-Garde Learning Alliance
Name of Project:	Career Exploration Program
Grant Period:	9/30/2010 - 09/30/2011
Contact Name:	Kameron H. Perez-Verdia
Contact Number:	(907).279.0356

Certification: I certify that the information in this report is current, correct and true and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Signed by:  Dated 10-17-2011

A. Narrative of Services:

The Career Explorations Program completed a number of services throughout the year to meet the goals and objectives of the grant. Throughout the course of the program goals/objectives were revisited as we strived to meet our participant numbers.

Goal 1: Participants will take part in state education aligned curriculum.

Throughout the course of the program, all participants took part in state education aligned curriculum. As part of the program, Avant-Garde developed lesson plans that aligned directly with state curriculum. These lesson plans and other resources were sent to participating teachers through Constant Contact, a tool that helps format, track, and archive emails while allowing live links and surveys that can connect readers to web pages and pdf versions of lesson plans. Teachers were also sent lesson plans through email. Teacher evaluations and surveys were collected, which reported that all teachers and all students had participated in many of these lesson plans.

Videoteleconferencing (VTC) was a large part of the program where students participated in VTC sessions that were aligned with state education curriculum under the Employability, English, Math, and/or Technology Content Standard. Throughout the program there were 15 VTCs. It was reported that the CEP lesson plans “helped students acquire the background information they needed to understand and engage in the VTC to come.” The lesson plans, activities, and resources gave teachers and students the background necessary to understand the context of the guest VTC speaker.

To extend access to the program and to extend our reach, Avant-Garde built partnerships. These partnerships also supported us in reaching our goals and objectives. Partnerships were established with the Rural Alaska Honors Institute (RAHI), and the STEM Careers Camp, at Ilisagvik College. For the duration of these programs, participants continued to take part in state education aligned curriculum. During the RAHI program, students attended courses that helped move them closer to achieving an academic degree. Credits earned also helped satisfy certain requirements for high school graduation and were aligned to state standards. Participants at the Ilisagvik Career Camp were introduced to various careers that incorporated the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and math. During this time, they took part in courses led by professionals in high demand fields. All curriculums were aligned to state education curriculum.

Goal 2: Participants will take part in resume writing and interview skills building activities.

All participants took part in and completed resume writing and interview skills building activities. Lesson plans on resume writing and interview skills building were developed and sent to participating teachers through Constant Contact and email. All participants also practiced their interview skills through VTCs with professionals and university students.

During the 2nd quarter, each participating classroom experienced a VTC with Career focused content providers. Content providers are *organizations like universities, museums, and cultural centers, which use VTC to teach or present materials to students in various content areas*. Prior to the content provider VTC, teachers were provided with state aligned lesson plans and activities that focused on building interview skills. Through the lessons students developed interview questions and practiced answering interview questions developed by their peers. During the content provider VTCs, students asked their questions to the professionals and university students. Participants were also asked to interview local professionals to learn more about the occupations available in their villages.

Through CEP we were building toward interactivity. Most of our participants found interview skills difficult, not only because interviews can be challenging, also because in some ways interviewing is contrary to cultural norms. In general, our students were very shy and lacked many soft skills necessary in industry. Through our projects students were given the opportunity to build up the soft skill necessary for interviews. At the end of each VTC session 10-20 minutes were left for question and answer. Teachers were asked to have their students prepare three to five questions in preparation for this time period. Then, when guests asked students for questions, students were prepared.

During the 4th quarter, participants at the Ilisagvik Career Camp took part in a lesson/activity on what resumes are and discussed why resumes are important. Once completed, students discussed interview skills and worked on developing good interview questions. Then, there were mock interviews where each student was interviewed by a peer. After the resume and interview skills building activities, students were given time and instructions on how to create an electronic portfolio on Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS). Once all participants had created an e-portfolio, they built resumes. All participants at the Ilisagvik Career Camp successfully created an AKCIS electronic portfolio and their first resumes.

Goal 3: Participants will complete a job shadow event.

All of the schools we worked with through the CEP program were located in villages with very few local job shadow opportunities. We were faced with the logistical challenges of organizing job shadow experiences outside of the students' home communities. Organizing something like this requires funding to cover travel expenses, knowledge of the area, along with a chaperone. Through partnerships we were able to work out the challenges that were preventing job shadows from becoming an actuality earlier in the program. 65 of the 90 participants completed job shadow events.

During the 4th quarter, the Career Explorations Program worked in partnership with the Southeast Island School District to send 11 students on a Career and College trip. Southeast Island School District agreed to provide two chaperones and organizers for this trip. Amy McDonald, the district counselor and a participating teacher in the Career Explorations Program, was one of the chaperones.

