



# Yukon Kuskokwim

## Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

December 14, 2023

**Food Security**

**Working Group Meeting**

# Welcome



# Land Acknowledgement

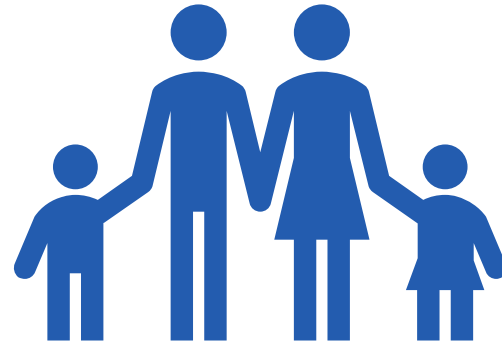


# Introductions (*invited participants*)

Alaska Department of Health and Social Services	National Wildlife Refuge
Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture	Native Village of Akiak
Alaska Farmers Markets	Native Village of Kalskag
Alaska Food Policy Council	Rural Alaska Community Action Program
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium	The Kuskokwim Corporation
Association of Village Council Presidents	University of Alaska Fairbanks
Bering Sea Elders Group	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Calista	Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association
Coastal Villages Region Fund	Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation
Donlin Gold	Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association
Inuit Circumpolar Council – Alaska	Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission	Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council
Meyers Farm, Bethel	Yuut Elitnaurviat

*Facilitation and support provided by Agnew::Beck Consulting: Shelly Wade, Abigail Morgan*

What does food security look like in your community? For your family?



# Today's Meeting Objectives

- Introduce the purpose and process of the YK CEDS.
- Share 2020/2021 YK CEDS Food Security and Subsistence Strategy and Actions and the transition to focus on food security.
- Share what we've learned so far.
- Discuss the challenges, opportunities, and solutions to the food security needs of the YK Region, and priority topics for collaboration.

# General Meeting Guidelines

- Be clear and specific.
- Avoid jargon and acronyms.
- Think creatively and strategically.
- Please use your mute button when not talking.
- Repeat your name every time you speak, if we have folks joining over the phone.



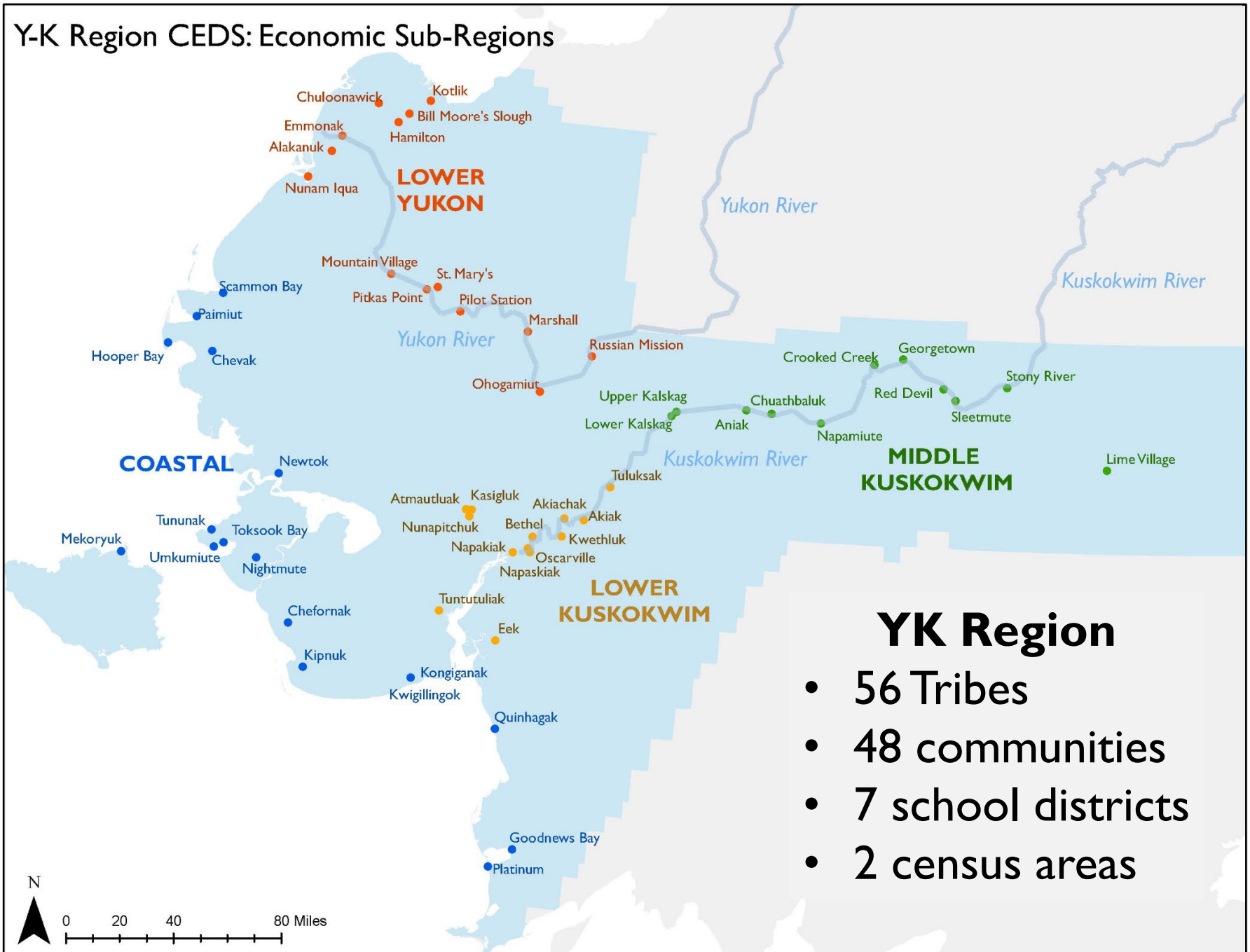
**We'd love to see you!** We are hoping for this to be an interactive meeting. Please turn your video on if your bandwidth allows.

