

CHUGACH REGIONAL RESOURCES COMMISSION



Project Title:	Chugach Region Economic Development Project
Award Amount:	\$536,753
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	7/1/2003 – 6/30/2006
Grantee Type:	Tribal Non-Profit

PROJECT SUMMARY

- 3 jobs created
- 3 businesses created
- 2 Native American consultants hired
- 8 elders involved
- 5 youth involved
- 27 people trained
- \$31,000 in resources leveraged
- \$35,000 in revenue generated
- 11 partnerships formed
- 3 products developed

BACKGROUND

The Chugach Regional Resources Commission (CRRC) is a non-profit Alaska Native organization representing seven Chugachmiut Tribes. The seven tribes include Nanwalek, Port Graham, Seward, Chenega Bay, Eyak, Valdez and Tatitlek.

CRRC addresses issues of mutual tribal concern regarding natural resources, subsistence and the environment, and it develops culturally-appropriate projects that promote sustainable development of the natural resources within the Chugach

Region. The region encompasses the immediate Alaskan mainland surrounding Prince William Sound and the entirety of the Kenai Peninsula.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Traditionally, the Chugach are a maritime culture. Their knowledge of the marine environment combined with their skill on the water has proven conducive to the development of marine resource-based projects with CRRC. The purpose of the three-year Chugach Region Economic Development Project (Project) was to protect their subsistence and maritime lifestyle and traditional practices through economic development of regional natural resources.

The Project's first objective was to identify value-added salmon products; identify a processing scheme for producing value-added salmon at Port Graham; and train village residents in value-added salmon processing techniques. The Project successfully identified a processing scheme for producing value-added salmon at Port Graham. The Project also developed an operations manual and trained village residents in the associated value-added salmon processing techniques. Although a

return on investment has not yet been produced, several potentially profitable products will likely drive this initiative to sustainability, including pet treats, salmon jerky sticks and baby food.

The Project's second objective was to increase annual marketable oyster production in the Tatitlek Mariculture Project from 200,000 to 650,000, including equipping the shellfish processing facility with enough processing and holding capacity to handle the increased production. Through capital investment and staff training, Tatitlek's shellfish processing facility now has enough processing and holding capacity to handle this increased production. This objective also included the development of a comprehensive marketing plan which the Project successfully completed. The plan included specific action steps for selling 650,000 oysters annually. Tatitlek is beginning to witness increased revenues from additional oyster sales, therefore providing a positive indicator for the Project's sustainability.

The Project's third objective was to complete littleneck clam and cockle research to determine their commercial potential. The Project completed the market research, and CRRC sent shipments of cockle seeds to two villages that have expressed interest in cockle production.

A Project challenge was an inadequate time commitment from volunteers in key project roles resulting from other community commitments involving work of greater or equal priority. The Project overcame this challenge with a strong commitment of participants to achieve the Project's objectives and dedication of extra time from other team members to make the Project a success.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

The Project trained 27 Port Graham community members in salmon processing. The development of marketable aquaculture products such as oysters and long-neck clams as well as the value-added salmon products combined with the skills training for Native community members resulted in a viable path for further job creation and sustainability.

Providing the Tatitlek community members with additional resources helped them gain valuable job skills, self-confidence and a keen interest to achieve their potential. Participants in the training program are enthusiastic for additional training in quality control and operations management.

Since the shellfish have been reintroduced to their historical areas, Native Alaskans in the Chugach Region now have increased access to traditional subsistence resources. Villagers and elders also gained increased recognition, value and use of their traditional maritime knowledge.

Additional social impacts resulted in improved community interaction through cultural activities. For example, the Project's production of oysters allowed for donations to cultural events, thus supporting the rejuvenation of traditional practices.

Community members shared their observation that CRRC trainer's commitment and enthusiasm spurred their involvement in the Project and their interest in further developing their maritime skills. Community members also indicated they are anxious to explore the establishment of larger scale maritime resource production operations, citing the potential of additional jobs for fellow non-Native Alaska village residents.

GULKANA VILLAGE COUNCIL



Project Title: Ahtna Athabascan Language Status and Viability Assessment Project

Award Amount: \$61,068

Type of Grant: Language

Project Period: 9/30/2005 – 9/29/2006

Grantee Type: Tribe

PROJECT SUMMARY

- 1 job created
- 1 language survey developed
- 10 elders involved
- 6 partnerships formed
- 1 person trained

BACKGROUND

The Gulkana Village is located in the Copper River basin, approximately 200 miles east of Anchorage and 250 miles south of Fairbanks. The Gulkana people are Ahtna Athabascan. Their primary food source is salmon, and they have established semi-permanent camps and small villages along the area's rivers and streams. Of the 350 tribal members, 106 reside in Gulkana Village year-round, and an additional 30 to 50 live in the Village during fishing and subsistence seasons.

