



**Delegates to the
2012 Conference of Young Alaskans (COYA)**

The NORTH is the Future—Our Place in Alaska; Alaska's Place in the World

COYA's Mission

The mission of the Conference of Young Alaskans is to connect young Alaskans to a rich history, a vibrant present and a thriving future.

The principles of coordination are:

- Fairness in representation
- Diversity of perspectives
- Commitment to one another and the state
- Value in sharing, dialogue and trust
- Nurturing relationships

"My appreciation for the state and its diversity and uniqueness increased 10 fold. I have re-found a sense of pride, wonder, and home that Alaska has come to mean to me."

Goals

- Develop an overall vision statement, goals and proposed courses of action in five issue areas.
- Put aside differences to work together for the common good.
- Recreate the atmosphere of unity and cooperation that marked the struggle for statehood.
- Teach young Alaskans the many aspects of our history that together shape our future
- Meet current leaders and receive a primer on current issues and, together, articulate a path for Alaska's future.

"COYA taught me important leadership skills...and most importantly, how to respect the different kinds of backgrounds from where people come from."

The Process

- Representing 28 communities across Alaska, 55 young leaders between the ages of 16-25 deliberated on the five topics that they identified as the priority areas for 2012 COYA.
 - Economic Resilience and Fiscal Policy
 - Education and Workforce Development
 - Energy and Power
 - Ilakuyulluta – Living Harmoniously
 - Natural Resources and the Environment
- Framed by historic and current lesson the delegates applied knowledge and creativity to visions, goals, and proposed actions for the state and its people. We produced a final document outlining the proposed solutions to issues facing Alaska.

"I have realized that if we remain uneducated about our government, young Alaskans will not have as much of a say in our home's future."

A Shared Understanding

- Subject-specific resource materials were provided to all delegates before the conference.
- Prior to deliberations, learning sessions gave delegates the opportunity to interact with subject matter experts and to explore a variety of issues.
- In addition to the final report, delegates developed respect for Alaska's past and present leaders, discovered insights into the challenges facing the diverse regions of Alaska and found inspiration for making a positive difference in our State's future.

"I have fully realized Alaska's full potential to be a global leader—we have the resources, the power, and the people to achieve this and should strive to do so."

Outcomes

- After reading the resource materials and participating in COYA 2012, delegates feel more knowledgeable about:

Alaska history	89%	
Personal role in the state		93%
Local, state and federal governance	82%	
Alaska's international role		89%

- 95% of post-conference survey respondents plan to vote in the future (the other 5% were unanswered, not 'no')
- Of those who indicated they *did not* vote prior to the conference, 87.5% of those eligible to vote, plan to do so in the future. That is a **70% increase in voting intention after attending the conference.**

"I feel more empowered than ever and now I've made incredible connections with other very engaged people. I feel very optimistic about my ability to make a difference in Alaska."

Outcomes

- Of those who responded, they feel **more empowered** to make a difference at:

local level		100%
state level		100%
national level	78%	
international level	76%	

- 71% of respondents are considering influencing state policymaking by seeking office.

"I'm connected to and believe in my peers, dynamic change makers committed to Alaska. The conference broadened my understanding about Alaska's role in the world on countless levels."

FINAL REPORT:

Vision Statements

Goals

Action Items – Near and Long Term

"I feel like Alaska has invested in me so I should invest some of my professional life in Alaska. Through experiences like this I can see the important role my generation will play in Alaska's future."

2012 Conference of Young Alaskans



Economic Resilience and Fiscal Policy

We envision an Alaska that maintains a diverse and sustainable economy through the responsible development of Alaska's vast and unique resource potential, for the maximum benefit to all Alaskans.

Goals *(approved, in priority order, by 95%)*

- Support diverse economies that sustain our cultures and unique state
- Find a balance between production and conservation, yielding economic sustainability
- Increase investment in Arctic infrastructure
- Foster small business growth and entrepreneurship in Alaska
- Promote Alaska's brand and tourism potential

"Seeing the diversity of our state's people and cultures really re-emphasized the feeling of our state's exceptionalism"

Economic Resilience and Fiscal Policy

Action Items (Near Term)

- Invest from the current budget surplus in educational programs that will achieve economic development (i.e. STEM, fisheries, business, vocational). (100)
- Encourage competition among electricity and internet providers to decrease cost and increase high speed internet availability in rural Alaska. (98)
- Except for slight modifications based on research and knowledge, Alaska should maintain its current oil tax structure. (96)
- Create tax incentives and regulations that encourage safe and responsible in-state manufacturing. (98)
- Promote Alaska hire within the seasonal industries. (98)

“The conference impressed upon me the importance of compromise and collaboration and my role in both.”