# Review Purpose and Process of YK CEDS





# Y-K Region CEDS: Economic Sub-Regions



## YK Region

- 56 Tribes
- 48 communities
- 7 school districts
- 2 census areas

# What is a CEDS?

*Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*

A document that identifies ways to

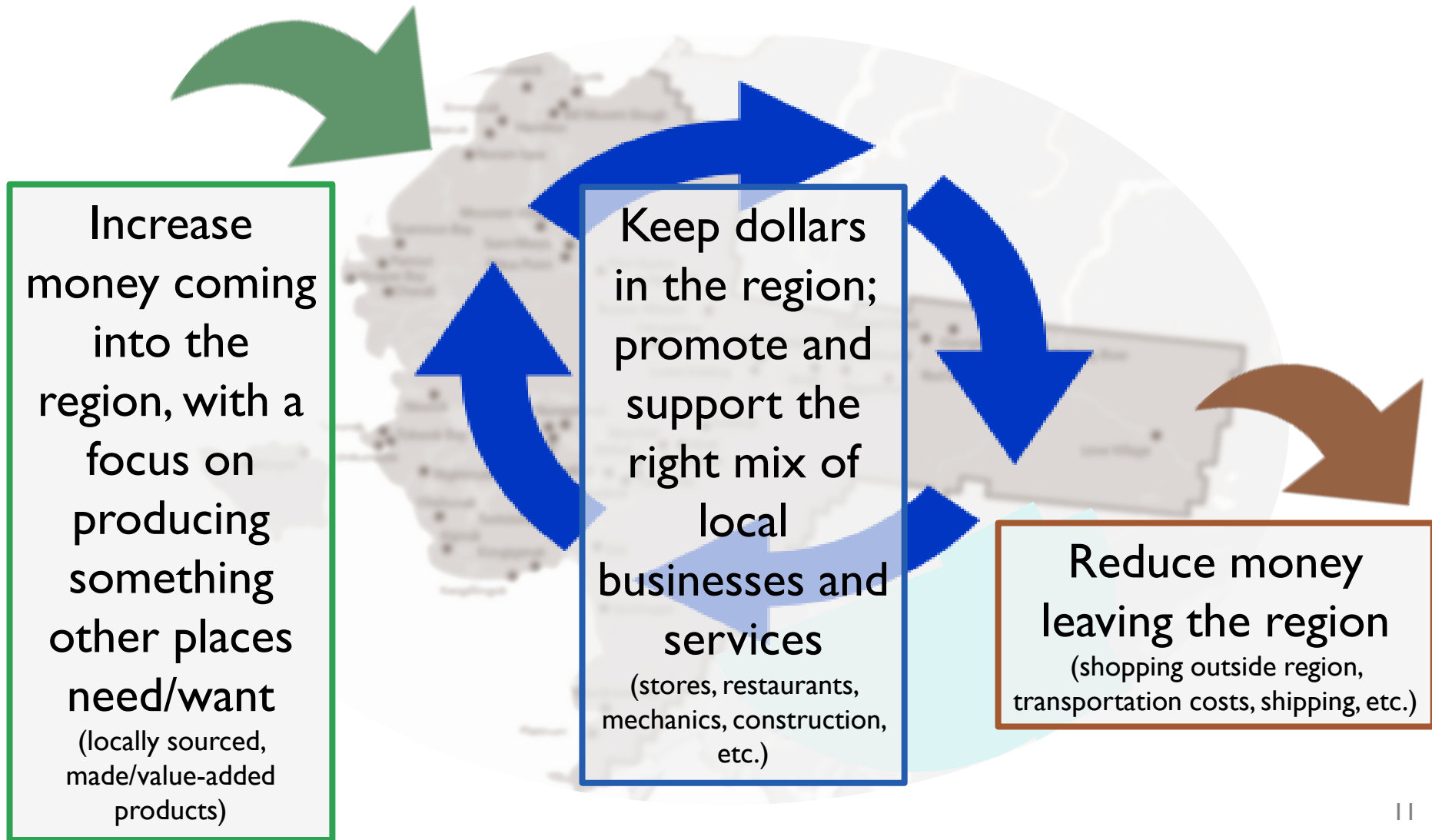
**support businesses**

**create more jobs**

**improve quality of life** and

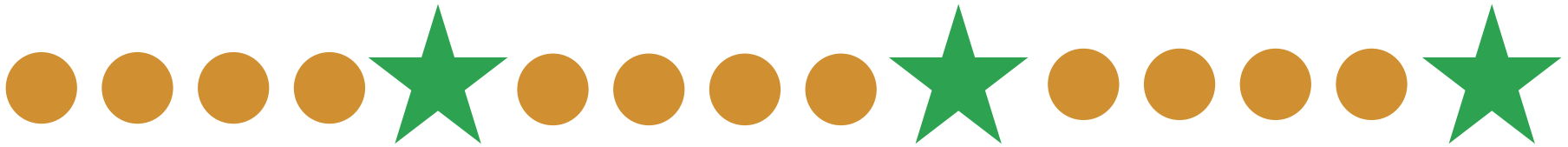
**increase resilience to  
changes and threats**

# How do we build a strong regional economy?



# Five-Year Update

CEDS must go through a robust update every five years, with shorter, less intensive updates annually. The five-year update was last completed in 2018.



- This current process is a 5-Year Update – 2024 – 2029 CEDS.
- Process and actions are shared by communities, partners in the region.

# Who is leading this process?

YK Communities, Tribes,  
Residents, Partners

YK CEDS Committee

## YK CEDS Working Groups

Housing/Water & Sewer Infrastructure | Food Security |  
Energy | Education and Workforce Development | Transportation  
| Business Development & Entrepreneurship | Communications

*Funded by  
the  
Association  
of Village  
Council  
Presidents  
(AVCP)*

# Roles and Responsibilities

## YK CEDS Committee

- **Represents the main economic interests of the YK Region.**
- Balances personal, community, and regionwide interests.
- Offers guidance, knowledge and implementation support for the YK CEDS.
- Assists with engagement and outreach.

## YK CEDS Working Groups

- **Offer expertise and experience around specific focus areas.**

For the focus area:

- discuss progress made, identify needs, propose solutions, and prioritize next steps.
- Guide data collection and help identify regional targets that can be used to track progress.
- Support collaborative efforts to implement CEDS recommendations with YK Tribes, communities, businesses, and organizations.