The students first went to Kotzebue where they participated in job shadows of their choice. Then, the group went on to a seven day college tour around Alaska. Students spent this time exploring the different pathways to their career of choice. Students toured AVTEC and four other Alaska Universities (University of Alaska, Southeast, University of Alaska, Anchorage, Alaska Pacific University, and University of Alaska, Fairbanks). Students who enroll in college or university will have school as their career after high school. For this reason, visiting a college campus, going on a tour, interacting with college students and teachers, and having meals in a dorm cafeteria served as a job shadow. Students got to experience what life is like away from home and surrounded by students. The students also participated in a group tour of the Wells Fargo building in Anchorage, where they learned about job opportunities that exist in the banking industry and participated in a Barrier to Employment training.

During the Career Camp at Ilisagvik College, students participated in activities that simulated what it would be like to have a career in various fields of science. They were busy from 8:30 am until 8:00 pm investigating careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). During this time students also participated in field trips, classes, and seminars. Each day students would spend with an expert in a new field, learning what it would be like to have a career in that specific field. Students participated on a tour of the Barrow Utilities and Electric Co-Op Inc. (BUECI). While at BUECI student were given a tour of the facilities and a rundown of the different job opportunities available. This experience served as a job shadow and is only one of the many great learning experiences these students participated in.

Many students plan for academic careers after high school, the RAHI program helps prepare these students for their next steps. RAHI is a rigorous academic institute that prepares students for life at college, offering exposure to the emotional and academic experiences that so often cause newly entering college freshman from Alaska rural village's problems. RAHI is a seven week program and participating students sleep in dorms, eat at school cafeterias, attend classes all day, and get a taste for what college life is going to be like. This experience served as a job shadow for students who are serious about an academic career, rather than a workforce career, directly after high school.

Goal 4: Participants will complete assessment and evaluation worksheet.

During the Career Explorations Program, students were continuously assessed. Throughout the program students were given several types of assessments including, but not limited to, checklists, surveys, observation, and rubrics. Some results were communicated to Avant-Garde directly through the teachers, while others were witnessed first-hand working with the students.

Throughout the year, participation levels more than doubled and students became more engaged during VTCs and activities. At the end of each lesson we would debrief the presentation and students would talk to one another about what they learned and liked about the presentation. During the debrief sessions, teachers and Avant-Garde staff would assess student learning and comprehension. Teachers also reported that student skills strengthened through the program.

Goal 5: On-site teachers will complete assessment and evaluation worksheet.

Teachers were given several assessments and evaluations. Overall, they were "very happy with the support from Avant-Garde." _____ from Chief Paul Memorial School in Kipnuk liked how the program offered "information from outside sources that benefit the students." The Career Explorations Program offers students ways to learn about different careers and opportunities in a way that they wouldn't normally be able to. _____ from Qugcuun Memorial High School in Oscarville stated that "it is helpful to have special guest in the classroom because the students have more opportunities to learn how to interact with different people." All teachers that participated in the Career Exploration Program 2010-2011 requested to participate again during the 2011-2012 school year.

Goal 6: Participants will take part in Barrier to Employment training.

All participants experienced at least one Barrier to Employment training over the year long program. Barrier to Employment Trainings were completed through VTCs and in person while on tours or in classes.

Each of the VTC sessions included a section on Barriers to Employment. For example, the focus of one VTC was the importance of obtaining a Driver's License. During this VTC, _____ from the Yuut Elitnaurviat driving school spoke on how not having a driver's license can be a barrier to employment.

Students who took part in the SISD College and Careers Trip, Iisagvik Career Camp, and RAHI participated in Barrier to Employment Training. The in person Barrier to Employment Training that occurred throughout the year includes:

- SISD College and Career Trip: students participated in a Wells Fargo Tour where they experienced a Barrier to Employment training.
- Iisagvik Career Camp: the guest instructors who represented universities or academic opportunities spoke to students about barriers to acceptance, while the other guest instructors who represented professionals in high demand jobs, spoke about the barriers to employment in their specific field. Students participated in a tour of the Barrow Utilities and Electric Co-Op Inc. (BUECI). While at BUECI student were given a tour of the facilities, Barrier to Employment Training, and a rundown of the different job opportunities available.
- RAHI program: students learned about barriers of acceptance and actions that could get one expelled from UAF.

B. Performance Outcomes & Demographic Data: Please enter the number participants that completed the corresponding objectives. Also, attach an updated participant list.

