



YK Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2021 Work Session

Education and Workforce Development Focus Area Action Planning Results

Thursday, October 21, 2021 | 10am – 12pm

Link to recording: <https://www.avcp.org/tribal-resources/community-development/regional-comprehensive-economic-development-strategy/>

Facilitator(s): Yvonne Jackson, Rural Alaska Professional Development

Support: Shelly Wade and Freddie Olin, Agnew::Beck Consulting

Participants:

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Jackie	Garcia	Calista Corporation
Cathy	LeCompte	Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC)
Natalie	Hanson	Nuvista Light and Electric Cooperative
Vernon	Chimalagrea	Donlin Gold
Tracy	Lewis	Native Village of Kongiginak
Kimberly	Hankins	Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD)
Brenda	Pacarro	Calista Corporation
Kira	Wilkinson	Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF)
Nicholai	Joekay	The Tundra Women's Coalition (TWC)
Michael	Ulroan	Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP)
Bill	Stamm	Alaska Village Electric Cooperative (AVEC)
Greta	Goto	Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC) Education Foundation
Collean	Laroux	Donlin Gold
Clarence	Daniel	Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)
Adelheid	Herrmann	Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Policy (ACCAP)
Azara	Mohammadi	Alaska Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs / Alaska National Guard
Christopher	Bryant	Alaska Rural Professional Development, LLC
Leila	Smith	Calista Corporation
Blanche	D.	--
Paul	Larson	Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) Student
Eric	Evon	Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)
Erik	O'Brien	Denali Commission
Florence	Kargi	Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF)
Audrey	Alstrom	Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP)
Rahnia	Boyer	Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC)
Andrea	Gusty	The Kuskokwim Corporation
Oscar	Evon	Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF)
Bessie Lea	Weston	Merkoyruk Resident
John	Charlie	Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)
Meg	Smith	Donlin Gold

Objective: Review progress on priority CEDS actions, define next steps for implementation, and track progress toward key indicators.

Agenda:

A. Welcome, Logistics, Roll Call, Breakout Purpose and Agenda Review

B. Strategy/Action Introduction and Knowledge Sharing

CEDS Strategy: Prepare regional residents for work in emerging economic sectors, including aviation, energy, housing construction and rehabilitation, infrastructure, planning, transportation and resource development.

C. Action Planning

Action Plan Task	Lead and Partners	Funding Sources	Next Steps
<p>Task A. Collectively develop and implement a regional vocational training workforce development plan focused on adults. <i>Components/process might include identifying:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific employer/sector gaps and needs • Existing opportunities and challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy barriers limiting success and proposed policy changes • Strategies to address gaps and needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Estimated costs, funding sources for implementation 	<p>Lead: Yuut Eliitnaurviat (YE)</p> <p>Key Partner: AVCP Workforce Development</p> <p>Other Partners: State of Alaska Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development (YK Delta Job Center), HR representatives from all major employers</p>		<p>ANSEP: Bethel Acceleration Academy has kicked off for 2021-2022 school year and plans to continue in the future.</p> <p>Calista: Has begun updating the YK Workforce Development Plan for 2022.</p> <p>Yuut: LPN training program has begun for 2021-2022. Nurse Aide training is also offered for 2021-2022.</p> <p>Working group: Representatives attend the YK Delta Workforce Development meeting (Feb 2021)</p>
<p>Task A. Progress Update: Calista holds an annual YK Delta Workforce Development meeting (Feb 2021). Brings together partners to share projects, resources. Brenda can include everyone on the invite.</p> <p>ANSEP has been working in the YK region through a partnership with AVCP. They are introducing a new Regional Director position based in Bethel, with soon-to-be-established Acceleration Academy. Participants are not adults yet, but they will be in a few years. The Acceleration Academy allows students to earn college credit while in high school without leaving the region. ANSEP, LKSD and KUC are in the planning phases.¹</p> <p>Yuut Eliitnaurviat has started a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) training program based in Bethel. It is the only program of its kind in Alaska. There is also a 9.00 credit Nurse Aide program offered through KUC. Yuut helps facilitate DOL/WD sponsored, employer-based apprenticeships.</p>			

Detailed Notes and Outline of Preliminary Gaps and Solutions on Priority Task a: collectively develop and implement a regional vocational training workforce development plan focused on adults. **Highlighted** industries in the table were the focus of the 12/17 working group discussion. **Green text is 2021 Work Session update.**

¹ 8-19-2021: <https://www.ansep.net/lksd-students-can-earn-high-school-and-college-credits-in-new-ansep-program/>

