

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development**Grants to Municipalities (AS 37.05.315)****Grant Recipient: Fairbanks North Star Borough****Federal Tax ID: 92-6000096****Project Title:****Project Type: Other**

Fairbanks North Star Borough - School District We the People Competition

State Funding Requested: \$46,950**House District: Fairbanks Areawide (1-5)**

Future Funding May Be Requested

Brief Project Description:

Provide travel, meals, housing, materials, and space rental for regional and statewide 'We the People' competition.

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$46,950
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2014 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$46,950)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

*Funding Details:**2012 - \$25,000 -- State of Alaska capital appropriation**2011 -- no federal funds approved, not known until April**2010 - \$59,345 federal appropriation**2008-2009 - \$59,105 federal appropriation each year**2007 - \$36,000 federal appropriation**This national program has been supported by federal funding since 1987.***Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

"We The People" is in the business of building a healthier society by creating engaged citizens.

The program goes far beyond asking students to simply memorize facts. Participants must synthesize solutions to practical questions pertinent to today's society based on a thorough understanding of the Alaska and United States constitutions. Exercises focus on the direct impact and personal importance of our constitutions through use of real-life, local situations and questions.

The hallmark of the We the People program is the design of its K-12 instructional program, including an innovative culminating activity, a mock Congressional hearing where students testify on constitutional issues before a panel of judges

comprised of community leaders.

A growing body of research demonstrates students who participate in "authentic activities," such as mock trials and model civic assemblies, score better on standardized tests and exhibit lifelong democratic behaviors, including regularly voting and participating in civic and social affairs at the community, municipal, state, and national levels.

Students involved in Alaska's program have shown an 82 percent turnout in subsequent elections. Not only are students voting more, they are voting based on a deeper understanding of important issues, the workings of government, and a working knowledge of the founding documents that make up the basis of our society.

However, the program's powerful educational effects extend beyond the polls. Students involved with the program show:

1. Increased Knowledge. Students demonstrate greater understanding of politics and how to participate effectively in the political process;
2. Intellectual skills. Students develop research, analytical, and communication skills;
3. Participatory skills. Students demonstrate a greater capacity to work with others;
4. Productive Attitudes. Students demonstrate a greater commitment to fundamental values and principles of constitutional democracy; and
5. Civic Behavior. Students pay more attention to politics, develop lifelong interests in current events, and collaborate to take active roles in seeking to improve life in their communities.

The We the People program grounds students with a respect for and understanding of the foundations of American democracy, then provides opportunities for participants to testify publicly in authentic situations on state and national constitutional issues. The same questions of the extents of and limits on governmental power the founding fathers grappled with come to life in modern situations.

A panel of experts -- active and retired judges, sitting and former legislators, constitutional attorneys, professors, and teachers -- assesses the students' performance. Past judges include:

- Colonel Thomas Baack, Eielson U.S. Air Force Base
- Alaska District Court Judge Jane Kauvar
- Alaska Senator John Coghill
- Alaska Representative David Guttenberg
- Alaska Representative Scott Kawasaki
- Alaska Representative Chris Tuck
- Former Alaska Representative and University of Alaska Fairbanks Alumni Director Joe Hayes
- Former Alaska Representative Mike Kelly
- Fairbanks North Star Borough Mayor Luke Hopkins
- Former Congressional Aide and FNSB School Board Member Royce Chapman
- Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly Member Van Lawrence
- Former Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly Member Randy Frank
- District Attorney Gayle Garrigues
- Public Defender Marcia Holland
- State Of Alaska School Board Member FNSB School School Board Member Sue Hull
- Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Assistant Superintendent Wayne Gerke
- Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Labor Relations Director Gayle Pierce

- Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Human Relations Director Clarence Bolden
- North Pole High School Social Studies Teacher Patricia Behner
- Fairbanks Daily News-Miner Editor Rod Boyce
- Attorney At Law David Baranow
- Attorney At Law Daniel Callahan
- Attorney At Law Chancy Croft
- Attorney At Law Robert John
- Public Advocate Karla Taylor-Welch
- U. S. Air Force Historian Doug Beckstead
- Alaska State Historian Jo Antonson
- University of Alaska Fairbanks Professor Terrence Cole
- University of Alaska Anchorage Professor Paul Ongtooguk
- University of Alaska Fairbanks Associate Professor Mary Ehrlander
- University of Alaska Anchorage Associate Professor Deb Periman
- Alaska Pacific University Professor Tim Rawson
- Former Assistant to the President, Doyon, Ltd. Tanya Beatus
- Congressional Aide Julie Hasquet
- Congressional Aide Tom Moyer
- Congressional Aide Janelle Perry
- Legislative Aide Meredith Cameron

In order to prepare for sharing this experience with their students, teachers receive training to extend their own content knowledge as well as to learn effective methods to teach students how to work in groups, and how to prepare and deliver testimony. The extraordinary skills and professional development required of teachers to prepare students for the creative and adaptive competitive environment of We The People sustain not only this program, but contribute to a more robust educational environment wherever We The People teachers practice.

Bringing students and judges from diverse communities together in a statewide competition requires funding, as reflected in the proposal's budget. The budget also allocates funds for participation in the national competition, the culminating event of We the People. This national competition serves as a tangible goal for all participants and elevates the importance of the statewide competition.

At every stage of the competition, students and teachers work with visiting students and mentors, which builds valuable skills and lifelong bonds with fellow Alaskans.

Last year, state capital funds were granted to the Fairbanks North Star Borough and then transferred to the FNSB School District. Typically, the Borough retains 10% of such funds as an administrative fee for the transfer process. However, Superintendent Pete Lewis was able to convince FNSB Mayor Luke Hopkins to waive that fee so the FNSB School District was able to use the full amount for program activities. That agreement remains in place; all funds appropriated to We The People will support program elements.

Compensation for the program coordinator is set lower than might be expected. The Center for Civic Education's guidelines stipulate contractors may receive up to 25% of the project budget for remuneration. Our proposed coordinator's stipend is considerably less than that twenty-five percent level.

Informed, engaged citizens are vital to our schools, our students, our state, and our nation. Unfortunately, the last Congress cut funding for this program that Congress itself had created and funded continuously for the last 24 years. Whether or not Congressional funding is restored, it is critical to continue Alaska's We The People program's growth.

In the last ten years, with the initiation of a competitive high school state final, the program has grown exponentially. Starting with one team from the Anchorage area in 2000, at the program's height, twenty public and private high schools from Anchorage, Fairbanks, and the Mat-Su valley competed. For the past three years, schools have conducted qualifying competitions to earn the right to compete in the statewide event.

As the program has expanded in recent years, Alaska's teams have made an impressive impact at the prestigious We the People national competition. In 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2010, the Alaska team earned first place awards for Best Unit Presentation. Most recently, in 2011, the Alaska team earned a Best In Region award and ranked 11th nationwide.

The Lower Kuskokwim School District is the latest to adopt the We The People curriculum; we expect Bethel-area students to compete for the chance to enter statewide and national events next year. For the past two years, We The People has also conducted a middle school showcase. In the most recent event, nearly 300 students from 12 classes participated, with two classes traveling from Fairbanks to the competition site on the University of Alaska Anchorage campus.

As the program has grown and developed, the number of participating Alaska schools as well as students involved has led to a stronger, more diverse program. The requested funds will continue that expansion and spread the program's benefits further across Alaska.

Participating teachers and community leaders have expressed an overwhelming desire to continue the hearing process. This plan calls for regional events where students participate in the mock congressional hearing before a panel of community judges. This modified budget also includes a limited statewide event, including concomitant travel and lodging costs. This request also includes continued professional development and teacher training, community outreach, and program follow-up. These efforts represent the maintaining of an infrastructure that will continue the program until congressional funding can be restored.

