ALASKA DEV ALLIANCE

DEVELOPER MANIFESTO 2019

Context

The technology workforce in Alaska is stagnant and has stunted the businesses in the technology sector in Alaska. Programmers often leave the state citing "no jobs" while potential employers overlook Alaska due to "lack of talent." Previous attempts to build and promote a programming community have been implemented in a very focused or niche manner such as "web developers meetup" or "game developers" meetup. Due to Alaska's large land mass and low population density, none of these groups have been sustainable.

The Alaska Developer's Alliance is bridging this gap to create the critical mass of programmers needed to promote and grow a community capable of supporting knowledge-based and technology businesses.

Problem statement

Alaska does not currently have the required workforce to fill the existing gaps in the workforce, support local technology development, or scale a high growth technology startup.

- Newer engineers have very few career prospects.
- Seasoned engineers either leave Alaska or work remotely because there are few jobs commensurate with experience or industry wages.
- Engineers working remotely from Alaska offer valuable skill sets and experience that are in-demand, but haven't found a way to participate in the community.
- Major corporations in Telco and Oil & Gas are outsourcing jobs to the lower 48 because they can't find the workforce locally.
- State and local government cannot fill senior developers positions

Without a cohesive programming community, the technology workforce in Alaska will continue to struggle.

Solution

In order to help drive engineering in Alaska we are building a community that serves as a hub for programmers, engages with students of all levels, and provides ongoing training and professional development.

The Alaska Developers Alliance is a grassroots organization that addresses all of the problems by being discipline agnostic, including all programming abilities, engaging community stakeholders(employers), and providing continuing education for programmers to progress their career. By positioning it as the flywheel of the Alaskan programmer ecosystem businesses can better see how their involvement with the organization will directly impact their own businesses and the future of Alaska.

The Flywheel of Community
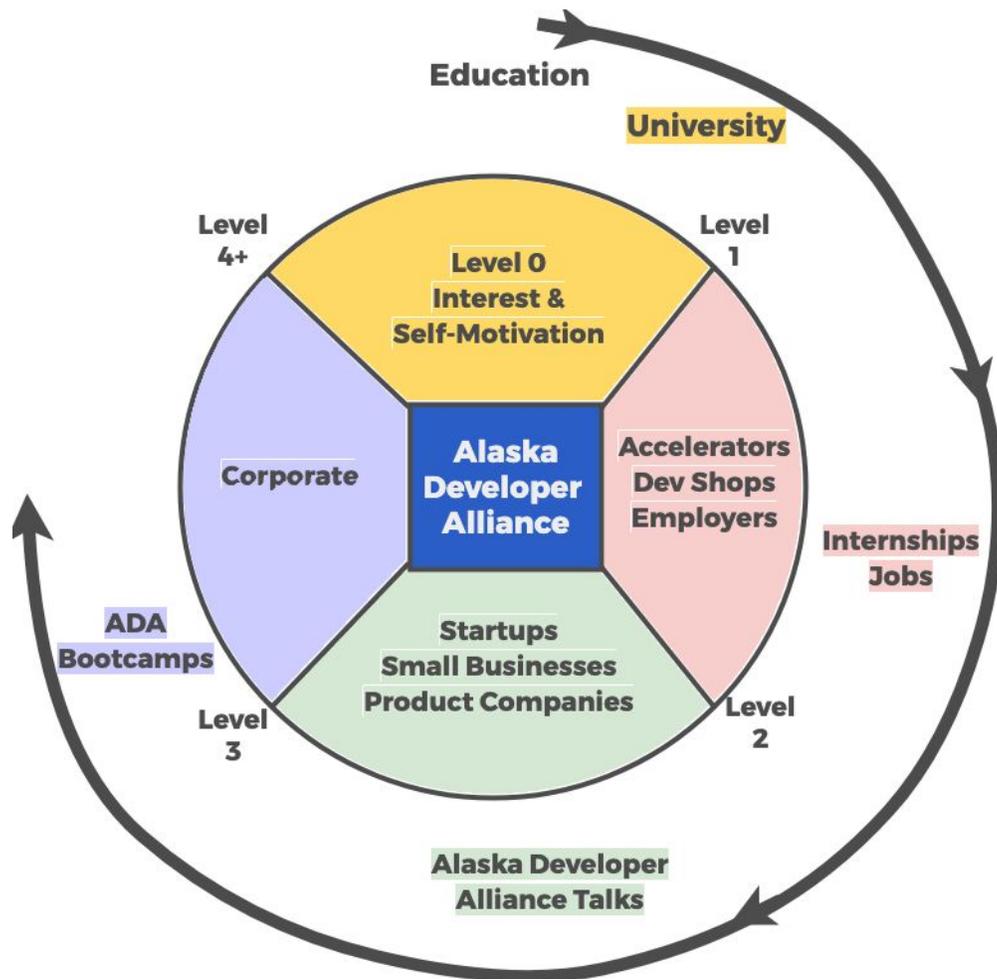
The Dev Alliance acts as a flywheel for the technology workforce by:
1. Engaging with learners at the earliest possible time
2. Fostering knowledge sharing and career possibilities with college students and providing internships
3. Working with accelerators and employers to understand the technology needs for programmers and bridging the gap to education

