



2024-2028 Yukon Kuskokwim Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

**Communications Summary:
Work Session Draft – February 2024**

Where We Are Today	What data indicators can we monitor to track progress? Where do we want to be in 5 years?	Where We Aim to Be in 2028
[#] communities	Communities Served: Number of communities served (at least 100mbps download speed, 20mbps upload speed).	[#] communities
71% of communities	Tribally-Owned Broadband Rate: Percent of communities served by Tribally-owned broadband. ¹	100% of YK communities
Need to identify	Internet Speed: Average upload/download speeds available.	Minimum 100 mbps download speed Minimum 20mbps upload speed
Need to identify	Internet Cost: Average cost of internet service.	\$60 or less/month

Other Potential Indicators (need baselines and targets): Percentage of remote, local employment; accrued savings for public institutions as broadband infrastructure expands; percentage of local employment in broadband deployment and maintenance jobs; number of communities connected in multiple modes.

Sources: ¹Alaska Tribal Spectrum Members

Proposed Communications Objectives *(adapted from previous CEDS)*

1. Increase connectivity in the YK region.
2. Support Tribal efforts to develop the YK Tribal broadband spectrum.

Communications Strategic Direction: Potential Strategies and Actions

Proposed Strategy A: *Expand broadband infrastructure and connectivity throughout the region, prioritizing local ownership of key assets.*

1. Utilize currently funded opportunities to develop telecommunications infrastructure.
2. Build a cohort of innovators or specialists to assist potential Tribal applicants for upcoming funding opportunities.
3. Build data tracking and reporting into planning efforts to measure progress and successes.

Proposed Strategy B: *Plan for broadband buildout by creating strong partnerships and collaborations between public, private, and Tribal entities on communications infrastructure projects.*

4. Develop Yukon Kuskokwim Delta (YKD) Broadband Plan.
5. Incorporate Tribes throughout the broadband planning process.
6. Develop a workforce development strategy for telecommunications infrastructure build-out, including establishing needed trainings.
7. Organize a YK Broadband Conference for regional entities and communications businesses.

Guiding Questions for YK CEDS Work Session Breakouts

1. What strategies or actions are missing?
2. Which strategies and actions are the most important to achieve first and over the next five years?
3. How can we collaborate to make progress?

Other Relevant Resources and Potential Funding Sources

Relevant Resources

- The Unmet Needs of Environmentally Threatened Alaska Native Villages: Assessment and Recommendations. Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. January 2024. [View here.](#)
- Bristol Bay Broadband Implementation Plan for Virtual Jobs Adoption. Bristol Bay Native Corporation and the Denali Commission. December 2023. [View here.](#)
- Southwest Alaska Long-haul Microwave and Optical Network (SALMONet) Job Opportunity Evaluation. Bristol Bay Native Association. 2023. [View here.](#)

Potential Funding Sources

- FY 2023 Distressed Area Recompete Pilot Program Phase 2 Notice of Funding Opportunity. Economic Development Administration, US Department of Commerce. December 2023. [View here.](#)

Strengths and Opportunities

Internal and external factors that contribute to our success in this focus area

- Telecommunications infrastructure in the region continues to be upgraded and expanded.
- Federal funding for broadband infrastructure such as Digital Equity and Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD).
- There has been increased acknowledgement of the need for digital equity and Tribal consultation.
- Faster, more reliable internet increases access to training and virtual employment opportunities.
- Starlink is helping fill short-term connectivity needs.
- Telecommunications infrastructure buildout creates local jobs for both construction and maintenance of broadband systems.

Weaknesses and Threats

Internal and external factors that are barriers to our success in this focus area

- High cost of telecommunications services.
- Low quality services (e.g., cell, landline, internet).
- Persistent issues in getting the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to disburse funds for telecommunications infrastructure planning.
- Lack of coordination and alignment between funders and organizations.
- Lack of capacity, technical assistance, and training for telecommunications infrastructure planning grant writing, ongoing maintenance, operations, and relevant data collection.
- Lack of cell service carriers.
- Lack of state regulation over the telecommunications industry.
- Lack of long-term planning to include workforce development training and education once broadband infrastructure is built out in the region.
- Limited engagement with Tribes in broadband planning.
- Permitting requirements and securing rights of way.