

Diversity Works

Office of University Partnerships

Minority-Serving Institutions Developing Partnerships, Building Communities

VOL. 7, ISSUE 1

Building Roads to Learning and Expanding Economic Opportunities: The University of Alaska Fairbanks, Bristol Bay Campus

Meeting the Demand and Bridging the Distance

Located more than 800 miles from the University of Alaska Fairbanks' main campus, the Bristol Bay (UAF-BBC) Campus serves students over a 55,000-square-mile area—roughly the size of Ohio. Home to one of the richest red salmon fisheries in the world, the economy and infrastructure of this region of Alaska create many unique challenges. There are no roads connecting the region's 32 villages, for example, and there are no interregional roads between Bristol Bay and the rest of the state. Travel among villages is possible only by snow machine, boat, or small plane. Employment is mostly seasonal and primarily related to the fishing industry.



The training programs offered through the Bristol Bay Campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks have increased employment and housing opportunities for Bristol Bay's inhabitants.

To overcome obstacles to residents' ability to obtain a higher education and earn a livable wage, UAF-BBC used its 2005 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian Institutions Assisting Communities (AN/NHIAC) grant to extend its rural human service program, which combines distance learning and intensive weeklong on-campus trainings.

"Because the villages in our region have a demand for trained counselors, we wanted to make it easier for people to receive the necessary training," said UAF-BBC Director Deborah McLean. "With the AN/NHIAC grant, we hired a full-time coordinator at the Bristol Bay Campus who taught the intensive sessions and coordinated off-campus sessions that were held at various locations and villages in the region. At the sessions held in the villages, village elders taught the students traditional counseling methods."

The program works with other rural campuses to provide culturally appropriate training in crisis intervention, suicide prevention, community development, and counseling in mental health, substance abuse, interpersonal violence, grief, and healing. The program allows students, many of who are already employed as human service providers, to develop their skills and credentials.

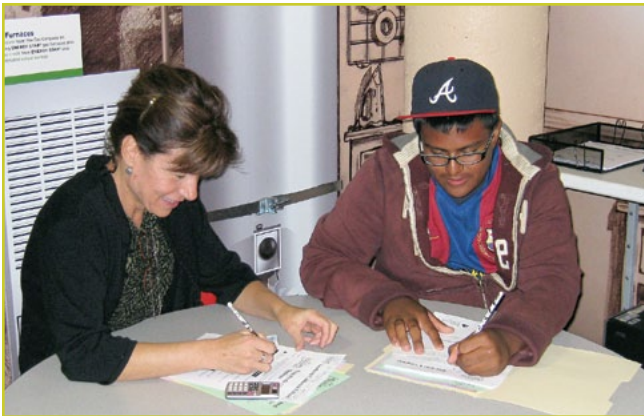
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Putting Money Management in Focus for a Community: Los Angeles Valley College

The Money-Management Awareness Program (Valley MAP)

The positive life changes that accompany financial literacy are immeasurable. At its most basic, financial management literacy can mean something as simple as smoother personal accounting. “I can now manage my budget in a better way,” said Anastacio Diaz, a graduate of Los Angeles Valley College’s (LAVC) Money-Management Awareness Program (Valley MAP). And it can go further by fostering financial stability, increasing homeownership, and developing, stabilizing, and strengthening small business ownership and entrepreneurship.



The Money-Management Awareness Program at Los Angeles Valley College has helped many program participants increase financial stability, secure homeownership, and develop small business plans.

Valley MAP, through its U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Hispanic-Serving Institutions Assisting Communities (HSIAC) grant, targets low-income individuals in California’s northeast San Fernando Valley, with a special focus on minorities and persons with limited English proficiency. Through this grant:

- 372 individuals received financial literacy training.
- 104 individuals received additional training in homeownership.
- 241 people received additional training in small business entrepreneurship.
- 48 individuals created new business plans.
- 272 people attended computer trainings on budget spreadsheets.
- 500 youth at the Youth Policy Institute received an adapted shortened version of Money Smart, a financial education program of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).

- 25 developmentally disabled adults at Tierra del Sol received basic financial literacy training in an adapted shortened version of the Money Smart curriculum.
- 40 homeless individuals at L.A. Family Housing received an adapted shortened version of the Money Smart curriculum to meet a homeless shelter program requirement that would enable them to move out of a temporary shelter, manage their own budgets, grow a savings account, develop a future financial plan, and access permanent housing.