Industry	Program Providers	Gaps	Solutions (2-year timeline)
Aviation	AVCP, AVTEC, EXCEL, YE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest wage jobs (pilots, mechanics, administration) are not filled by residents Residents must meet prerequisites to participate in the program; many recent HS graduates struggle on qualifying performance tests A flight school is needed; current AVCP flight school facility is closed Yuut recently lost a full-time aviation mechanics instructor. There have been no instructors from the region to date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reopen flight school Encourage potential participants to work with ANSEP, AVTEC on prerequisites and test readiness Flight school instructors teaching ground school courses in partnership with regional high schools
<p>Summary of Existing Aviation Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANSEP: most programs begin in middle school, with a focus on STEM. Upcoming Bethel-based high school acceleration academy supports all career paths. Helps students meet prerequisites, eliminating the need for remediation. YE Air Frame and Power Plant School: graduating cohort one in mid-January 2021. Signing up students for cohort two, expected to begin January 2022. EXCEL Alaska: has Flight School and Ground School class at Summer XL; graduated private pilots who are progressing to get licensed. LKSD had an aviation career path for students, but the lack of a flight school made it challenging – nowhere for graduates to go. Also need ground school instructors in region; LKSD could share an instructor with the flight school. 			
Communications	Donlin, GCI, Denali Commission, Tribal governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadband and cell service connectivity has historically been inconsistent and spotty throughout the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The US Department of Treasury has recently opened up a Tribal Capital project fund for local infrastructure needs, particularly for high bandwidth distance delivery education and training programs.
Energy	AEA, AVTEC, Kusilvak Academy, LKSD, REAP, RUBA (EPA), UAF Bristol Bay (Sustainability and Tribal Governance program partnership), YE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turnover; major driver of turnover is pay. Operators are not properly compensated or valued in many rural communities given complexity of the job and more competitive paying jobs elsewhere Lack of understanding in small communities of appropriate costs, investment in utility operations and maintenance More skills needed as renewables and technology needs expand in YK communities; need dual-skill operators who can oversee both traditional and renewable systems Financial constraints of training, investment Facilities maintenance; budget cuts are driving cuts to maintenance at schools, Tribal buildings; efficiency can reduce costs but requires more sophisticated skills (“not just janitors anymore”); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training for power plant operations, building maintenance, bookkeeping – emphasize these as interesting, secure, well-paying jobs Educate municipal and Tribal governments on importance of proper investment in utilities; need for energy literacy in local government More renewable energy “hub” operators or strike teams who can service multiple communities Connecting students with existing prerequisite courses for program such as occupational endorsement Encourage entrepreneurship – lots of opportunity in this industry, and does not require a degree School-based internships/ apprenticeships: students paired with facilities maintenance staff

Industry	Program Providers	Gaps	Solutions (2-year timeline)
		building systems/controls are increasingly complex and computerized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big opportunity for homes and weatherization, including constructing homes that are better weatherized, and/or retrofitting existing homes. (RurAL CAP, CCHRC) • AVTEC has been offering a bulk fuels handling training in Seward, with a flexible or blended format so students are not required to spend two months total away from home.
Health Care	EXCEL, Hooper Bay charter school, LKSD, YE, YKHC, KuC, Yuut, ANSEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional organizations can better assist residents to prepare for and successfully pass the standardized Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE), which would help meet basic education requirements for many job opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kuskokwim Campus works closely with the UAA Recruitment and Retention of Alaska Natives into Nursing (RRANN) and the Alaska Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) network to recruit and retain local residents into CMA/CNA and RN professions. • YKHC has also been cooperating with AHEC for recruitment of both Mental Health Aide and Dental Health Aides in the region. YKHC is working to recruit more students for CMA/CNA and CHAP in the region. Also working with Yuut to recruit for a six-week Dental Assistant program.
Housing Construction & Rehab	AVCP, EXCEL, Hooper Bay charter school, LYSD, YE, TKC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TKC has recently been working closely with ANTHC about weatherization and water and sewer projects for the sub-region.
Planning	UAF Kuskokwim Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low local-hire and workforce capacity involved with climate change adaptation planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current BIA Tribal Climate Resilience Program has funding available until FY2026 to secure young Alaska Native/Native American employment and placement opportunities with professional engineering firms involved with climate change adaptation planning.
Public Safety	EXCEL, YE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Industry	Program Providers	Gaps	Solutions (2-year timeline)
Transportation	AVCP, EXCEL, YE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging road systems and lack of materials (e.g., gravel) • Potential future need for trained operators for gravel extraction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Resource Development	ANSEP, Calista, Donlin, EXCEL Alaska, Hooper Bay charter school, TKC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource assessment, planning and feasibility – spans many resource topics (e.g., biomass harvesting) • Broad need for biotechnicians and biologists for guiding, preservation and conservation • More residents in fisheries + wildlife manager roles, participation with advisory groups (also focus of Subsistence Working Group) • GIS – mapping skills for lands department, recording sites. Challenging to find residents trained with those skills; lots of competition for that skill set • In-region mining-related training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TKC has been evaluating biomass potential in the sub-region, which would help build local workforce and lower heating costs for public facilities and residential homes. The residential home option includes specially designed homes from the Cold Climate Housing Research Center for biomass heat connections, which would be transformative.
General	ANSEP, AVTEC, YK job center, TKC, Yuut, Alaska Rural Professional Development, Calista, Donlin, LKSD, Kuspuk SD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline math and reading skills; starts in 3rd-4th grade, students that start to fall behind do not catchup. This has a cascading impact that negatively impacts testing, reading comprehension, etc. Statewide challenge. • Transportation to training, jobs • Regional residents, employers, and education/training institutions are all actively working to build, retain, and enhance the regional workforce, but there could be more focused efforts on coordination, cooperation, and collaboration. • Job and training opportunities appear to be Bethel-centric. There needs to be more coordination between regional organizations to level the playing field so there are equitable job and training opportunities in villages and communities besides Bethel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage successful HS graduates to pursue in-region opportunities in trades such as aviation – not just college. Too much emphasis on college. • TKC is working on “micro-credentialing,” or targeted training and workforce development strategies for shareholders in the sub-region. • Yuut has been working to recruit and fill DOL/WD sponsored, employer-based apprenticeship programs. • Alaska Rural Professional Development has helped fill a need for “soft skills” or business/employer setting training, as well as Calista, TKC, Donlin, etc. • Calista has recently started the Associate Teacher Apprentice Program as a local hire initiative with a focus on culturally appropriate curriculum and teaching methods. • LKSD and Kuspuk School Districts have been fully involved in a “Grow Your Own” professional education training and development program, so village residents would not have to leave the region for formal education programs and training opportunities.