In the last 50 years, the Village has transitioned from a subsistence lifestyle to a cash economy. Children have been removed and sent to public and boarding school or placed in foster or institutional settings. As a result, the community has experienced a dramatic loss of culture and language.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Ahtna Athabascan Language Status and Viability Assessment Project purpose was to construct a foundation for their language preservation. The Project planned to create an Office of Native Language, staffed by a Program Manager and a Language Technician; to research strategies for assessing the language; to use the research to create a survey tool; and, to survey approximately 123 members (35 percent). The results would provide the Gulkana Village Council a comprehensive language assessment.

The first challenge the Gulkana Village Council faced was their isolation and the difficulty administering a project with technical components such as designing, administering and compiling language surveys. The Project met this challenge by hiring Tribal members for the two key Project positions and developing key partnerships. The University of Alaska at Fairbanks, Chugachmiut Village, Chickaloon Village, Ahtna Heritage, and Copper River Native Association assisted in creating the survey instrument and compiling results.

To maximize participation and ensure that members living in other areas would participate, the Project decided to personally survey participants. Project staff overcame the challenge of securing completed surveys and gathering responses from members living outside the area by hiring tribal members in staff positions. This personal approach resulted in a high return rate (i.e., 193 completed surveys), but it also increased the time for administering the surveys, as staff traveled to other villages to meet with members in the Copper River Basin.

Since the Project used an interview process to collect survey information, the time to survey the community was longer than planned. While the staff has been resourceful in using the Internet to conduct project research, their lack of familiarity with database development delayed the Project's completion. A comprehensive assessment of the Ahtna Athabascan language in the Gulkana community had not been completed, but the quality of information gathered was impressive.

The survey captured data on the number of speakers and levels of fluency, settings in which the language is used, reasons community members stopped using the language, and demographic characteristics of speakers and non-speakers. The survey also captured information on individual's interest in learning the language, whether respondents believed the language should be taught in schools, and whether the language should be written or remain an oral tradition. The surveyors also asked whether respondents were interested in the sharing of: information on Tribal history and culture, old photos and old recordings of stories and ceremonies.

The results revealed that only 8 percent of the Tribal members speak the Ahtna

language fluently and that only half of this group speaks the language all the time.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

Developing and administering the survey in Gulkana and other Copper River region communities generated active involvement in preserving the language and the culture. It generated interest and involvement in cultural enhancement efforts and activities, such as sharing cultural knowledge, language knowledge, historical pictures and recordings, and written materials related to Gulkana Village history and traditions.

Elders' involvement in developing the Athabascan survey increased their involvement in community activities. Their involvement and leadership in Project implementation was partially due to their concern over language loss and their status as keepers of the language and culture.

The Project forged long-term partnerships to preserve and restore the language, including commitments for assistance in, and initial concepts for, curriculum design. In addition to implementing the Project's objectives, the partners helped staff members build their own knowledge and skills.

One community member considered this Project a "wake-up call" and said that "time is of the essence" if the language is to be salvaged. According to survey responses, many community members felt that not only were they losing their language, they were losing their young people. The village hopes a Native language curriculum and accompanying support programs will benefit the youth by bringing about resurgence in cultural pride and values.

NATIVE VILLAGE OF KOTZEBUE



Project Title: Planning for Restorative Justice

Award Amount: \$86,181

Type of Grant: Social and Economic Development Strategies

Project Period: 9/30/2005 – 9/29/2006

Grantee Type: Tribe

PROJECT SUMMARY

- 17 people trained
- \$77,750 in resources leveraged
- 2 youth involved
- 8 elders involved
- 6 partnerships formed
- 1 Native American consultant hired

BACKGROUND

The Native Village of Kotzebue is the tribal government representing 2,500 Inupiaqs. Kotzebue is located 33 miles north of the Arctic Circle on Alaska's west coast. Kotzebue is not connected to Alaska's road system, and travelers and supplies arrive by air (approximately 549 air miles from Anchorage) and barge.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of Planning for Restorative Justice (Project) was to create a framework for a tribal court that would incorporate Inupiaq values and offer a culturally-appropriate alternative to the existing judicial system. Restorative justice means "restoring health, wholeness and balance" to individuals who come before the court.