4. Providing continuing education via talks, bootcamps, and scholarships to outside conferences
5. Bridging the gap from level 0 all the way through a company's level 7 hire

Community responsibility

As a grassroots organization, our primary responsibility is to the developers that exist in our ecosystem. The Alliance strives to create the best possible community that can exist and is a welcoming group for all human beings regardless of race, sexual orientation, creed, and preference for tabs vs. spaces.

It has a responsibility to the community to exist and will create an organizational structure that will promote the success of the ADA in coming years.

Organizational Structure

We will adopt a board to handle turnover and add some redundancy for members to step back if need-be. The organizational structure will consist of a board staffed by ADA members and a Launch Alaska position.

Launch Alaska will serve as the fiscal sponsor for the ADA. This is includes:
- Fundraising within the Alaskan Community and corporate outreach
- Financial management (receiving sponsorships, paying expenses, accounting, etc)

Guidance based on needs communicated from Launch Alaska Stakeholders

Board roles:

- **Managing Director**
- **Assistant Director**
- **Non-profit Chair / Treasurer** - Oversees financial activities of the ADA including accounting, managing bank accounts, and overseeing expenses.
- **Anchorage Representative** - Representative for Anchorage community, coordinates efforts for training, talks, and engaging with the community.
- **Juneau Representative** - Representative for Juneau community, coordinates efforts for training, talks, and engaging with the community.
- **Fairbanks Representative** - Representative for Fairbanks community, coordinates efforts for training, talks, and engaging with the community.
- **Social Media Team (monthly newsletter, post events)** - Handles social media posts related to events on Facebook, Eventbrite, Meetup, etc. Publishes monthly newsletter via mailchimp. Takes photos at events.
- **Sponsorship / Outreach team** - Engages with businesses to promote awareness, participation, and sponsorship for the organization.
- **Event Coordination Team** - Works with each local chapter to ensure a location, food, and conferencing facilities are available for each event.

Timeline and Organizational Stats

Timeline:

10/17 - Jeff Levin begins researching developer community in Alaska

2/18 - Dev Alliance joins UAA Advisory board for Computer Science and Engineering

5/18 - Developer's Alliance is announced to public

6/18 - First Dev Alliance Meetup with James Clancey with over 30 people in attendance!

7/18 - Mailing list breaks 100 subscribers with 62% open rate!

8/18 - Dev Alliance joins forces with Arsh Chauhan and Vincent Castro to merge the Fairbanks Developers Meetup. Slack channel is created. 70+ members join the first day.

9/18 - Members begin teaching Scratch programming to grade school students

11/18 - Blair Brown introduces our Mascot Codi the Yeti.

1/19 - 40+ people attend the first meetup of the year. Slack usage grows exponential

2/19 - Conroy Whitney opens a Juneau chapter of the Developer's Alliance. First meetup happens during the Juneau Innovation Summit

3/19 - First Statewide meetup with Juneau, Fairbanks, and Anchorage participating virtually. All meetups go statewide in every location!

5/19 - Mailing list breaks 200 members!

6/19 - Frank Krueger from Merge Conflict is our first remote speaker presenting from Seattle!

7/19 - Anjana Vakil from Mapbox is our first speaker to FLY to Alaska to present to the Alliance!

Stats on membership
238 on mailing list - 50% open rate
170 members on slack - average 60 weekly members

Alaska Developer Alliance Code of Conduct

The ADA strives to be welcoming to all human beings regardless of age, body type, disability, ethnicity, education, socio-economic status, nationality, race, religion, gender identity, or sexual identity and orientation.

See https://akdevalliance.com/conduct to read our full code of conduct

Conclusion

In order to overcome the lacking technology sector in Alaska, we must invest time and money into fostering a community organized around learning the craft of programming. This is the single biggest factor in the coming success of Alaska's knowledge based economy. See the operational plan at https://akdevalliance.com/plan for how we're moving into the future.

Further Reading

White paper - https://akdevalliance.com/paper
Operational plan - https://akdevalliance.com/plan

Endorsed by the founders of the Alaska Developers Alliance:

Jeff Levin
Vincent Castro
Arsh Chauhan
Isaac Vanderburg
Conroy Whitney
Adam Link
Jeremy Mayfield
Lincoln Larson
Matt Perry
Kelly Larson
Erik Talvi