Budget Summary

A. Personnel

1. Coordinator \$10,000.00
2. Substitute Teacher Pay \$1,000.00
3. Stipends- mentor \$1,000.00

B. Travel

1. State Final \$5,000.00
2. National Finals \$7,000.00
3. Professional Development \$5,000.00
4. Lodging \$2,000.00

C. Supplies

1. Curricular Materials \$1,000.00
2. Awards \$150.00

D. Office Expenses

- 1. Printing and support materials in-kind*

E. Contractual Expenses

- 1. Professional Development \$1,800.00

F. Indirect Costs

- 1. State Competition \$6,000.00
- 2. National Competition \$7,000.00

TOTAL \$46,950.00

* \$5,000.00

Project Timeline:

All expenditures will occur in FY 14.

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Traci Gatewood

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

Name: Traci Gatewood
 Title: Director of Grants & Special Projects
 Address: 520 5th Ave
 Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
 Phone Number: (907)452-2000
 Email: traci.gatewood@k12northstar.org

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? Yes No

White Paper – We the People

For more than twenty years Alaska's We the People competition has been creating thoughtful citizens. During this time more than ten thousand students have participated in We the People.

The hallmark of the We the People program is the design of its K-12 instructional program, including its innovative culminating activity, a mock congressional hearing where students testify on constitutional issues before a panel of judges recruited from community leaders.

It is necessary to emphasize that this is a competition for everyone; it involves more than one person or a small elite team or group. In order to enter this competition or showcase, a school must show that the participants are members of a regular rostered class and that all students in the class participate. At a recent state competition, eleven teams totaling more than 250 students enjoyed a day of spirited competition at Anchorage's Captain Cook Hotel. However, this program is more than a competitive program for honor students. Another positive feature focuses on using the mock congressional hearing part of a classroom performance final exam.

An additional highlight of the mock congressional hearing that is at the crux of this program is the role of the judges and the consequent interaction between the school and the community. Leaders in the community who have served as judges include:

State Representatives David Guttenberg Scott Kawasaki, and Chris Tuck
Congressional Aides Julie Hasquet and Tom Moyer
Fairbanks Borough Mayor Luke Hopkins
District Court Judge Honorable Jane Kauvar
District Attorney Gayle Garrigues
Public Advocate Karla Taylor-Welch
Attorney at Law Chancy Croft
Public Defender Marcia Holland
Attorney at Law Daniel Callahan
Attorney at Law David Baranow
University of Alaska Fairbanks Professor Terrence Cole
University of Alaska Fairbank Associate Professor Mary Ehrlander
University of Alaska Anchorage Professor Paul Ongtooguk
University of Alaska Anchorage Associate Professor Deb Periman
Air Force Historian Doug Beckstead
Former Aide to Congressman Young and School Board Member Royce Chapman
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Labor Relations Director Gayle Pierce
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Human Relations Director Clarence Bolden
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Assistant Superintendent Wayne Gerke.

Research Results

Research has documented that students involved in the program have had an 82 percent voter turnout. However, the powerful educational effects extend beyond the polls. Students involved with the program show:

1. **Knowledge:** Students demonstrated of greater understanding of politics and how to participate effectively in the political process.
2. **Intellectual skills:** Students demonstrate greater research, analytic, and communication skills.
3. **Participatory skills:** Students demonstrate a greater capacity to work with other.

4. Attitudes: Students demonstrate a greater commitment to fundamental values and principles of constitutional democracy.
5. Behavior: Students pay more attention to politics and the media and take active roles in the enactment of policies improve the life of their communities.

This is an extremely important program for our students, for our state, and for our nation. However, during this last Congress, funding was cut for this program that Congress had created and funded continuously for the last 24 years. While this funding may be reinstated, it is critical to continue Alaska's program's growth.