The Project planned to write a five-part report that would address: 1) codes, ordinances, policies, and procedures for the court; 2) a summary of tribal court operational procedures and a description of the tribal court's relationship to federal and state legislative and judicial systems; 3) a strategic plan and action steps for an operational court; 4) a strategic plan and action steps for interacting with existing addiction treatment and life skills programs in Kotzebue; and 5) a summary of research on traditional Inupiaq approaches to dispute resolution.

This was a complex project that involved sending Tribal Council members to visit tribal courts in Alaska and the lower 48 states. The purpose was to gather background information, challenges, and successes, and to bring back replicable models and ideas. The Project also conducted an inventory of existing services and interventions in the Kotzebue community that would be available for use in a court operation that focused on healing and restorative justice.

Tribal elders were engaged, and they shared their understanding of traditional concepts and applications of justice. Tribal elders

also researched the Spokane, Lummi, Tulalip, Gila River, Acoma and Kake tribal courts. They participated in workshops around the country on restorative justice, and then shared their understanding of traditional dispute resolution and forgiveness practices with other members of their community.

The Native Village of Kotzebue faced three challenges implementing this project. First, they underestimated the complexity and time to develop a tribal court. This was compounded by the Tribal Council's workload and the need to ensure that the Council had ample time to review court operations plans and to determine how the Tribe's judicial branch should be structured.

They also underestimated travel costs to visit other courts and to attend trainings on restorative justice approaches and court operations. Seventeen people did attend training in tribal court development, court administration and ordinances, and peacemaking.

The Project also encountered difficulty hiring staff for key Project positions. As a result, the existing staff assumed the duties and responsibilities of the vacant Project positions which exacerbate delays.

While the report had not been finalized at the grant's conclusion, content had been drafted. The Project staff and Tribal Council members indicated their strong commitment to completing it.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

The Project increased the entire community's awareness about traditional justice concepts and applications. Kotzebue youth participated in community meetings and discussion groups. This involvement heightened awareness of the judicial system and an appreciation of their civic responsibility. Elders were re-engaged in

community activities and were seen as valuable community resources. Elders were encouraged by the possibility that their traditional ways of handling disputes would be brought back. Parents were interested in knowing that alternatives to the punitive system were on the horizon.

The Project also increased the Tribal Council's governance capacity. In addition to visiting other tribal courts they also received tribal court training.

This Project also helped develop inter-jurisdictional partnerships, and the police from multiple jurisdictions are working with State Court Magistrates. Alaska Legal Services and the Maniqa Regional Corporation also supported the Project through research and resource identification activities.

The Project has effectively moved the community from talking about problems (such as substance abuse and juvenile crime) to planning solutions rooted in culturally-based activities and interventions.

"The formal judicial system follows strict laws and usually offenders end up serving time in jail where they learn more hard-core negative behaviors and often return home to face an unchanged situation. They now have the tools to chart a local course and apply restorative justice principles at home."

Linda Joule, Executive Director

NATIVE VILLAGE OF NAPAIMUTE



Project Title: Phase II Survey of Napaimute Community Lands

Award Amount: \$120,659

Type of Grant: Social and Economic Development Strategies

Project Period: 9/30/2005 – 9/29/2006

Grantee Type: Tribe

PROJECT SUMMARY

- \$750 in revenue generated
- \$118,000 in resources leveraged
- 1 person trained
- 15 partnerships formed
- 3 ordinances adopted and implemented
- 1 Native consulting firm hired
- 15 elders involved
- 34 youth involved

BACKGROUND

The Native Village of Napaimute is located in western Alaska on the Kuskokwim River. In 1930, the U.S. census reported a Napaimute population of 111 individuals, but by 1969, the Village's last permanent resident had left. Only a few spend more than eight months of the year in the Village due to the freezing of the Kuskokwim River, which renders the Village inaccessible.

In 1994, Napaimute received federal recognition as one of Alaska's Native Villages. However, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA), does not recognize Tribal governments as the appropriate entities to receive lands. Lands re-conveyed under ANCSA are held

in trust by the State of Alaska until a city government is established.

In 1977, Napaimute merged its assets with nine other Kuskokwim Valley villages to form The Kuskokwim Corporation (TKC). TKC is obligated to re-convey no less than 1,280 acres to the city governments of each of its ten-member villages for community purposes, including community expansion. An ANCSA clause requires that a lesser amount of the specified 1,280 acres could be re-conveyed if all involved parties agree. Napaimute has proposed a direct land transfer of 650 acres from TKC to the Tribe, a settlement that offers Napaimute a smaller amount of land, but more local control.

In May of 2004, the Native Village of Napaimute was granted a 24-month interim lease over these lands. Since the Tribe is acquiring its land base through non-conventional means, it must bear the cost of the land survey.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of Phase II Survey of Napaimute Community Lands (Project) was to allow Napaimute to survey their community lands and to set up a home site program. The Project planned to award home site lots to enrolled Napaimute

members and allow non-enrolled members interested in becoming a part of Napaimute's development to rent land.

