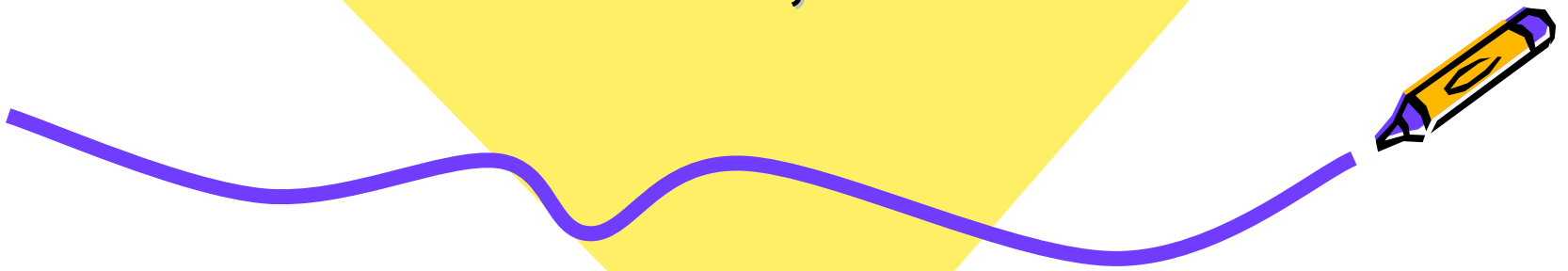




# **ALASKA WORKS INITIATIVE**

**March 30, 2005**



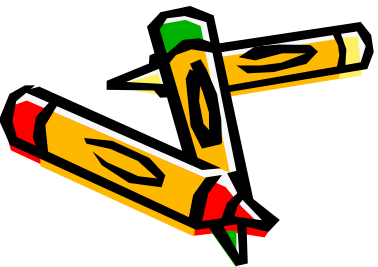
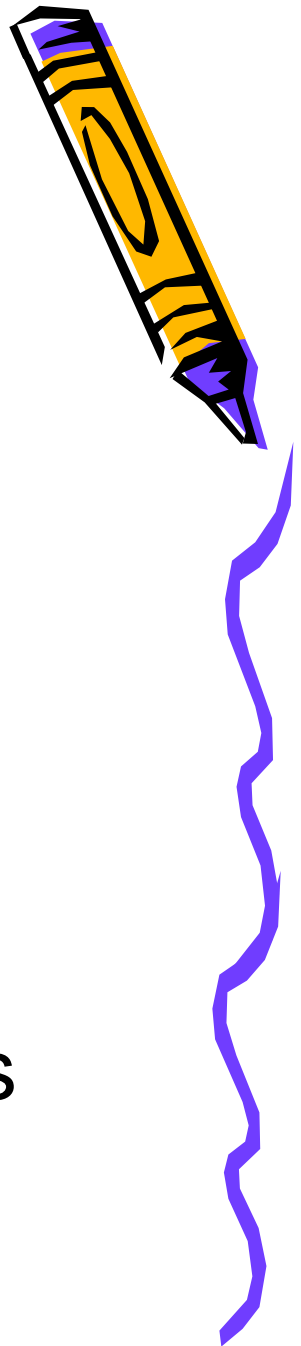
# EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS

- Fear of losing health benefits
- Financial disincentives
- Lack of knowledge/use of existing work incentives
- Lack of holistic vocational services
- Fragmented services
- Limited work opportunities



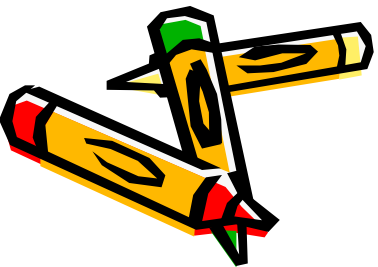
# COMMON SYSTEMS CHANGE FEATURES

- Sustainable, permanent change
  - Policy
  - Performance standards
  - Job descriptions
- Integration of multiple stakeholders
- Long-term outcome oriented
- Time-limited projects/demonstrations