Nine Weeks Equals a Lifetime of Financial Readiness

Valley MAP runs for approximately 9 weeks and combines theory with hands-on application in basic financial management literacy. After coursework in budgeting, credit, home and business ownership, investing, predatory lending, and other related personal finance subjects, Valley MAP students take 9 hours of homeownership schooling or receive hands-on entrepreneurship experience at the Junior Achievement Finance Park, an interactive environment where students are able to apply their knowledge of financial literacy. Students are assigned an identity and profile for use at the park and must develop a family budget within their annual income. Mandatory budget items include rent, transportation, utilities, living expenses, and education.

Responses to the program have been extremely positive. Said LAVC Dean of Economic Development Deborah diCesare, “By developing partnerships with Junior Achievement, FDIC, and the City of Los Angeles, LAVC was able to create a multifaceted program geared in financial literacy.”



A participant in the financial management and literacy course offered through LAVC’s Money-Management Awareness Program develops a family budget.

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A Study in Creative Community Partnerships: Kapi'olani Community College

Commitment Despite Challenge

Something unexpected happened in 2000 while Kapi'olani Community College (KCC) in Honolulu, Hawaii, was establishing a technology center for young residents of public housing. The money ran out—practically overnight.

The technology center was designed to raise computer literacy among elementary and high school students at Palolo Homes, Hawaii's largest public housing community. The project had been funded by a 3-year "Making a Civic Connection" grant from Campus Compact and MCI WorldCom. But when MCI WorldCom declared bankruptcy during the grant's second year, KCC and its partners at Palolo Homes found themselves with a fledgling technology center and no budget. Walking away from the project was not an option, said KCC English Professor Judith Kirkpatrick. Instead, the partners decided to get creative.

First, KCC equipped the technology center with 18 older model computers that were no longer needed on campus. Then, Kirkpatrick amassed a collection of donated spare parts so her team of service-learning students could fix the computers when they broke, which happened frequently. Finally, the partnership depended on service-learning students and resident volunteers to open the lab and supervise the young people who used it.

Despite a total lack of funds, the technology center flourished. In the process, KCC earned the trust of Palolo Homes residents and developed a working relationship with the Mutual Housing Association of Hawaii, the community's owner. The partnership also convinced other funders that the technology center filled a critical need and deserved additional resources. "Our residents already had seen organizations leave the community if there was no funding," said Dahlia Asuega, a longtime community resident and Mutual Housing's resident services manager. "But KCC was committed to running the center whether there was money or not. That made our relationship more of a friendship than a partnership."

Strong Partnerships Equal Success

KCC's dedication to Palolo Homes was abundantly clear in 2008 when it used funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian Institutions Assisting Communities (AN/NHIAC) program to open a state-of-the-art technology center on the second floor of the community's 51-year-old administration building. The 4,400-square-foot Palolo Learning Center bears little resemblance to the small technology lab that KCC struggled to keep open in 2000.

For one thing, the new center has 45 new desktop computers and 20 wireless laptops. It also features a sound and video editing room, a public health nurse's station, a reading room, a demonstration kitchen, and ample space to hold special classes. KCC plans to use the center to sponsor a variety of programs requested by residents, including English-language classes for adults, job training for certified nursing assistants, college preparatory courses, computer literacy classes, and a creativity academy where young people will learn animation. "For us it is not just a learning center," said Asuega. "It is an opportunity to succeed."



Kapi'olani Community College students helped to design and will assist in staffing the Palolo Homes new technology learning center that sponsors a variety of educational and training programs requested by the housing residents.

A Clear and Positive Impact

When KCC partnered with Palolo Homes a decade ago, its initial goal was to provide computers and computer literacy programs to a diverse community that includes Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and recent immigrants from Samoa, Tonga, and Micronesia. Before long, however, KCC and Mutual Housing were collaborating to create an educational pipeline that has already sent 52 residents to college. Asuega explained that before the partnership began, college was not an option that most residents considered possible.

Service-learning students have been critical to helping the college create that pipeline. Approximately 150 undergraduates from KCC, the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and Chaminade University of Honolulu tutor students at the public schools that Palolo Homes youth attend. The tutors have enjoyed measurable success at Palolo Elementary School, which was forced into a No Child Left Behind restructuring process 4 years ago due to poor test scores. That restructuring ended in 2008 when

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Changing the Lives of Children and Adults Through Education and Partnerships: Chief Dull Knife College

Taking Decisive Action

Until recently, the demographics of its student population and its geographic location presented a serious challenge to Chief Dull Knife College (CDKC) in Lama, Montana. “Eighty percent of our student body is made up of parents, and many of them are single parents,” said William Wertman, vice president of administration at CDKC, located on the Northern Cheyenne reservation in southeastern Montana. Adding to the challenges, as Wertman explained, the 2-year college is 20 miles from the nearest childcare provider and a 90-minute drive from the closest midsized city.