# YK CEDS Committee Membership

Organization	Representative(s)
Alaska Village Electric Cooperative	Bill Stamm, Anna Sattler
Association of Village Council Presidents	Clarence Daniel, Diane Atti
AVCP Regional Housing Authority	Peter Evon
Bethel Community Services Foundation	Michelle DeWitt
Bethel Native Corporation	Ana Hoffman
Calista	Miranda Strong & others on the Government Relations Team
City of Bethel	Alan Lanning, Lori Strickler
Native Village of Napaimute	Mark Leary
Nuvista	Sean Glasheen, Bertha Prince
Orutsararmiut Native Council	Brian Henry
The Kuskokwim Corporation	Andrea Gusty, Will Hartman, Jonathan Samuelson
Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation	Christopher Beltzer
Yupit Piciryarait Cultural Center	Marybeth Whalen
Yuut Elitnaurviat	Tiffany Tony and Mike Hoffman
<i>Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program</i>	<i>Invited</i>

# Schedule and Process

Summer and  
Fall 2023

- Kickoff process
- Conduct interviews
- Launch community assessment tool

Fall 2023  
/Winter 2023-  
2024

- Collect economic, population data
- Convene working groups
- Host YK Work Session

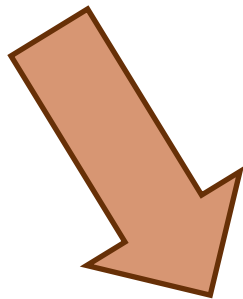
Spring 2024

- Develop draft and final YK CEDS Five-Year Update

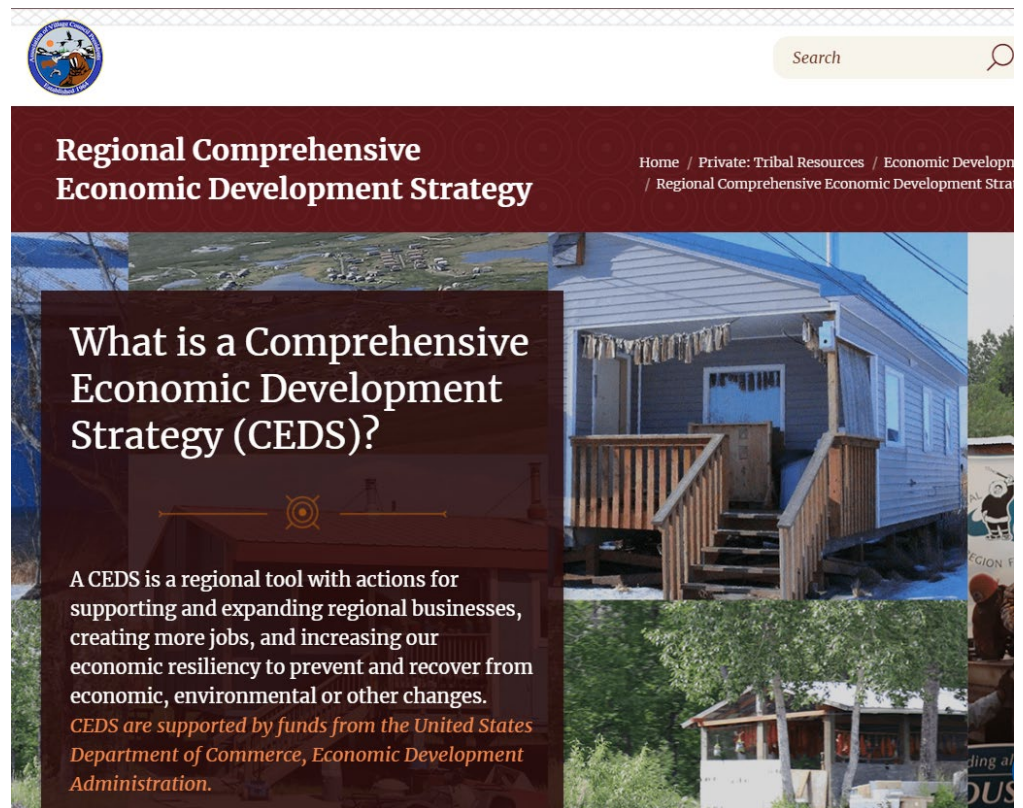


# Learn More about the CEDS and Past YK Work Sessions

Review past YK CEDS updates and previous YK work session summaries on the AVCP website:



<https://tinyurl.com/ykceds>



**Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**

Home / Private: Tribal Resources / Economic Development / Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy




## What is a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)?

A CEDS is a regional tool with actions for supporting and expanding regional businesses, creating more jobs, and increasing our economic resiliency to prevent and recover from economic, environmental or other changes.