History of the Program in Alaska

In the last ten years, with the initiation of a competitive high school state final, the program has grown exponentially. Starting with one team from the Anchorage area in 2000, now high schools, both public and private from Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Mat-Su compete. For the past three years, schools have conducted qualifying competition to earn the right to compete in the state competition.

With program growth, the Alaska team has made an impact at the prestigious We the People national competition. In 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2010 the Alaskan team earned first places for best unit presentation. Most recently, in 2011, the Alaska team earned a best in region award and an 11th place overall. Over the years, as the program has developed, the number of participating Alaskan schools as well as students involved has lead to a stronger program.

For the past two years, we have also conducted a middle school showcase. In the most recent event, nearly 300 students from 12 classes, with two classes traveling from Fairbanks to the site on the University of Alaska Anchorage campus, participated.

Current Needs

Participating teachers and community leaders have expressed an overwhelming desire to continue the hearing process. This plan calls for regional events where students participate in the mock congressional hearing before a panel of community judges. This modified budget also includes a limited state event. This includes concomitant travel and lodging costs. This request also includes continued professional development, community outreach, and program follow-up. These efforts represent the maintaining of an infrastructure that will continue the program until congressional funding can be restored. The accompanying spreadsheet delineates budget costs.

DOUGLAS BECKSTEAD

Historian

2909 Klamath Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99517

21 February 2012

Representative David Guttenberg
State Capitol Room 418
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Guttenberg:

It has come to my attention that you are sponsoring legislation that would fund the Alaska portion of the *We the People* program. I would like to express my gratitude that you have taken an interest in the program.

I have served as a judge for approximately ten years in the Fairbanks and Anchorage regional competitions and the statewide competition. This year I am looking forward to representing Alaska as a judge at the national competition in Washington DC in April.

It has been my pleasure to run into a number of students after they have graduated and moved on to bigger and better things and to find that their experience with the *We the People* program has left a lasting impression on them as they take their place among the citizens of our great country. One former student competitor now works as a legislative assistant for Representative Lindsey Holmes (unfortunately I cannot recall his name off-hand).

As a professional historian, I find the program to be extremely valuable to Alaska's high school students. It provides a solid, in-depth foundation on how our Constitution came about as well as a broad understanding of how it functions in our day-to-day lives. This is something that is sorely lacking in most of the history courses being taught today. The students I have encountered have taken a great deal of interest in the program and the competition for regional and state champions is very keen every year. The course affords students a very solid understanding of what it means to be a citizen of our great country and why it is so important that they exercise their rights as citizens.

I support your efforts to fund the *We the People* program and would be happy to lend any additional support that I can to see this legislation through the process.

Very respectfully,



Douglas Beckstead
Historian
Anchorage, Alaska

Tanya Beatus
2015 Bridgewater Drive
Fairbanks, AK 99709
tbeatus@gmail.com
(907) 750-5339

February 24, 2012

Representative Guttenberg
State Capitol Bldg. Room 418
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Guttenberg:

I write in support of your efforts to fund the statewide *We the People* High School program. For the last few years, I've had the pleasure of volunteering as a judge for the *We the People* program both on the district and statewide levels.

The knowledge and confidence of our students paired with pertinent topics from the U.S. Constitution makes for a wonderful program. Our students are able to have in depth conversations regarding past and present political issues. After judging such competitions, I am hopeful for the future as I know these students are the basis of our democracy.

Again, I applaud your efforts to seek funding to keep this very important program alive in our State and Nation.

Sincerely,



Tanya Beatus
We the People Judge

cc: Maida Buckley, *We the People* Statewide Coordinator

Meredith Cameron

From: Jane Kauvar <jkauvar@courts.state.ak.us>
Sent: Wednesday, February 22, 2012 11:00 AM
To: Meredith Cameron
Subject: We The People Support

Representative David Guttenberg
Alaska Legislature
February 22, 2012

Attention: Meredith Cameron

Dear Representative Guttenberg,

I am writing to thank you for your support of the program entitled “We the People”, a national high school civics program. For many years, I have been fortunate enough to judge the competition at the local, state and national level.