The first objective was to increase the overall Tribal member involvement in the survey of Napaimute lands. The Project developed a community needs survey and distributed it to all adult Tribal members through direct mail, the Tribe's newsletter and website. The Project sent 54 surveys, and respondents returned 27 surveys. The Project then presented the results to all community members at the annual gathering.

The Project's second objective was to complete a land survey and transfer Napaimute lands. The Project formalized a Request for Proposals and incorporated the information received from the community needs survey. It received two responses, and selected the Native-owned firm McClintock Land Associates. The survey crew completed all the necessary GIS mapping and benchmarking of Napaimute lands in 13 days. The direct transfer of Napaimute lands occurred in mid-2006, although in late August 2006 the Village was still awaiting the State's approval on the land survey plat.

The Project's third objective was to prepare the home site program for Napaimute members and other area Alaska Natives. The Home Site Land ordinance, Right of Entry permit and the Residential Lease ordinance were adopted; a public notice published on the Napaimute website announced the commencement of the Napaimute home site program. The Project then organized a list of approved applicants for the Traditional Council's review. Upon their approval, a small lottery was held to select the final applicants and determine the home lots they would receive. The Project then presented awardees with a detailed cost analysis for housing development options.

After careful consideration and much dialogue, the intended milestone of opening ten home sites in the first year was deemed too overwhelming and the community as a whole decided to allow five lots to open in 2006. These developments will now allow the village to establish Tribal enterprises which will provide the resources for the self-determination of the Napaimute community.

The lack of precedent for the negotiation of a direct land transfer posed a continuous challenge for the Project. In addition, there was the challenge of feeding and housing the land survey crew in their small village. Napaimute villagers are a subsistence-based people, and preparing three meals a day for the four crew members for two weeks proved to be a demanding, but necessary, task. Finally, the Project faced general community concerns that Napaimute would grow too quickly.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

Bertha Kristovich, a Napaimute elder, remarked on the resolve of her people and the Project, "We had the motivation and the talent to start from nothing. To outsiders, our little Village may not look like much, but to us it means everything." The Project has illustrated that Native Villages can reclaim their ancestral lands at little cost, and has raised the possibility of Native Village leadership replicating the Napaimute process.

"We are re-developing a community that our ancestors cared deeply about, and for their sake we wanted to do it correctly."

Devron Hellings

PILOT STATION TRADITIONAL COUNCIL



Project Title: Pilot Station Community Development Plan

Award Amount: \$109,570

Type of Grant: Social and Economic Development Strategies

Project Period: 9/30/2004 – 9/29/2006

Grantee Type: Tribe

PROJECT SUMMARY

- 1 job created
- \$2,093 in resources leveraged
- 10 youth involved
- 5 elders involved
- 4 partnerships formed
- 2 products developed
- 11 people trained

BACKGROUND

Pilot Station is an Alaska Native Village located within the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. It is a traditional Yup'ik Eskimo Village, dependent upon a fishing and subsistence lifestyle. There are approximately 550 inhabitants of which over half are under 18 years of age.

No roads link the Village to other communities. All goods must therefore be delivered by plane, or barged upriver during the area's short summer.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Pilot Station Community Development Plan (Project) purpose was to use a participatory approach to create a comprehensive Community Development Plan. Community meetings and surveys

would be the basis of a comprehensive assessment of Pilot Station and the Plan would include a structured set of future development priorities.

The Project's first objective was to establish the Pilot Station Community Planning Office. The Office was located in a building considered the community hub. This first objective presented the largest challenge that the Project had to overcome – to establish an accounting system to meet Federal grant financial reporting requirements. Staff members also needed to familiarize themselves with the reporting requirements.

The second objective was to involve community members in the creation of the Pilot Station Community Development Plan. To foster comprehensive community involvement, the Project hired a well-respected community member for the Tribal Planner position. Early in the Project's implementation, it convened two community meetings which were attended by seven and 49 people, respectively. Due to the initial meeting's low turnout, staff scheduled the second meeting with a regularly-scheduled community event, and attracted a large attendance. After the two initial meetings, the Tribal Planner developed a community survey and altered the Project's community

involvement format to a drop-in service. Forty formal surveys were collected.

The third objective was to determine the issues and constraints to be addressed within the Plan. Based on community input, the Project drafted a vision statement and an issues and constraints narrative.