Economic Resilience and Fiscal Policy

Action Items (Long Term)

- Work with the Coast Guard, the State government, interested parties, shipping entities, and other stakeholders to build infrastructure to safely utilize Arctic shipping lanes and prepare for inherent risks. (98)
- Provide all Alaskans the knowledge to be financially and economically literate citizens in our unique marketplace (i.e. education, public relations, and community dialogues). (96)
- Increase funding to DOT to create interconnectedness between roadways, waterways, bridges, railroads, airports and other forms of transportation infrastructure. (67)
- Every decade, examine and adapt Alaska's tax policy to remain competitive in the world market. (98)
- Increase investment and encourage development of Alaska's agriculture and farmland for food security (i.e. community gardens, community supported agriculture, incentives). (98)
- Reinstate the state income tax. (69)

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Education & Workforce Development

Alaska's workforce development and education system will foster life-long learning, community engagement, and respect for diversity. Creative approaches to learning will provide equal opportunities to all Alaskans regardless of socioeconomic, geographic, and other barriers.

Goals *(approved, in priority order, by 100%)*

- Educate Alaskan students in ways consistent with their cultural traditions and interests
- Create and expand programs that incentivize and retain quality educators and professionals
- Create community engagement through service-learning and volunteer work
- Ensure all Alaskans have a safe and healthy learning environment
- Expand and diversify class and program offerings across Alaska

"The conference empowered me to play a more active role in my state at the local and state level. I now plan on looking at our foreign policy more closely as well as all of Alaska's diverse issues as they all play a role in the well-being of our state."

Education & Workforce Development

Action Items (Near Term)

- The State of Alaska shall immediately apply for a waiver from No Child Left Behind. (96)
- School districts shall strictly enforce a no-tolerance policy for bullying, including cyber bullying, and increase funding for psychological support for bullies and the bullied. (93)
- The State of Alaska will provide funding for school districts to establish school gardens as a way to promote hands-on learning. (84)
- The State of Alaska shall provide funding support to the Alaska Humanities Forum in order to expand its culturally specific teacher training programs. (95)
- The State of Alaska will provide loan forgiveness for a wider range of high demand jobs and provide guidance and training for the unemployed. (96)
- The State of Alaska and school districts will establish and fund language programs consistent with regions and needs, and install Alaska Native language programs in urban centers. (100)

"I feel more empowered to contribute to Alaska and to achieve the goals we created. In Alaska we are all part of more than just living in the same state. It is such a valuable and rich place that people form a pond to help protect."

Education & Workforce Development

Action Items (Long Term)

- Alaska school districts shall develop curricula that integrate culturally -specific, non-traditional and experiential learning methods into traditional subject areas such as math, biology, and English. (95)
- The state will adequately fund current, and support future, district-run and other programs that provide early childhood education. (96)
- To make Alaska's residents more competitive in the global market, the state will expand funding for vocational training and workforce development in high-demand technical fields. (93)
- The State of Alaska will develop a dynamic, rigorous, challenging and globally competitive set of pre-K through 12 curricula; as well as assess the educational system and provide recognition for teacher excellence. (100)
- The state of Alaska will provide adequate funding to support students with special needs by providing technology resources and trained professionals to ensure their inclusion in the education system. (100)

"I realize it is more important to become involved in the government in order to get your voice and opinion heard."

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Energy & Power

Our state shall lead the world by maximizing the efficient utilization of our energy resources, providing all Alaskans access to safe, affordable, sustainable, and inexhaustible power.

Goals *(approved, in priority order, by 98%)*

- Make energy prices more affordable for all Alaskans
- Maximize efficiency of energy usage
- Work with communities to increase cooperation and utilization of local resources.
- Become global leaders in developing and employing alternative energy sources
- Improve safety and reduce impact on human and environmental health while meeting energy needs

"The conference has changed my feelings about my role in Alaska. The conference has changed my opinion about Alaska's role in the world because now I see that Alaska is in many ways a role model."

Energy & Power

Action Items (Near Term)

- Host an energy conference bringing leaders together from around the state promoting cooperation, resource evaluation and creating energy action plans. (98)
- Create energy incentives that include tax breaks, grants and expand on climate-appropriate housing. (100)
- Create a comprehensive Arctic Oil Spill prevention and relief plan. (98)
- Increase funding for the Renewable Energy Fund (grants) and establish a revolving green fund (loans). (93)
- Support funding and permitting for renewable energy infrastructure, particularly tidal energy products. (95)
- Incentivize investment in renewable energy research and development. (96)

"The conference has made me feel that I can influence Alaska's policy more than I thought."

Energy & Power

Action Items (Long Term)

- Create a strategic energy infrastructure plan that minimizes negative effects on the environment. (98)
- Aggressively reduce reliance on fossil fuels through efficiency and renewable energy products. (95)
- By 2062, have the ability to be reliant on renewable energy sources. (95)
- The State of Alaska will mandate that all utilities will employ net metering at competitive rates. (81)
- Alaska will pursue an in-state natural gas pipeline and create spur lines from any such project to assist in providing affordable energy prices in rural Alaska. (83)

"I have a responsibility to return to Alaska after college in order to not contribute to the brain drain."