# OVERALL STRATEGIES

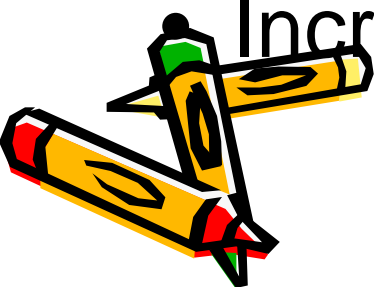
- Take comprehensive approach
- Gather variety of information to prioritize activities
- Work within existing systems, initiatives and partnerships
- Identify and leverage resources to strategically address areas of need
- Build on what's learned



# PHASE I STRATEGIES

- Learn more about barriers
- Develop strategies to remove barriers
- Increase service availability
- Provide training/hands-on TA
- Develop business partnerships/self-employment opportunities

Increase access to health care



# WHAT WE LEARNED

- Driven by federal policy (other than APA policy)
- Generic staff willing to make some changes IF tools/support are available
- Changes proposed benefit ALL job seekers
- Rampant attitudinal barriers/low expectations



# WHAT WORKS

- Benefits analysis and counseling
- Vocational futures planning, informational interviews, job shadowing, on-site assessments and long-term support services
- Self-employment options
- Support from friends and family, positive employer/co-workers attitudes, convenient, accessible transportation



# WHAT'S NEEDED

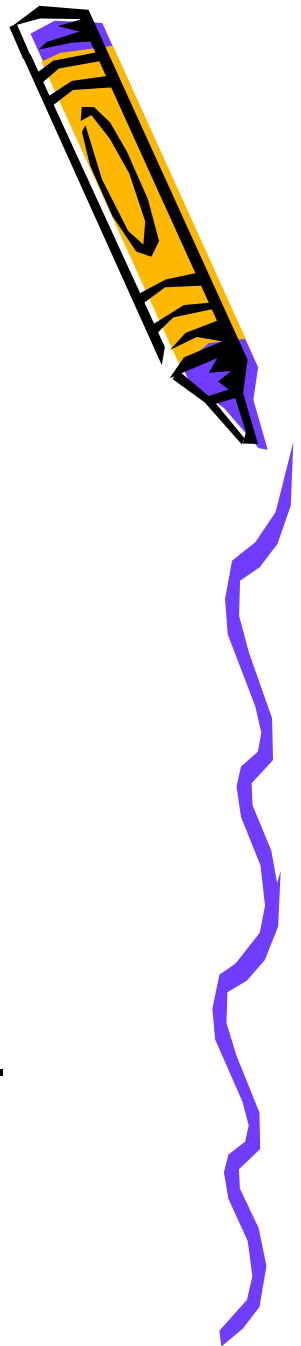
- Early intervention
- Job re-training and skills development
- Consideration of unique needs of sub-populations
- Lots of exposure to the idea of working/high expectations
- Long-term support services
- Outreach and readily accessible information for a variety of audiences





# PHASE II STRATEGIES

- Secure resources to help agencies make changes and build systems capacity
- Develop resource and marketing tools, training curricula and screening tools
- Provide training and technical assistance
- Develop statewide system of benefits counseling
- Identify non-traditional resources for long-term support



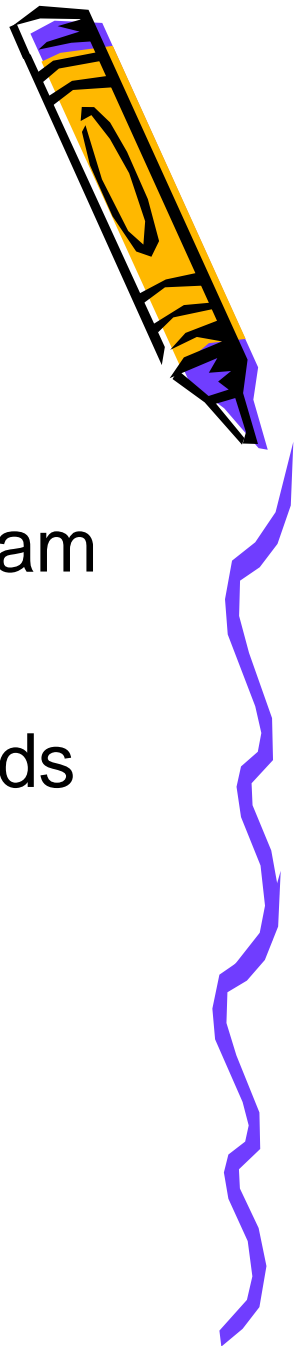
# PHASE III STRATEGIES

- Implement the Ticket program in Alaska
- Make the State of Alaska a model employer
- Implement customized employment services within job centers
- Increase use of non-traditional resources for long-term support
- Provide training on job development for underserved populations