The fourth objective was to develop goals and objectives. Although the Tribal Planner organized a Planning Committee consisting of three volunteer community members, the Committee met only once. As a result, all Project activities were planned by the Tribal Planner, information was gathered from the community, and an organized version of the data was then presented to the Traditional Council for approval.

The fifth objective was to collect information from community members for inclusion in the Plan. The Project extended the survey timeline to ensure that all community concerns were captured for inclusion in the final Plan. (This survey has become an on-going task, since community members' most pressing concerns tend to be seasonally-based.) Project staff also researched and reviewed previously completed community plans from surrounding villages.

The sixth objective was to prepare the final Plan. The final draft of the Plan was submitted to the Pilot Station Traditional Council, and the Project planned to produce a copy of the Plan for all Pilot Station households.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

Initially, there was skepticism that a community plan would lead to the actual implementation of priority-based projects. However, the community meetings and encouraging number of completed surveys

and drop-in requests assured them that the process could be effective. As a result, community members have become more vocal in sharing their personal visions for Pilot Station.

For the Pilot Station Traditional Council, the Plan's development and creation has educated each member on the issues, priorities and concerns of their constituents in a structured, formal way. For example, since over half of the community's population is under 18 years of age, and 28 percent live below the poverty level, there is a pressing need to establish a stable job base to accommodate the burgeoning population growth. Improvements to the sewage lagoon and dump-sites within the village have also gathered the most support from community members. The Project's implementation has also informed the Council of their responsibility in setting Pilot Station's course for development, including their responsibility to secure the economic resources to meet the stated needs of the community and to protect the village's environmental resources.

The Pilot Station Traditional Council now has clear, current and accurate information about the priorities and concerns of its constituents. Recently, the Traditional Council responded to the community's request and is moving forward with planning for the community's second store.

Despite the initial and steep learning curve in managing this Federal grant, the Project staff is now prepared and intent on procuring additional federal project funds. Given a clear community-based Plan, Pilot Station is capable of procuring further grant funding to realize its vision for progress, and to capitalize upon the environment of empowerment that this project has been created.

ROBERT AQQALUK NEWLIN SR. MEMORIAL TRUST



Project Title: Northwest Arctic Inupiaq Revitalization Project

Award Amount: \$96,419

Type of Grant: Language

Project Period: 9/1/2004 – 5/31/2006

Grantee Type: Native Non-Profit

PROJECT SUMMARY

- 1 language survey completed
- 40 youth involved
- 100 elders involved
- 16 people trained
- 3 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Robert Aqqaluk Newlin Sr. Memorial Trust manages a post-secondary scholarship program, a small grants program supporting language and culture projects, and a cultural summer camp. The Trust's services target the Inupiaq population in the Northwest Arctic boroughs of Alaska. One of its top priorities is reviving the Inupiaq language and culture.

Over 7,000 people live in the eleven villages of the Northwest Arctic region of Alaska. The largest community, Kotzebue has as many as 3,000 residents and the smallest community, Kobuk has only 109 inhabitants. The region is isolated from the outside world, and the region's 11 villages are isolated from each other.

Most of the region's population is of Inupiaq descent. The population's age range is skewed with more than 40 percent of the

residents aged 25 or younger. Only six percent of the population is 60 or older.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Northwest Arctic Inupiaq Revitalization Project was to assess the status of the Inupiaq language through the development and implementation of a survey. The Project activities included: developing a survey to determine the ability of Northwest Arctic community members to speak and understand Inupiaq, administering the survey, compiling the results, and reporting the survey results.

Complementing that endeavor would be a series of conferences with the 11 villages in the borough area.

The Project successfully surveyed 11 villages and 4,112 residents. Elders (aged 55 and older) comprised 14 percent and youth (aged 18 years and younger) comprised 41 percent of the surveyed population. A significant survey finding was that 72 percent of the respondents did not indicate any Inupiaq speaking ability. While 92 percent of the population aged 65 and older (or 7 percent of the population) indicated they had speaking capabilities, only 5 percent of the population 18 and

under (41 percent of the population) were able to speak Inupiaq.

The cost and difficulties of travel needed to coordinate project development and language preservation strategies were an ongoing challenge in the Project's operation. Sub-regional approaches for coordination, teleconferencing and combining regional language gatherings with other conference events (the Alaska Federation of Native meetings, for example) were strategies that helped overcome this challenge.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

The language loss surprised the communities. The survey's impact has been to stimulate interest and participation in developing preservation strategies and engaging in "next steps" for Inupiaq language preservation. Concerns over the language's status increased participation in a regional conference held in Kotzebue in Spring 2006. A second conference was planned in conjunction with the Alaska Federation of Natives annual meeting to continue development of a regional Inupiaq language restoration plan.