2012 Conference of Young Alaskans



Ilakuyulluta - Living Harmoniously

We envision mentally, physically and culturally healthy communities promoted through contextually appropriate education and respectful communication.

Goals *(approved, in priority order, by 96%)*

- Provide access to the education, preventative care, and resources necessary for healthy lifestyles
- Enhance preservation, understanding, acceptance and celebration of diverse cultures and traditions
- Foster healthy families and communities through mentorship and intergenerational communication
- Ensure innovative access and funding to quality healthcare for all Alaska communities
- Reduce rates of domestic violence, sexual assault and abuse, and eliminate “rape culture”
- Encourage communities to utilize the land to improve their health and well-being

“COYA taught me how to get involved with others to discuss things.”

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Action Items (Near Term)

- Educate and increase awareness to eliminate “rape culture” throughout Alaska with 1) training workshops for selected community or regional representatives; 2) awareness campaigns incorporating all media; 3) education of communities; and 4) evaluation processes and workshop re-trainings. (96)
- Repeal Article 1, Section 25 of the Constitution of the State of Alaska. (91)
- Extend comprehensive suicide prevention programs to individuals experiencing struggles, parents, teachers, friends, and communities throughout Alaska. (100)
- Establish a statewide mandate for all inclusive education from kindergarten through 12th grade on age-appropriate fitness, sexual and mental health, eating disorders, suicide prevention, the use and misuse of substances, and other health issues. (95)
- Properly equip a central location in every Alaska community where patients can access telemedicine, traveling practitioners, and emergency care. (95)

“The conference has tilted my decision about where to live in favor of staying in Alaska. I feel more hope for the direction of the state and more appreciation for what makes the state special.”

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Action Items (Long Term)

- Establish an on-call system within Alaska hospitals and the UA system to ensure biannual dental visits for rural communities. (98)
- Create community centers in local schools, which offer affordable services such as health care, banking, training, and recreation to members of the community. (91)
- Professionally educate communities on how to develop their land and encourage the local stores to buy locally. (87)
- Use the model of gifted mentorship in the Anchorage School District to develop inclusive and affordable mentorship and job shadowing programs throughout Alaska. (95)
- Work with the University of Alaska and the State of Alaska to create programs that allow Alaska Native elders without advanced language teaching degrees to teach Alaska Native language and tradition in secondary and post-secondary education. (100)

"I've learned that young Alaskans have a voice in Alaska's future. We can, and should, be proactive in shaping the future of shared resources and a shared state."

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Natural Resources & the Environment

Alaska will establish a land ethic based on maximum sustainable yield that would foster recreational and subsistence opportunity, establish a research base to diversify energy dependence, and ensure ecological stability through extended sustainability plans. Alaska will integrate traditional knowledge and modern science to adapt to climate change, increase food security, and lead the world in renewable resource innovation.

Goals (approved, in priority order, by 96%)

- Alaska will preserve and value traditional Alaska culture and protect subsistence lifestyles
- Alaska will be proactive in climate change adaptation
- Alaska will collaborate with and lead Arctic nations in the responsible development and protection of the Arctic
- Alaska will strive for sustainability through the practice of maximum sustainable yield
- Alaska will responsibly manage collective natural resources by combining traditional and local ecological knowledge and scientific innovation

“The conference has given me a better understanding of my role in Alaska, in particular my role as a rural resident in sharing my experiences with other Alaskans.”

Natural Resources & the Environment

Action Items (Near Term)

- Reinststate the Coastal Zone Management plan and advocate the ratification of Law of the Sea. (91)
- Protect and expand personal use rights to natural resources. (87)
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- Amend Alaska's Constitution to bring State subsistence law into compliance with ANILCA. (98)

"The conference reiterated my faith in my peers. It was hopeful and effective dialogue; very uplifting.

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Action Items (Long Term)

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- Galen Pospisil, co-chair
- Dani Carlson
- Weston Eiler
- Courtney Enright
- Kristine Hildebrand
- Joseph Kelly
- Ottar Mobley
- Sophie Wiepking-Brown
- Theresa Woldstad

Stars of Gold

(friends of COYA and supporters of emerging leaders in Alaska)

- Paul Brown
- Carol Comeau
- Dara Glass
- Ermalee Hickel
- Michael and Karen King
- Megan McBride
- Representative Cathy Munoz
- Gordon Pospisil and Blyth Marston
- Erik OBrien
- Caroline Schultz

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COYA 2012 Sponsors

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University of Alaska Fairbanks	Alaska Airlines
University of Alaska Southeast	Goldbelt Hotel
	Princess Cruises

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ConocoPhillips	First National Bank Alaska
ExxonMobil	GCI
the Foraker Group	Golden Valley Electric Association
Koniag Inc	Information Insights
Sealaska	IBEW 1547
Southeast Conference	NANA Regional Corporation
Strategies 360	Usibelli Foundation
Ukpeagvik Inupiat Corporation	360 North
University of Alaska Fairbanks	Alaska Airlines
University of Alaska Southeast	Goldbelt Hotel
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