This is an outstanding program because it is done within classrooms, and entire classes participate, so that many more students benefit from the education than would happen in an after-school activity. Democracy requires informed citizens. The students that I have observed as a judge reassure me that there will be highly informed and knowledgeable citizens in the next generation.

Furthermore, this is a non-partisan educational program based on a study of the history of the Constitution and its application to current issues. The questions answered by students are designed to show that they can think. There are no “right or wrong” answers based on ideology. Instead, there is a requirement that they use what they have learned from history to tackle current issues facing our country today. Questions regarding the interpretation of our Constitution and the roles of the different branches of government are central to our country today. Clearly, this is a time when an informed citizenry is critical.

I appreciate your willingness to continue to work toward finding funding to allow for the continued existence of this excellent program. It has taken many years of hard work to get the program to where it is today, and it would be a travesty of justice to allow it to come to an end. It is a tribute to the program that it continued on this year, after losing federal funding. However, I do not believe it will continue without regaining some funding. Recently, I judged this year’s regional and state competitions, held in Fairbanks. It was very sad to think that this would be the end of this great program. I know that everyone who participates, and observes the students in action, is impressed with the depth of knowledge demonstrated by the students. For this reason, I am happy to hear that you are working on finding funding for this program.

Thank you in advance for your hard work on this matter, and I appreciate your support!

Sincerely yours,

Jane F. Kauvar
Fairbanks, Alaska

Meredith Cameron

From: Randy Frank <randyfrank@gci.net>
Sent: Sunday, February 26, 2012 5:08 PM
To: Meredith Cameron
Subject: We The People Support

Dear Meredith,

I have been privileged to be a judge three times for the Alaska state wide "We The People" program that Maida Buckley heads up so well. I am in full support of any monetary help that the State of Alaska can provide for the program. Since federal dollars have dried up for the program, it is important for Alaska to step up and help.

This study program is very helpful to the education of our high school students making them better informed citizens. This program helps me also because to judge the students, I have to research the material myself. It is a good learning experience for all.

Sincerely,
Randy Frank
Former North Star Borough Assembly Member

Janelle Leigh Perry
776 8th Avenue
Fairbanks, AK 99701
907-322-8358 • JanellePerry907@gmail.com

February 27, 2012

Representative David Guttenberg
State Capitol Bldg. Room 418
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Guttenberg,

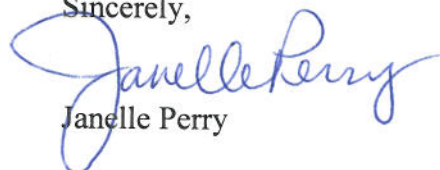
Thank you for your support and work towards securing funding for the "We the People" competition in Alaska. The loss of federal funds for this program has been a critical obstacle in ensuring the continuation of this civic education program for Alaskan students.

This year I was asked to be a judge for both the regional and state competitions in Fairbanks, AK. The students, who volunteered to be in the class and competition, had all obviously spent considerable time learning about the founding of the United States and our constitutional history. The "We the People" program motivated the students to understand the material and be civically engaged before many of them can even vote. They learned to think critically about the founding of our country and how those principles can be applied today in a very different world. The critical thinking and public speaking skills developed for participation in this competition are invaluable and will continue to serve the students as they become productive members of society.

This year, the students of West Valley High School in Fairbanks won the State competition and will be going to Washington, DC in April to represent Alaska. However, because there is no funding for them to compete, the school and the students will be responsible for raising all of the funds for the airfare and expenses in Washington, DC. Although all 50 states are burdened with this new financial requirement, Alaska is disproportionately impacted because of the distance from the capitol and cost of airfare.

I appreciate your efforts, along with Senator Joe Thomas, in securing funding so Alaskan schools can continue participating in this phenomenal program which emphasizes being a good citizen through learning and civic participation.