Concern over the Inupiaq language status has also helped forge organizational partnerships including schools, boroughs, Tribes, and the Regional Corporation. This partnership evolved into the Inupiaq Language Commission, which will help ensure the longevity and sustainability of this Project. The Commission will coordinate and maintain the momentum for Inupiaq language preservation.

The Project also increased involvement of elders in community activities. The community members who are fluent speakers are almost all elders. Many elders have been reluctant to use and share the language because they were punished in mission schools for speaking Inupiaq,

because they believed that no one cared about learning the language, or because teaching the language in a non-home setting (e.g., village schools or immersion classes) seemed overwhelming. As a result of the Project, elders have been increasingly willing to participate in language preservation efforts. Their interest and leadership in this Project is evidence of their concern, as well as their hope.

Another impact was the increased capacity of 16 people in the local villages who attended workshops regarding language surveys and native language programs.

Community members expressed optimism about the Project's potential. One elder said that the language survey and planning meetings have already caused him to volunteer more at the local high school so that he can teach the culture to his grandchildren and other youth; "It's been an eye-opener for kids to realize that their parents were punished for speaking their language," he said. Interest in sustaining this project and bringing the Inupiaq language back to its people is high.

The Project succeeded in laying the groundwork for Inupiaq language restoration and has resulted in the documentation of the status of the Inupiaq language in eleven Northwest Arctic villages. It has generated a substantial amount of interest in, and support for, preservation and restoration of the language, its use, and the cultural heritage that the language embodies.

SEALASKA HERITAGE FOUNDATION



Project Title: Hoonah Northwest Coast Art Certificate Program

Award Amount: \$363,571

Type of Grant: Social and Economic Development Strategies

Project Period: 9/1/2003 – 8/31/2006

Grantee Type: Native Non-Profit

PROJECT SUMMARY

- 1 job created
- 1 business created
- 9 Native American consultants hired
- 15 elders involved
- 10 youth involved
- \$18,750 in resources leveraged
- 21 people trained
- 5 partnerships formed
- 8 products developed

BACKGROUND

Sealaska Heritage Foundation (renamed Sealaska Heritage Institute or SHI) is a regional, Native non-profit organization founded to perpetuate the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian cultures. Hoonah, the largest Tlingit village in Southeast Alaska, is a community which partners with SHI. Approximately 860 residents live in Hoonah. Unemployment for the entire village population is 12.5 percent, yet the unemployment rate of enrolled Hoonah Tribal members is 39.1 percent.

Hoonah was opening a cruise ship dock in 2004, and purchased a historic cannery which it was renovating to attract cruise ship tourists. The renovated facility planned to include 24 retail shops, a number of which would be stocked with traditional Native art. Although the majority of Hoonah residents are Alaska Natives, none were professional Native artists.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Hoonah Northwest Coast Art Certificate Program (Project) had two main objectives. Specifically, the Project intended to provide the Native residents in Hoonah with the skills and tools used in Native carving and basketry and to support Hoonah's goals to achieve self-sufficiency by creating art to be sold to tourists. The Project was an expansion of the University of Alaska's Northwest Coast Native Arts Certificate program, and included plans to develop instruction manuals for future students of Native art.

The limited number of skilled Native carving and basketry teachers and the students' busy schedules during the summer, due to subsistence activities, made organizing the logistics of the training

classes challenging. To address this challenge, additional teachers were incorporated into the Project. The unanticipated benefit was that students experienced a wide variety of techniques.

Eighteen community members completed the two-week core requirement, the Hoonah language and culture class. Seven community members successfully completed all seven courses in Native weaving. Ten community members completed all four courses in Native carving. Finally, a two-day Native art marketing class was staged for all trained community members. In total, the Project trained and certified 21 Hoonah community members in traditional weaving and carving arts.

A master carver, master basket weaver, photographer and SHI staff completed Phases One, Two and Three of the carving and basketry “How-To” manuals. The training manuals were expected to make learning Native practices easier and faster, while also ensuring that learned history and cultural knowledge would be preserved.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

This Project demonstrates how a community can successfully address both short-term needs (i.e., skill-building and income) and long-term needs (i.e., perpetuating cultural history and art) through an intensive study approach.

The Project encouraged residents to reconnect to their family heritage. Intergenerational activities among the villagers were also enhanced through shared activities such as intergenerational art classes or the carving of a traditional Tlingit canoe.

The Project also increased participants’ self-confidence and helped them to supplement their incomes through artwork sales. Two

participants opened a business to further the sales of local artists’ work. The Project’s benefits have already extended beyond the Project’s scope. Some participants are teaching high school students.