*CEDS are supported by funds from the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration.*

# Community Assessment Tool

**Purpose:** Learn individual priorities of YK communities and support solutions for communities' needs.

<b>TOPIC</b> <b>IMPORTANT: Please complete Questions #1, 2, and 3 for each topic.</b>	<b>1. What is your top community priority or project for this topic? <i>This should be the project you want to make progress on over the next year.</i></b>	<b>2. What are you doing currently or what steps have you taken to address that priority project?</b>	<b>3. What is the biggest barrier to making progress on your top priority project?</b>
<b>A. Housing</b>  <i>This topic may include issues about new housing, overcrowding, housing costs, and others.</i>			
<b>B. Water-Sewer</b>  <i>This topic may include issues about water, sewer, washeteria, and related issues.</i>			
<b>C. Food Security</b>  <i>This topic may include grocery costs, food storage, subsistence, greenhouse opportunities, and other food related issues.</i>			

Deadline:  
 January 12,  
 2024

# Review and Discuss Past YK CEDS Food Security Recommendations



# Priority Strategy from 2021 Update

## Food Security

Strategy 9: Expand local employment and involvement in natural resource research, management and subsistence decision-making at the community, regional, state and federal levels.

**9-A.** Maintain a youth seat on CEDS Subsistence working group.

**9-B.** Develop a career pathway for subsistence and natural resource management.

**9-C.** Develop an apprenticeship program to guide younger people into high-level resource management positions.

**9-D.** Establish a small cohort of youth to be mentored and introduced to educational and career pathways in natural resources.

# Priority Strategy from 2021 Update

## **9-A. Maintain a youth seat on CEDS Subsistence working group.**



9-B. Develop a career pathway for subsistence and natural resource management.

9-C. Develop an apprenticeship program to guide younger people into high-level resource management positions.

9-D. Establish a small cohort of youth to be mentored and introduced to educational and career pathways in natural resources.

## **Update**

- Three Yup'ik UAF ANSEP students were featured as keynote speakers for the October 2021 YK CEDS Work Session, providing a leading example of an all-Yup'ik waterfowl research crew.
- Calista can be a partner to cultivate opportunities for youth to serve on boards.

# Priority Strategy from 2021 Update

9-A. Maintain a youth seat on CEDS Subsistence working group.

**9-B. Develop a career pathway for subsistence and natural resource management.**



9-C. Develop an apprenticeship program to guide younger people into high-level resource management positions.

9-D. Establish a small cohort of youth to be mentored and introduced to educational and career pathways in natural resources.

## Update

- Several resources exist or are in development, including:
  - ANSEP placements into the Yukon Delta NWR
  - Navigating the New Arctic Community Office (NNA-CO) capacity-building in early-career researchers
  - Study of Environmental Arctic Change (SEARCH)
  - UAF Fisheries Management Program
  - Tamamta
  - UAF Tribal Governance Program
  - Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, Orutsararmiut Native Council, and the State of Alaska
  - US Fish and Wildlife Service
  - Calista Lands Department

# Priority Strategy from 2021 Update

9-A. Maintain a youth seat on CEDS Subsistence working group.

9-B. Develop a career pathway for subsistence and natural resource management.

**9-C. Develop an apprenticeship program to guide younger people into high-level resource management positions.**

9-D. Establish a small cohort of youth to be mentored and introduced to educational and career pathways in natural resources.

## Update

- ANSEP is guiding young people toward high-level resource management positions, starting with its Acceleration Academy (in partnership with Lower Kuskokwim School District and UAF Kuskokwim Campus).
- USFWS is hiring youth from the region into its Fisheries Resource Management Program.
- Calista awarded 362 CECI natural resource scholarships over the last five years.

# Priority Strategy from 2021 Update

9-A. Maintain a youth seat on CEDS Subsistence working group.

9-B. Develop a career pathway for subsistence and natural resource management.

9-C. Develop an apprenticeship program to guide younger people into high-level resource management positions.

**9-D. Establish a small cohort of youth to be mentored and introduced to educational and career pathways in natural resources.**



## Update

- The Native Youth Climate Adaptation Leadership Congress is an annual national mentorship program for youth that is a collaboration among the USFWS, National Park Service, BIA, and USFS.
- TKC is building subsistence advocacy into their internship program.
- Four of the current Tamamta cohort members have ties to the Y-K.