# PHASE III STRATEGIES

- Develop Business Leadership Network
- Develop statewide micro-enterprise program
- Target resources to youth with disabilities
- Develop strategies to better meet the needs of people with severe mental illness and traumatic brain injury



# MAJOR OUTCOMES

- Of the total number of people on SSI, 9% are working compared to 2.8% in 1997
- 89% increase in # of people in 1619(b) status
- 57% of 171 people served by APA WDS are working
- Steady increase in MBI program (221 as of 9/30/05)
- 35 people started/planning their own businesses
- 150+ people employed through BDS activities



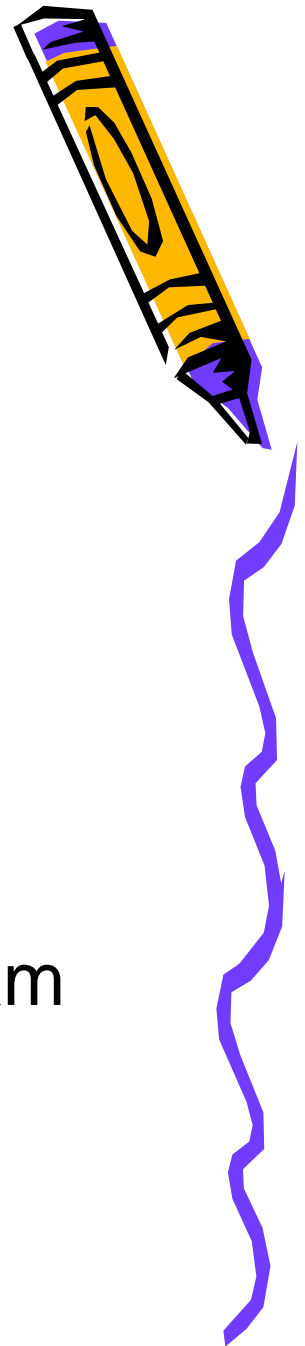
# MAJOR POLICY OUTCOMES

- Statewide benefits counseling program
  - QA process for training, certifying and mentoring benefits counselors
  - DVR benefits counseling policy
- Changes in DVR self-employment policy/goal to increase self-employment
- Establishment of micro-enterprise program
- Changes in DVR assessment process for consumers with significant needs



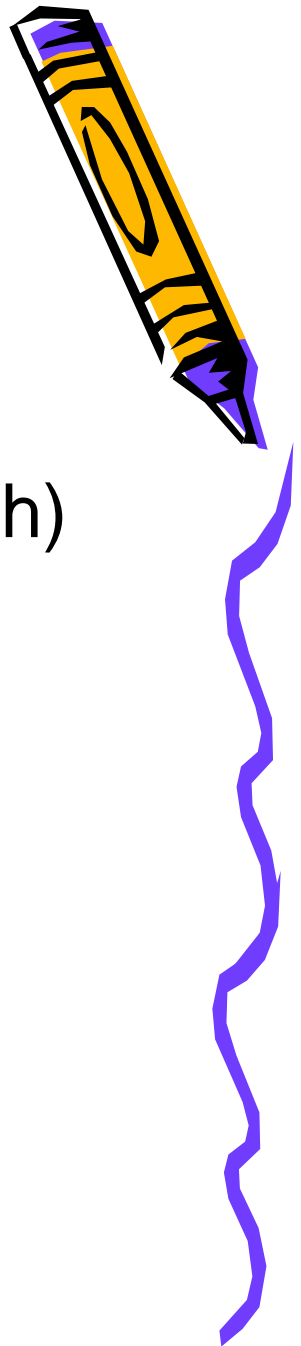
# MAJOR POLICY OUTCOMES

- Establishment of the Alaska Mobility Coalition
- SSA identification of local staff knowledgeable about work incentives
- APA eligibility staff make over 50% of referrals to the Workforce Development Specialists
- Establishment of Alaska's first IDA program and the Assets Building Initiative program