Action Plan Task	Lead and Partners	Funding Sources	Next Steps
Task B. Conduct quarterly meetings between education and workforce development agencies and the HR departments of major employers.	Lead: Yuut Elitnaurviat Partners: Bethel Job Center, AVCP, HR representatives from major employers		Working group: Schedule December 2021 work group meeting planned. Exact date TBD.
Task B. Progress Update: None provided during meeting.			

D. Indicators of Success

Facilitator’s Note: The 12/17/20 and the 10/21/21 meetings did not include discussion of “indicators of success”, but should be a focus of future meetings, especially as priority strategies and actions are refined.

Indicator of Success/ Positive Change	2-Year Target	Priority Indicator?	Next Steps
<p>Tasks A-B. Employment for YK residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a meaningful target for this indicator requires baseline information that is not readily available. To set a meaningful target will require communicating with major employers in the region to document their upcoming employment needs/opportunities, a key step in the workforce development plan listed in task A above. 	In 2 years, X number of jobs are created for regional residents in emerging economic sectors (e.g., aviation, energy, housing construction and rehabilitation, infrastructure, planning, transportation, resource development, public safety, etc.).	(yes/no)	<p>Where to find the data: TBD at future Working Group meeting.</p> <p>Who will collect it: TBD at future Working Group meeting.</p>
<p>Tasks A-B. Decrease average amount of time between graduating with a training/certification and getting a job.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a meaningful target for this indicator requires collecting baseline information from training partners in the region. 	In 2 years, X percent reduction in the average amount of time (in weeks) between graduating with a training/certification and getting a job.	(yes/no)	<p>Where to find the data: TBD at future Working Group meeting.</p> <p>Who will collect it: TBD at future Working Group meeting.</p>
<p>Tasks A-B. Amount of private funding invested in YK education and workforce development programs (e.g., foundation grants awarded, donations to YE for programs, investments in a project or business because the training is available).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a meaningful target for this indicator requires baseline information from task A above. 	In 2 years, \$# in private funding invested in YK education and workforce development programs.	(yes/no)	<p>Where to find the data: TBD at future Working Group meeting.</p> <p>Who will collect it: TBD at future Working Group meeting.</p>
<p>Tasks A-B. Average number of weeks employed for training graduates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a meaningful target for this indicator will require baseline data 	In 2 years, the average total number of weeks training graduates are employed out of 52 weeks will increase from X to X .	(yes/no)	<p>Where to find the data: TBD at future Working Group meeting.</p>

Indicator of Success/ Positive Change	2-Year Target	Priority Indicator?	Next Steps
be collected from graduating students.			Who will collect it: TBD at future Working Group meeting.
<p>Tasks A-B. Number and percentage of YK jobs, apprenticeships and internships filled by YK residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a meaningful target for this indicator will require baseline data be collected from the State of Alaska (for the estimated percentage of resident employment in jobs) and from training partners (for the estimate of residents enrolled in apprenticeships and internships). 	In 2 years, X jobs will be filled by YK residents (X percent of all jobs), X internships will be filled by YK residents (X percent of all internships), and X apprenticeships will be filled by YK residents (X percent of all apprenticeships).	(yes/no)	<p>Where to find the data: TBD at future Working Group meeting.</p> <p>Who will collect it: TBD at future Working Group meeting.</p>
Task A. Future indicator: Number of YK residents achieving renewable energy occupational endorsement (program is all online, funding available).			

E. Summarize, Closing Comments and Adjourn

What final comments, questions or concerns do we have as individuals/as a group?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We should develop a K-12 curriculum that would teach math and reading using the existing infrastructure and environment that students see every day or what they personally are able to relate to in their daily lives. Set academic benchmarks at 9-12 level that are measurable. What percent of students are achieving those?
When should we meet again?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet in December.