Worried that parents with no access to childcare would be forced to drop out of school, CDKC acted decisively to keep its students engaged in their postsecondary education. Using funds from its U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Tribal Colleges and Universities Program (TCUP) grant and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Community Facilities Grant Program, the college built an early childhood learning center (ECLC), which opened in 2007. The ECLC more than doubled the size of the college’s original daycare center built in the 1960s, and, in the process, the center helped the college meet several important institutional goals.

A Model in University Partnerships

First, the ECLC’s unique design process allowed CDKC students to interact with professors and students from some of the country’s leading universities, thanks to an initiative organized by the American Indian Housing Initiative (AIHI). AIHI represents a partnership among CDKC, Pennsylvania State University, the University of Washington, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison to introduce green-building technologies and community-based planning to Native American reservations. Faculty and students from the participating universities worked

together over 2 years to design and build the ECLC so that it complemented the cultural heritage of the Northern Cheyenne, while also honoring the environment and saving money.

“Our students are longing for this kind of practical experience,” said David Riley, associate professor of architectural engineering at Penn State. Riley, who served as the ECLC’s design and construction manager, brought 50 engineering students to Montana to gather data and plan for the new daycare center.

Green by Design

To ensure that the ECLC met the needs of the community, faculty and students held community design workshops and used landscaping projects to connect Cheyenne youth and elders with college students. These interactions helped students learn how to incorporate the needs of end-users into a building’s design. Ultimately, student-collected data persuaded the college to change the location of the ECLC so it would accommodate parents’ need for convenience in picking up and dropping off their children. Community input also led students to include two mosaics, which highlight the colors and language of the Cheyenne, in the building’s design.

In addition to broadening the horizons of all participating students, and bringing outside expertise to campus, the planning process also gave the ECLC an energy-efficient design that reduced construction costs and continues to keep the college’s utility bills under control. “We expect to save 60 to 65 percent on our utility costs,” said Wertman.

The energy savings come from straw bales, which form the structure of the 4,800-square-foot facility. The bales provide excellent thermal insulation from Montana temperatures, which range from -10 degrees Fahrenheit in winter to 105 degrees Fahrenheit in summer. In addition,

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the eco-friendly building blocks are weatherproof, fire-resistant, pest-free, and soundproof—all desirable features for a daycare center. At \$2 to \$4 a piece, the bales are less expensive than other building materials. Construction costs are further reduced because straw-bale buildings are easy for volunteer and unskilled laborers to assemble.

A Demonstrated Result

Since 2000, AIHI has constructed seven buildings on the Northern Cheyenne reservation, four of which are on the Chief Dull Knife campus. The ECLC is the largest. “The whole experience has been a win-win,” said Wertman. “During the exchange, our students and theirs also learn about each other’s cultures.”

While the cultural exchange and the cost savings associated with the new center have been important, the real winners are parents like Sunshine Curlee, a working mother and college employee who is pursuing an associate’s degree from CDKC and a bachelor’s degree in science from Montana State University. Curlee is delighted with the ECLC’s facilities and the individual attention that her 10-month-old daughter, Araya, receives there.

“She’s adjusted so well,” said Curlee, who expects to finish her second associate’s degree next spring. “Araya is ordinarily so clingy. It’s been a surprise to discover she’s become a little socialite.”

Training and Partnerships Build Better Housing

Geography creates unique challenges for Alaska’s housing industry as well. It is extremely expensive for private individuals to build their own homes in the Bristol Bay region, and most private housing construction is undertaken by the Bristol Bay Housing Authority. Until 1992, the housing authority used prefabricated houses imported from Seattle. Convinced that it could build homes of better quality and at less expense with local labor, the authority began doing its own construction in 1993, establishing partnerships with UAF-BBC and the Alaska Works Partnership, an association of labor unions, to train locals in construction.

Instruction takes place at the main campus in Dillingham and at the Southwest Alaska Vocational Education Center (SAVEC), a renovated building located at the U.S. Air Force base in King Salmon, at the north end of the Aleutian Peninsula. SAVEC is equipped with classrooms and dormitories, since most trainees must live in King Salmon while training is in session. UAF-BBC uses its AN/NHIAC grant to pay student travel costs and help with tuition.

According to McLean, the campus has trained more than 570 students, many in King Salmon, with help from the campus’s first AN/NHIAC grant.