SHI project members shared the positive benefits their implementation efforts have garnered in the Hoonah community and stated, “Community youth and elders have been very enthusiastic with many wanting to get directly involved in the art projects. There is great anticipation to use the manuals for future projects.”

The Project’s teachers were buoyed by their experience. One teacher expressed, “It makes me feel proud and encouraged.” A weaving instructor added, “I think all the students have become great weavers.” Finally, a weaving student remarked that “An old wisdom [is] coming back; a lost art [is] coming back.”

Overall, the Project had positive social, cultural and economic impacts on various stakeholders, including villagers, teachers, the University and tourists. The partnerships formed provide a sound foundation for further training initiatives and product development.

“This project significantly helped to preserve the history and the culture as a stepping stone to the future.”

Project Director

SITKA TRIBE OF ALASKA



Project Title: Sitka Tribal Tannery
Award Amount: \$143,468
Type of Grant: Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period: 9/30/2004 – 8/31/2006
Grantee Type: Tribe

PROJECT SUMMARY

- 3 jobs created
- 3 businesses created
- 3 Native American consultants hired
- 15 elders involved
- 30 youth involved
- \$18,709 in revenue generated
- \$61,025 in resources leveraged
- 71 people trained
- 8 partnerships formed
- 4 products developed

BACKGROUND

Sitka is located on Baranof Island, one of the many islands that comprise the Alexander Archipelago of southeastern Alaska. Sitka's population is approximately 8,500 people. The tribal enrollment is 3,100 and the Native Alaska Sitka community has an average annual income of \$12,500. Considered one of Alaska's most beautiful seaside towns, 250,000 visitors visit Sitka annually.

In Sitka, marine mammals are plentiful and tribal members continue to harvest these animals as a traditional food. Harvesting

also ensures a balance between predators and prey. Currently, mounting sea otter populations are threatening Sitka's commercial shellfish beds. To protect the traditional shellfish resources while also ensuring that the pelts of sea otters hunted in the Sitka region are processed for use by Sitka Native artists, the Sitka Tribe of Alaska developed the concept of a Sitka Tribal Tannery.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Sitka Tribal Tannery (Project) is to establish an economic development initiative that would create jobs while perpetuating the community's traditional culture and maritime lifestyle. More specifically, the Project planned to hire a tannery technician, coordinate and participate in an intensive tannery training program, and conduct artist workshops using donated furs and skins.

The first objective was to hire a tribal tannery technician. This objective was completed as planned and the hired technician was retained throughout the Project scope.

The second objective was to coordinate and implement a two-week intensive tannery training program to be offered on-site in the

Sitka Tribal Tannery. Six community members completed the training, receiving certification in techniques to tan hides.

The third objective was to coordinate and implement three artist workshops. The Project partnered with the local Boys and Girls Club chapter, instructing 30 youth in traditional drum making. Nine community members participated in a “Teddy Bear Project” and 14 were trained to sew travel pillows from otter pelts.

One challenge that arose during the initial Project phase was finding an affordable location for the tannery within the ANA-funded budget. Suitable commercial space was secured at a slightly higher rent than originally planned; therefore, the Project procured additional funding resources from outside partners to secure the location and keep the Project within budget.

The Project also developed several useful products. The products included a business plan for the Sitka Tribal Tannery and a DVD.

In addition to achieving its objectives and leveraging extra resources, the Project has formed new strategic partnerships. The United States Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development program will fund the Tribe’s two six-week small business development courses. In partnership with “Sitka Works!” (a small business development incubator), the courses will be offered to tribal members and Sitka residents. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service committed to fund the development of an experienced hunter/new hunter training program and training video. The Service will also fund Sitka Tribal Tannery’s and Sitka Marine Mammal Commission’s 2nd Regional Marine Mammal Management and Training Workshop.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

The Project successfully created the Sitka Tribal Tannery, allowing hunters to process their furs and providing raw materials for locally-created tribal arts. Sitka community members, ranging from 4 to 65 years of age, participated in the Project’s workshops and are now creating traditional crafts from Sitka Tribal Tannery processed furs and skins.

The Tannery has also had a positive ripple effect due to the creation of the “Made in Sitka” brand and the organization of an artists’ cooperative. The brand development has created an outlet for Sitka’s artists to sell authentic Tribal arts.

The “Teddy Bear Project” involved a partnership with the local social services program. It provided isolated, single mothers with an opportunity to bond by creating fur teddy bears from the processed otter pelts. These teddy bears were then used in centers which treated children who were victims of violence. For the single mothers, the enterprise offered a chance to gain extra income and to perpetuate traditional art skills, resulting in increased self-confidence and awareness of resources available to help them achieve their independence.

