

Topic: Funding & Building a Pitch

Summary

Steering committee members focused on the urgent funding challenges impacting healthcare programs, especially amid federal and state budget uncertainties. Members voiced concern about the implications of potential cuts on nursing initiatives and workforce training programs. Emphasis was placed on the importance of state-level support and the need for innovative, sustainable funding models.

The consulting team underscored the value of collective advocacy and coordination among organizations involved in nursing workforce development. Members discussed how aligned communication and educational outreach can strengthen their impact, reduce duplication of efforts, and improve visibility of shared goals.

Discussions also explored strategic approaches for future funding proposals. The consulting team advised that specificity and data-driven justification are critical for successful grant requests, noting the importance of understanding what motivates funders and legislators to support workforce investments. The committee acknowledged that making a compelling business case—grounded in measurable outcomes and shared commitments—is key to securing support.

There was shared concern over the impact of funding volatility on collaboration across Alaska's healthcare system. The committee emphasized that addressing the nursing shortage must include both strengthening local education pipelines and protecting the integrity of existing programs. Members explored alternative funding models and reaffirmed their commitment to a unified, forward-thinking approach to secure the future of nursing in Alaska.

Funding Challenges and Advocacy Efforts

Steering committee members expressed concern about potential federal cuts to programs like the Alaska Area Health Education Centers (AHEC). These cuts threaten longstanding youth pathway programs and other workforce initiatives. University-affiliated members noted limitations in their ability to advocate directly and encouraged innovative strategies to support programs that are less vulnerable to political change.

Insights on Collaboration and Advocacy

The consulting team emphasized the need for greater collaboration and alignment among organizations involved in nursing workforce efforts. Previous conversations revealed a lack of clarity about the range of activities happening across the state, which presents an opportunity for stronger coordination and shared advocacy.

Asset Mapping and Funding Strategy Development

The committee discussed the ongoing development of an asset map to better understand current investments and priorities in nursing across Alaska. The map is intended to support the future Alaska Nursing Workforce Center by identifying gaps, avoiding duplication, and informing

funding decisions. Steering committee members emphasized the importance of building a stable center to coordinate efforts amidst a changing funding landscape.

Funding Landscape for Nursing Workforce Development

The consulting team reported on outreach to entities like the Alaska Workforce Investment Board, which indicated interest in supporting nursing initiatives but needed clearer direction on where to invest. The committee discussed following up to align proposals with available resources.

Leveraging Resources and Volunteer Contributions

Steering committee members emphasized the value of recognizing in-kind contributions—such as volunteer time and organizational support—as critical components of funding proposals. This recognition helps demonstrate the existing commitment and collective investment in the initiative.

Impacts of Funding Cuts on Collaboration and Training

Concerns were raised about how funding losses could weaken partnerships and derail training programs. Steering committee members agreed on the importance of clearly identifying which programs are at risk and communicating this to funders and policymakers.

Legislative Engagement Strategy

The consulting team shared guidance from legislative contacts suggesting a focus on workforce development. Members discussed the possibility of advocating through appropriations amendments and aligning their messaging with legislative priorities.

Vision and Pitch Development

To strengthen external communication, the committee agreed that a clear and compelling pitch for the Alaska Nursing Workforce Center was needed. The consulting team stressed the need for flexible, unrestricted funding and encouraged all members to contribute to this effort by identifying potential funding partners and articulating shared goals.

Operational and Budget Planning

The committee discussed a phased approach to establishing the new center, including the potential hiring of dedicated staff. Conversations included considerations around qualifications, compensation, and the structure needed to support the center's foundational work.

Balancing New Initiatives with Current Realities

Some members expressed concern about launching new initiatives while struggling to maintain existing programs under financial strain. The committee acknowledged these concerns and affirmed the importance of protecting current infrastructure while thoughtfully building new systems.

Addressing the Nursing Shortage

The conversation returned repeatedly to the critical nature of Alaska's nursing shortage. Steering committee members emphasized that a comprehensive solution requires immediate attention, multi-sector collaboration, and strong advocacy for both federal and state funding.

Next Steps

- Develop a concise, data-supported pitch deck for funders and legislators.
- Identify and pursue non-traditional funding sources.
- Quantify volunteer contributions and existing assets.
- Coordinate follow-up conversations with key partners, including state agencies.
- Explore a phased staffing model for the Nursing Workforce Center.
- Continue aligning efforts across institutions to speak with a unified voice.