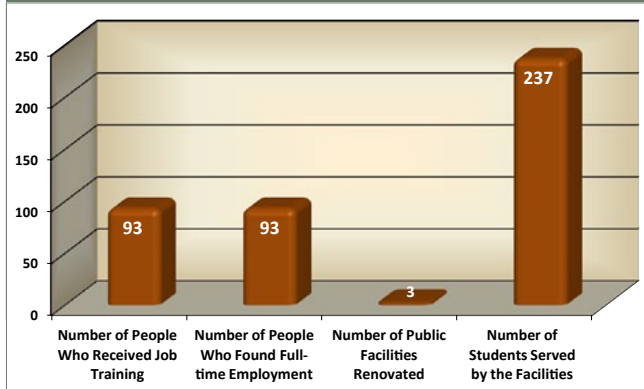
The project helps more Alaskans obtain their union cards and qualify for construction jobs that, in past years, have gone to workers imported from other states. In addition, more than 300 students have received onsite village-based construction trades training and offsite training for villages in Bristol Bay, exceeding the program’s projected forecasts to serve 188 participants. UAF-BBC also offers courses in construction and a student practicum course, and many of the students completing these courses enroll in a paid internship program.

Leading the Way in Measurable Results

UAF-BBC has served 169 participants in onsite village-based computer training. The computer classes also enhance the sustainability of communities by expanding economic opportunities for the small rural villages of Bristol Bay. Furthermore, Bristol Bay residents have received training to become building maintenance technicians. To date, 13 students have been trained in building maintenance and weatherization. All 13 students were employed by the Bristol Bay Housing Authority to perform weatherization activities for HUD homes in the region.

Through its various partnerships—including those with local school districts, municipalities, village councils, local businesses, and community-based organizations—UAF-BBC has become a leader in offering vocational and academic education and lifelong learning to the region’s youth and adults, providing them with opportunities for furthering academic learning and building employment skills. (See Figure 1.) Each year, UAF-BBC serves more than 1,000 students, including a high percentage of males, Alaska Natives, and area high school students.

Figure 1: Achievements of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Bristol Bay Campus Grant



Improving Literacy Scores and Lives for Nashville Children: Tennessee State University

A Partnership Plan for Achievement

“One Child at a Time...” It’s a phrase that has become more cliché than action-oriented. But for the faculty and students at the Tennessee State University (TSU) College of Education and Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement, those words have become a springboard for reducing the gap in reading achievement and improving the services offered to the residents of North Nashville.

Together with Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), TSU is raising the literacy achievement of area students by establishing reading clinics in urban schools. The purpose of the reading clinics is twofold: provide intervention for at-risk readers and offer college students in the education field an opportunity to develop and refine their talents and skills as instructors. Since the inception of the clinics in 2007, more than 900 students in grades K–12 have received weekly help with reading.



Dr. Tammy Lipsey offers teaching guidance to a TSU tutor working with a McKissack elementary school student.

According to Ginger Hausser, director of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) grant, “the HUD funds served as seed money to grow a pilot project into a vast initiative helping hundreds of kids improve their literacy skills.” When clinic participants were asked, 98 percent said that they enjoy coming to the reading clinic, 95 percent like reading with their TSU tutor, and 91 percent believe they have improved as readers.

“We saw that kids weren’t succeeding in school, because of a lack of reading and literacy skills,” said Deena Sue Fuller, director of TSU’s Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement. “Putting university and grant resources

behind raising student literacy has helped hundreds of kids become more successful in school and provided an invaluable experience for college students who want to become teachers.”

Fuller, former Chair of TSU’s Teaching and Learning Department Ronald Groseclose, TSU Assistant Professor Tammy Lipsey, Ginger Hausser, and other TSU faculty members began by meeting with Sharon Braden, then principal of McKissack Professional Development School, who welcomed the opportunity to provide her students with individualized tutoring using research-based instructional strategies. Braden agreed to dedicate space at her school for a reading clinic and to assign a staff liaison to work directly with TSU. She promised that teachers at McKissack would work with TSU faculty to refer students to the clinic, review the program’s reading education techniques, and discuss the children’s progress with TSU tutors. Then, they approached MNPS.

Demonstrated and Measurable Results

“It was a win-win situation for us, so we said yes,” said Gary Cowan, MNPS executive director of instruction for middle schools. “We agreed to identify school sites, provide materials, and provide an individualized reading inventory of students so Lipsey and her team could identify their reading levels.”

The team developed plans for a one-semester reading clinic pilot at McKissack, as well as long-range plans for expanding reading clinics to two or three additional Nashville schools every year.