Overall, these outcomes have empowered the Sitka community. Opportunities to overcome economic barriers have been created, as well as venues to strengthen the community’s self-esteem and self-sufficiency. This progress was achieved in a manner that honors and perpetuates the Sitka culture. Finally, the Project has successfully created strong networks and partnerships to improve approaches to natural resource management, which will have positive long range environmental outcomes and strengthen the sustainability of the tannery.

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM HEALTH CORPORATION



Project Title: Health Career Pathways

Award Amount: \$295,700

Type of Grant: Social and Economic
Development Strategies

Project Period: 9/1/2004 – 1/31/2006

Grantee Type: Native Non-Profit

PROJECT SUMMARY

- 1 job created
- \$129,340 in resources leveraged
- 650 youth involved
- 4 elders involved
- 3 partnerships formed
- 19 products developed
- 33 people trained

BACKGROUND

The Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC) is a private, non-profit health corporation that delivers primary care, educational, preventive and planning services to the people of the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta. Headquartered in Bethel, it maintains clinics in Aniak, Emmonak, St. Mary's and Toksook Bay. The YKHC service area encompasses 58 federally-recognized tribes in 56 villages. The service area population is about 24,000 people of whom 89 percent are Native Alaskans.

Most area medical care providers are not Native Alaskans and they average less than two years in the region. YKHC currently employs 1,400 health professionals. Twenty-eight percent of YKHC staff work

at the Bethel headquarters, and non-Natives account for more than 50 percent of the payroll.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Health Career Pathways' (Project) purpose was to educate students and community members about health care careers. By exposing Native Alaskans to health careers, YKHC seeks to ultimately increase the number of Native Alaskans who become licensed or certified healthcare professionals. By relying on Native Alaskans in skilled, professional positions, YKHC expects to increase Native Alaskan income and improve overall workforce stability.

The Project's first objective was to promote Alaska Native professionals as role models and raise awareness of health career opportunities. The Project created 19 "Profiles of Success" posters and sent posters to area schools to highlight the link between education and available career options. The Project also recognized Alaska Native health professionals in the YKHC newsletter and local newspaper.

The Project's second objective was to promote health careers to K-12 students and community members. The Project conducted

Health Career Fairs in each village with clinics, and attended numerous career fairs held within the YKHC service area. The Project also sponsored a Health Career Planning Workshop with the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Kuskokwim Campus, tailored to college students interested in the health field. Fourteen staged “Lunch with a Health Professional” events provided community members with an opportunity to increase their knowledge of health care disciplines. The Project established a database to maintain attendee’s contact information and 650 entries were logged.

The Project’s third objective was to assist students pursuing health professional training. The Project provided scholarship and financial aid information to interested students at all events.

During the second year, the Project had planned to expand dual-credit course offerings through partnerships with school districts and the UAF Kuskokwim Campus. Due to departures of key staff at the University, the Project was unable to capitalize upon its pre-existing relationships.

The final objective was to provide job shadow opportunities for regional high school and/or college students. Thirty-one students participated in the job shadow program, with each student spending two weeks at a Bethel homestay and receiving per diem for the program’s duration.

High turnover in two education coordinator positions posed a continuous challenge for the Project. Three individuals held the positions over a 17-month period, and the grant operated with only one education coordinator for the final five months of the Project. Due to the turnover, staff spent unanticipated time and effort to orient the new hires.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

By reaching over 650 youth, this Project successfully educated and increased awareness about health careers in the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta. The Area Health Education Council rewarded its success by awarding YKHC a three-year grant to continue the Project’s work.

The Project had a positive impact on other professions in Alaska. The Future Teachers of Alaska Program has replicated YKHC’s model with the goal of getting Native youth interested in becoming teachers.

By being continuously involved with the Native school-aged population, YKHC has directly benefited from and effectively created a career development system. YKHC currently has 11 Native students in their scholarship program, four of which were awarded during this Project’s timeline.

The teachers who hosted health care professionals in their classrooms shared that they welcomed the chance to have Native Alaska professionals present their success stories in their classroom and eagerly supported those interested students who wished to pursue the job shadow program. Russ Boring, a teacher with the Lower Kuskokwim School District, related: “YKHC gives my students an opportunity to experience a day in the life of a health professional that they wish to become.” Wally Richardson, Native Hire Coordinator at YKHC, reflected on the necessity to create these opportunities for their community members: “It’s important to keep our people here. We want them to succeed, and we want to put them in a better position to help our community.”

“That’s the woman from the poster! I want to be just like her!”

Native Alaskan Student