Sincerely,


Janelle Perry

LAW OFFICE OF ROBERT JOHN

P.O. Box 73570
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707
907-456-6056
907-456-6057 FAX

February 27, 2012

Alaska State Legislature
Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: We The People Funding

Dear Distinguished Members of the Alaska Legislature:

It has recently come to my attention that your honorable and august body is considering funding the We The People program in Alaska. Should you do so, that would be a most-wise expenditure of resources, one that will have both immediate and lasting, long-term benefits to Alaskans as today's students become the leaders of tomorrow.

I have had the good fortune of being involved with the We The People program for approximately the last decade and to have judged in the local and statewide competitions during most of those years. Should you not already be familiar with We The People, it is in essence a nationally-recognized program in our schools focusing on the issues facing us as citizens in a constitutional democracy.

I see the immediate impact of We The People every time I judge a competition. The students I have thereby encountered are thoroughly prepared to discuss issues, ranging from the political theories and legal principles which influenced our founders to the pressing issues of today. While some of this is undoubtedly due to the tireless efforts of their teachers, the ultimate result is the product of extensive preparation by the students that places them in the position of truly thinking about their roles as citizens in our society.

My own personal reward from encountering the students in the We The People program has been to experience their energy and enthusiasm for being better citizens and to think freshly about my own role as a citizen of Alaska and the United States. More importantly, however, is that when I see the level of preparation, knowledge, and thought

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evidenced by those in the We The People program and realize that those students will be the leaders of tomorrow, I know our future is and will be in good hands as many of those students will someday serve as your aides and some of them will eventually stand in your shoes.

In conclusion, I sincerely hope that the Legislature will choose to fund the We The People program. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RJ', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert John

RJ/cr

Meredith Cameron

From: Gayle Pierce <gayle.pierce@k12northstar.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 01, 2012 3:28 PM
To: Meredith Cameron
Subject: WTP Support

Dear Representative Guttenberg,

I want to add my voice of support for the We The People program. This is an excellent curriculum focused the U.S. Constitution. I have been a judge for the program at classroom, district, and state competitions and at every level students experience a first rate educational experience. The program involves research, collaboration with students on a team, preparation for a team presentation, performance as a team at the competition, and extemporaneous application of the material studied. I am very pleased to know that through your efforts this program may be funded on the state level. Thank you for your support for this excellent program.

Gayle Pierce

Meredith Cameron

From: Patricia Behner <pat.behner@k12northstar.org>
Sent: Friday, February 24, 2012 3:56 PM
To: Meredith Cameron
Subject: wtp support

Dear Rep. Guttenberg,

As a social studies teacher with 38 years of experience, I am writing this letter to unequivocally ask for your support for the *We the People* program, from the Center for Civic Education. Not only has this program changed the way I teach, it has changed the way my students learn. Through *We the People*, students experience government through intense preparation and participation in the competitive hearing process. Working in "Unit Groups" that are part of a class team fosters a sense of community that cannot be equalled by a more traditional approach to instruction. The competition spotlights student learning, teamwork, presentation skills and understanding of our Constitution and the American political system. The opportunity to present to an audience greater than the class or school pushes the achievement bar higher than other instructional strategies.

I have been involved with the Center for Civic Education for ten years and have coached ten competition teams. The *We the People* competition remains a high point of the participants' high school careers. I continue to receive emails from my WtP alumni recalling the significance of their competition experience. Participation enhances self confidence and esteem, teaches responsibility and accountability, and is great fun!

Unfortunately as you know, the *We the People* program lost federal funding during this past year. If this incredible experience and learning opportunity is to remain part of the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District's array of possibilities for our students, support must come from alternative sources. What better way to invest in the future of Alaska than to provide this program for our youth. We hope you and the Alaska Legislature can support the *We the People* program and competition in our schools.

Sincerely,
Patricia Behner
Social Studies Teacher
North Pole High school