Forty McKissack students participated in the 13-week pilot reading clinic, and, by the end of the clinic’s first semester, all 40 made reading gains and were well on their way to reaching their grade-level reading goals. At a second clinic in 2008, all of the students showed reading gains. A third clinic that fall also showed improved reading scores. In addition, rising reading levels helped the school to meet No Child Left Behind academic performance requirements. The percentage of McKissack students who were proficient in reading increased from 81 percent in 2007 to 87 percent in 2008.

Every program partner, including the university, the school district, and, most importantly, the students, have reaped multiple benefits from the reading clinics. Over the past 4 years, 96 percent of the children who received tutoring have made gains ranging from one to three reading levels. Principals report that student self-confidence, attitudes

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about learning, and self-esteem have improved. Individual MNPS schools participating in the clinics are pleased to see improved end-of-year test scores, to participate in reciprocal relationships with area colleges, and to have access to effective curricular resources and intervention strategies.

“The reading clinics are serving and helping a range of our students,” said Cowan. “It’s particularly advantageous that our students are working with college students, who are closer in age to them and who take an interest in them. They know that these college students are invested in helping them make major strides in their reading and writing.”

“I had the opportunity to watch many children in the clinic develop relationships with their tutors and develop a love for reading,” said tutor Chris Falvey. “I have also had the opportunity to apply lessons that I learned while working in the clinic to my first-grade class. I have students increasing two reading levels in 2 weeks, and the behavioral gains are even more impressive. I hope that in the future all schools are able to have their own clinics and all students will be able to receive such benefits.”



A McKissack student and his Tennessee State University tutor read together at the McKissack reading clinic, an initiative that has helped many kids improve their reading skills.



A Metropolitan Nashville Public School student and her tutor work on sounds at a white board, an educational technique that helps to reinforce reading skills.

A Replica for Success

Indeed, the program and its partners continue to expand. Today, there are 13 MNPS reading clinics, and plans are underway to establish a reading clinic in all Title I schools in the district. Under Dr. Lipsey’s leadership, the partnership now has students from Belmont University, Lipscomb University, TSU, and Vanderbilt University providing more than 800 tutors and more than 6,000 hours of tutoring to date. The YMCA and other community-based organizations have also demonstrated their dedication to what is now the Tennessee Literacy Partnership. The outcome? “This is no longer just a one-university project,” said Lipsey. “It’s now a community project.”

Broad-based Partnerships Achieving Common Community Goals

LAVC’s partnership with the Alliance for Economic Inclusion—FDIC’s national initiative to establish broad-based coalitions of financial institutions, community-based organizations, and other partners—helps bring all unbanked and underserved populations in the service area into the financial mainstream. FDIC’s goal is to provide an alternative to high-cost and often predatory financial products for low- and moderate-income individuals

and families. Locally, this partnership is made up of banks, credit unions, community development agencies, the local HUD office, and LAVC, which serves as the financial training component of the partnership. Junior Achievement Finance Park is a hands-on experience that primarily helps young people to recognize their responsibility to attain financial self-sufficiency. However, through its HUD grant, LAVC is able to allow access to this park by adults that need the same hands-on experience in a non-threatening environment.

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the percentage of students reading at a third-grade reading level rose from 13 to 56 percent. "We played a part in that improvement," said Robert W. Franco, KCC's director of planning, grants, and civic engagement.

College students are also making a difference at Palolo Homes. Kirkpatrick and a core group of technology-savvy KCC students helped design and equip the new learning center and will help ensure that it operates smoothly. Another group of undergraduates will continue to staff

the center, interacting with young residents and showing them, by example, that attending college is an achievable and worthwhile goal.

"Public housing communities in Honolulu often are the places where immigrants first arrive in Hawaii from the Pacific Islands and Asia," said Franco. "We are trying to make sure that communities like Palolo Homes are not dead ends for these residents. Instead, we want to make these communities launching pads to higher education."



Students from Kapi'olani Community College and other area higher education institutions tutor Palolo Homes youth and have assisted in helping local elementary school students improve reading scores. Older residents benefit from computer education and other life skills courses.

HUD's Office of University Partnerships (OUP) provides grants to institutions of higher education to assist them and their partners with the implementation of a broad range of community development activities, including neighborhood revitalization, housing, and economic development. This newsletter, *Diversity Works*, highlights the efforts of grantees in OUP's Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions Assisting Communities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian Institutions Assisting Communities grant programs and includes a variety of interesting projects, compelling grantee profiles, and other valuable resources for minority-serving institutions.