	Goals/Objectives	Target Number of Participants	Number of Participants Completed	Documentation
1	Participants will take part in state education aligned curriculum.	100	90	Participant attendance roster.
2	Participants will take part in resume writing and interview skills building activities.	100	90	Copies of resumes and interview results maintained in participant files.
3	Participants will complete a job shadow event.	100	65	Participant records documenting job shadow experiences.
4	Participants will complete assessment and evaluation worksheet.	100	90	Copies of assessment and evaluation worksheets should be maintained in the participant files.
5	On-site teachers will complete assessment and evaluation worksheet.	100	90	Copies of assessment and evaluation worksheets should be maintained in the participant files.
6	Participants will take part in Barrier to Employment training.	100	90	Participant attendance roster.

B. Timeline of Grant Activities:

Did the grant progress as planned? If not, explain the causes and outcomes.

We were faced with many challenges during the progression of this grant. Our main struggle was reaching our target number of participants and providing job shadow events for each of them. This was due to a couple of factors:

1. Logistically it was very challenging to meet the needs of the classrooms we were working with. School and classroom schedules prevented more teachers and students from joining in the VTC sessions that we provided.
2. All of the schools worked with are located in communities with very few local job shadow opportunities. The logistical challenges of organizing job shadow experiences outside of the students' home communities prevented us from creating job shadow events for all of our participants.

Because of the challenges mentioned above, Avant-Garde began to form partnerships during the 2nd quarter. Through our partnerships with SISD, Ilisagvik, and UAF, we were able to come closer to reaching our target goals by giving 65 students opportunities to experience job shadow events and 90 students exposure to other career building content and skills.

Another challenge that prevented grant progress from moving forward as planned was that a partnership with the Alaska Summer Research Academy (ASRA) was not actualized for reasons beyond our control. Had we been able to support and participate in ASRA we would have reached all of our target numbers.

We had planned on launching our Moodle site during the 4th quarter, but realized that a Moodle site was not what the participants wanted or needed. Lots of time and work was put into development of the Moodle site, but in the end we found that Constant Contact was a great replacement for Moodle that met our participant needs. Through Constant Contact we tracked usage, sent live links, and sent several surveys. Constant Contact was a more user friendly way to get a lot of the same tasks accomplished. We decided that creating and hosting a Moodle site would take too much time and funding to fully develop.

We recently submitted an extension and budget revision for this grant. The extra time allowed for us to participate in the summer programs mentioned above. The budget revision will allowed us to expand outreach and support content that we once thought we would be providing.

- Were you able to complete the project within the budget? If not, explain the causes and outcomes.

We were able to complete the project within the budget.

D. Success Stories and Photographs:

During the last year, the Career Explorations Program and its participants experienced several great successes.

1. Throughout the year we supported students' understanding of the careers that exist and how to prepare for them. Part of this process included building e-portfolios on AKCIS. Over 50% of our participants created an e portfolio on AKCIS and began to build their personal information in the system. By building a personal portfolio on AKCIS, students can track their education; custom search information on colleges, universities, technical schools, etc; find occupations; and search for scholarships, grants, and loans. They can also save references, write resumes, save writing samples and documents; and take/save personal assessment tests. Information and e portfolios on AKCIS can be saved indefinitely and accessed from anywhere, as long as there is an internet connection. Avant-Garde is supporting our participants in the journey of becoming life-long learners by exposing them to a free tool that can travel with them throughout their post-secondary school and/or into their career. Learning how to effectively and efficiently use AKCIS as a tool is a great success.
2. All of our participating teachers used state education aligned curriculum that we prepared. Our overarching goal is to support teachers and students. By designing lesson plans that are useful to teachers and meet state education curriculum, we met one of our goals.
3. Job Shadows- we were able to send 72% of our participants on Job Shadow Events. All of the schools we worked with are located in communities with very few local job shadow opportunities. Through developing partnerships with SISD, Ilisagvik, and RAHI we were able to work out the challenges that were preventing job shadows from becoming an actuality.
 - a. During the Southeast Island School District College and Career trip we were able to support 11 students to experience job shadows, Barrier to Employment Training, and travel outside of their home community. As a result of this experience:
 - i. Two students applied to and got accepted at Job Corps;
 - ii. Two seniors applied to UAA this year; and
 - iii. One senior applied to UAF this year.
 - b. During the Career Camp at Ilisagvik College, 8 students participated in activities that simulated what it would be like to have a career in various fields of science. They were busy from 8:30 am until 8:00 pm investigating STEM careers and participating in field trips and seminars. Each day student would spend with an expert in a new field. During this time students would learn what it would be like to have a career in that specific field. This experience served as a job shadow and is only one of the many great learning experiences these students participated in.
 - c. Many students plan for academic careers after high school, the RAHI program helps prepare these students for their next steps. RAHI is a seven week program and participating students sleep in dorms, eat at school cafeterias, attend classes all day, and get a taste for what college life is going to be like. This experience

served as a job shadow for 46 participating students who are serious about an academic career, rather than a workforce career, directly after high school.