# What We Have Learned So Far



# Challenges

- Lack of regional and community-level data collected and/or available.
- High grocery costs are negatively impacting communities.<sup>1</sup>
- Low salmon numbers in both the Kuskokwim and Yukon Rivers and resulting fishery closures and increased regulations.<sup>2</sup>
- Lack of capacity for outreach on supportive services and programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Women, Infants and Children, etc.<sup>3</sup>
- Food insecurity is high in the region.<sup>4</sup>
  - Kusilvak Census Area has the second highest rate of food insecurity in the nation in 2021 at 25.9% .
  - Bethel Census area has above average rates at 20.5% which is nearly double the national food insecurity rate (10.4%).

<sup>1</sup> Identified through Community Assessment Tool responses

<sup>2</sup> Identified from [Alaska Department of Fish and Game data](#)

<sup>3</sup> Identified through Community Assessment Tool responses

<sup>4</sup> Identified from Feeding America's [Map the Meal Gap data](#)

# Opportunities

- Work of the Kuskokwim and Yukon Inter-Tribal Fish Commissions.
- Co-Stewardship and Co-Management discussions and agreements toward local/Tribal management of subsistence and other resources.
- Formalize data collection (some agencies are already working toward this!).
- Collaboration for joint outreach efforts on programs like SNAP and WIC.
- Alaska-wide food security efforts are in the works:
  - House Bill 298 (Food Strategy Task Force): Report development.
  - Alaska Food Policy Council: Food Systems Action Plan.
  - Alaska Salmon Research Task Force: They have a YK work group!

# Food Security Data Indicators

- Natural resource stewardship jobs (created or maintained)
  - Bureau of Economic Analysis: Employment in forestry, fishing, and farming
- Number of businesses providing farm-to-table or seafood-to-table products.
- Increase in the number of value-added production and distribution jobs in the agriculture and fishing industries.
- Increase in the number of schools in the region serving locally-harvested products.
- Others?

# Priority Topics and Emerging Solutions



## Food System Components, Processes, and Activities



Graphic Credit: [International Institute for Sustainable Development](https://www.internationalinstitute.org/)

## Potential Strategies/Topics:

- Expand local employment, youth involvement, and mentorship in natural resource research, management, and subsistence decision-making at all levels.
- Ensure communities have sufficient emergency food supplies to feed the community in the event of a disaster.
- Identify ways to grow and produce more food locally.
- Identify ways to mitigate climate impacts on subsistence resources (e.g., low berry harvests, toxicity in fish, etc.).
- Increase the use of SNAP, WIC, and other benefits across the region.

