Stimulus Grants Fund Youth Employment

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Diana Gish/KMXT

Three federal stimulus grants are benefitting Kodiak youth and assisting some local employers.

The Department of Labor's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Summer Youth Employment Program is putting Kodiak youth to work this summer.

A 200,000 dollar Workforce Investment Act grant is one of three awarded to the school district with an emphasis on promoting academics and employment for youth between the ages of 14 and 24. The Alaska "Youth First" grant, also funded by the Department of Labor, pays 101,000 dollars to help Kodiak youth find jobs and receive training for future careers. The "Youth First" grant connects young job seekers with employers on the island and pays the young workers' wages. Another Workforce Investment grant will provide 150,000 dollars to continue the youth employment program beyond the summer and through the school year. The grants are administered by the Kodiak Island Borough school district. Kodiak High School principal Bill Watkins is the grant manager and helps coordinate the program.

-- (Summer Youth 1 1:03 "...into the classroom next year.")

In total, the program is keeping 47 Kodiak youth employed this summer, including the group of drafting and architect students who are submitting design ideas for the high school. There's also a group of students gaining hands-on maintenance skills and helping with a variety of community service projects.

-- (Summer Youth 2 1:15 "...try to get them hired.")

Along with hands-on experience, some of the participants can now add new credentials to their resumes.

-- (Summer Youth 3 :45 "..that experience was invaluable.")

The Summer Youth Employment Program's benefit to participating local employers is the additional summer labor they might not have otherwise been able to afford.

-- (Summer Youth 4 :10 "...their help and support.")

Watkins is required to file monthly reports on the progress of the youth employment program. He said the Department of Labor issued a clear mandate along with the grants; that the program result in immediate and measureable results.

I'm Diana Gish.

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