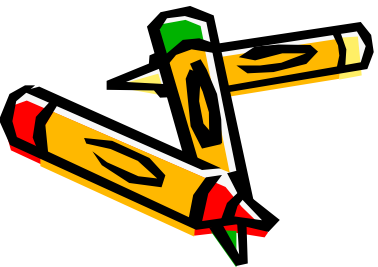
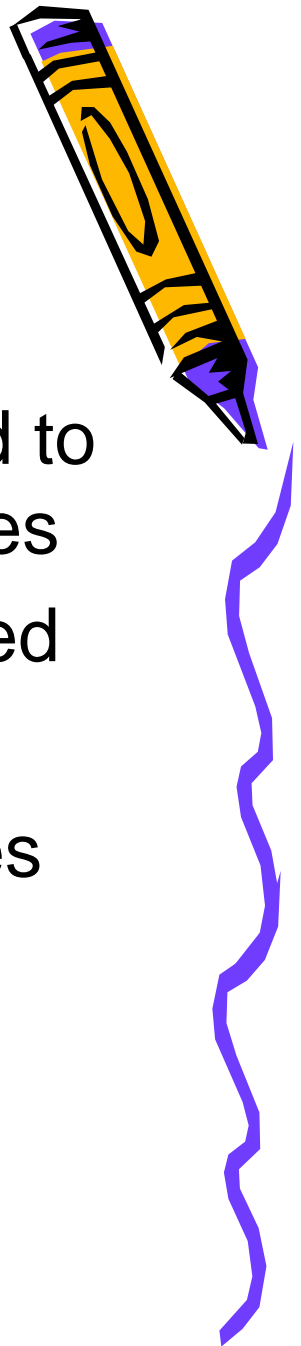
# MAJOR POLICY OUTCOMES

- Request for Proposals for Supported Employment (Division of Behavioral Health)
- Division of Personnel
  - Interviewing/hiring classes
  - Provisional hire/interns
  - Outreach
  - Work First
- Ticket to Work policy (DVR and APA)



# ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

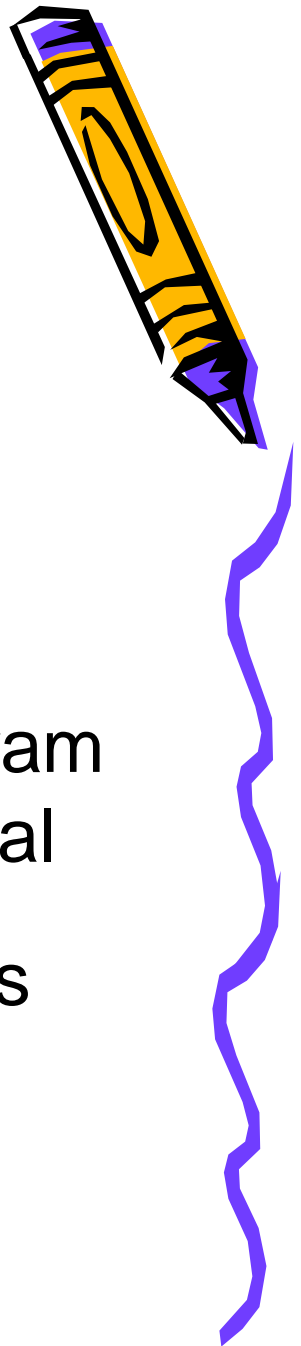
- Work expectations and/or incentives need to be built into existing programs and services
- Resources need to be blended and braided
- Expanded outreach and training is critical
- Linkages to workforce investment activities are tenuous
- Better coordination is needed





# PHASE IV SYSTEMS CHANGE STRATEGIES

- Develop and “shop” new 5-year strategic plan to an expanded audience
- Enhance and provide training and information about employment resources
- Continue to “vocalize” the APA program
- Continue to build the capacity of behavioral health programs to meet the employment needs of people with severe mental illness and/or traumatic brain injury



# PHASE IV SYSTEMS CHANGE STRATEGIES

- Change the Medicaid program to better meet the needs of working people with disabilities
- Increase the use of the Ticket-to-Work program
- Engage employers as partners
- Coordinate and collaborate with disability-specific projects and initiatives
- Coordinate and collaborate with generic projects and initiatives