## Guiding Questions:

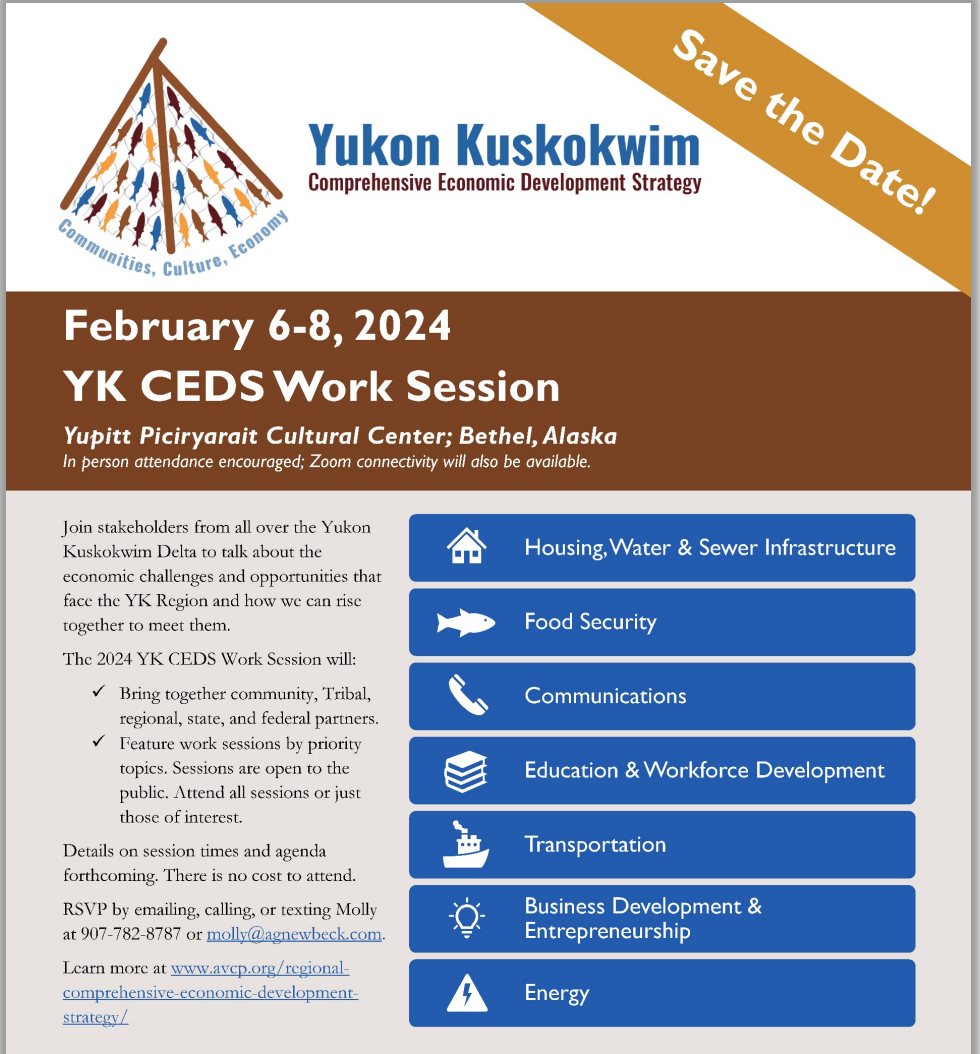
1. What is your Tribe, community, agency doing to address food security in your community, the YK?
2. How can we work together to increase food security in the YK?

# Wrap Up



# Upcoming YK CEDS Work Session

- **When:** February 6-8, 2024
- **Where:** At the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center in Bethel (*also a virtual option*)
- **Purpose:** Convene people from around the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta and develop solutions to regional economic challenges.



The flyer features a logo on the left consisting of a triangular arrangement of colorful fish, with the text 'Yukon Kuskokwim' and 'Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy' to its right. A diagonal banner in the top right corner reads 'Save the Date!'. The main text is centered in a dark brown box, and a list of topics is presented in blue buttons on the right side.

**Yukon Kuskokwim**  
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

**February 6-8, 2024**  
**YK CEDS Work Session**  
**Yupitt Piciryarait Cultural Center; Bethel, Alaska**  
*In person attendance encouraged; Zoom connectivity will also be available.*

Join stakeholders from all over the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta to talk about the economic challenges and opportunities that face the YK Region and how we can rise together to meet them.

The 2024 YK CEDS Work Session will:

- ✓ Bring together community, Tribal, regional, state, and federal partners.
- ✓ Feature work sessions by priority topics. Sessions are open to the public. Attend all sessions or just those of interest.

Details on session times and agenda forthcoming. There is no cost to attend.

RSVP by emailing, calling, or texting Molly at 907-782-8787 or [molly@agnewbeck.com](mailto:molly@agnewbeck.com).

Learn more at [www.avcp.org/regional-comprehensive-economic-development-strategy/](http://www.avcp.org/regional-comprehensive-economic-development-strategy/)

- Housing, Water & Sewer Infrastructure
- Food Security
- Communications
- Education & Workforce Development
- Transportation
- Business Development & Entrepreneurship
- Energy



# Upcoming YK CEDS Working Groups

Topic	Next meeting
Business Development & Entrepreneurship	Proposed for mid-January
Communications	Proposed for mid-January
Education & Workforce Development	Proposed for mid-January
Transportation	Proposed for mid-January
<b>Food Security</b>	<b>Held TODAY</b>
Energy	Held December 13, 2023 (yesterday)
Housing, Water & Sewer Infrastructure	Held October 13, 2023

# Next Steps

- Share notes from today.
- Continue to promote and distribute the Community Assessment Tool.
- Convene additional Working Groups.
- Come together for the YK Work Session in February.
- Prepare the draft and final CEDS.

# Closing Comments & Questions

Ideas or questions? Contact us.

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