

YK Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Food Security Work Session Meeting Notes

1:30 pm – 3:30 pm, Tuesday, February 6, 2024. [Link to meeting recording.](#)

Attendees (alphabetized by organization)

Attendee Name	Organization
Romorenzo Marasigan*	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Marcia Anderson*	Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Michael Black*	Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Marisa McKasson*	Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Rebecca Ligler*	Alaska Psychiatric Institute
Clarence Daniel*	Association of Village Council Presidents
Jennifer Hooper*	Association of Village Council Presidents
Carey Atchak	Bethel Community Services Foundation
Joe Atchak	Bethel Community Services Foundation
Michelle DeWitt	Bethel Community Services Foundation, Bethel Housing and Homelessness Coalition
Tonia Baklanova*	Calista Corporation
Tisha Kuhns*	Calista Corporation
Miranda Strong*	Calista Corporation
Erik O'Brien	Denali Commission
Colleen Laroux*	Donlin Gold
George Guy	Kwethluk Inc.
Tim Meyers	Meyers Farm
Jack Hebert	National Renewable Energy Laboratory
Roberta Murphy	Regional Tribal Government, Chuloonawick
Iva Karoly-Lister	Rural Alaska Community Action Program
Jonathan Samuelson	The Kuskokwim Corporation
Archie Andrew	Tuntutuliak Community Services Association
Ann Fischer	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Science
Brett Nelson	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Science
Robert Chambers	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development
Sean Kelly*	University of Alaska Fairbanks
Elizabeth Tressler	Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation
Patty Murphy*	Yukon Kuskokwim Regional Tribal Government

*Starrred attendees participated in the work session virtually while unmarked attendees participated in person.

Each breakout session featured a specific focus area summary document to guide the discussion. This summary document was used as a baseline and will be updated for the future CEDS document based on Work Session attendee feedback. To view the draft focus area summaries referenced in the breakout sessions, visit the YK CEDS page [here](#).

Data Indicators Discussion Highlights

- Need to determine ways to include subsistence despite the data collection from Fish and Game no longer being available.
 - Could possibly measure impacts of traditional/subsistence food on household food security from Orutsararmiut Native Council data collection.
 - Measure the quantity of customary and traditional food/harvests.
 - Calculate average resident costs of accessing traditional food (calculate gear, equipment, gas costs, and additional expenses incurred due to land closures and regulations).
- Measure the percentage of food imported to region.
- Consider nutrition – this can tie our work to the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.
- Consider other wellness factors – if you're not getting enough nutritious food, that often impacts your stress and other wellbeing levels.
- The cost for food as a percentage of household income (compared to that of other household expenses – rent, energy, etc.).
 - Consider how to address financial contributions of subsistence – what may be considered a low-income household might actually have a very high subsistence income (could possibly use the Tanana Chiefs Conference subsistence calculator). Put another way, if a household takes time off to harvest a moose, would the value of the moose to that household offset/more than offset time costs?
- Measure the percentage of households that report food security/insecurity.
- Increase in institutions providing local food (e.g., Yukon Kuskokwim Health Consortium, hospitals, schools and could expand to include restaurants and grocery stores).
- Consider how to share collected data so it can better impact our region.
- Which communities in the region have food security planning in place?

Objectives, Strategies, and Actions Discussion

What strategies or actions are missing?

*Starred items are noted as a proposed priority.

- **Under Action #6:** Include having a more regional, collaborative approach to helping with plans, grant writing, project management. Also include food storage and food producing/distributing facilities. *
- **Under Action #14:** Traditional food access and promoting traditional foods in communities, especially institutions ([schools](#), hospitals, etc.). Determine how to share knowledge from other successful communities and regions that have been able to get around regulation to serve traditional foods in institutional settings. *
 - U.S. Department of Agriculture regulations are a barrier.
 - One school serves fish and moose and the students love it.
 - See [Farm to School](#) resources.

- **ADD:** Consider workforce development opportunities and the current research and best practices to develop strong regional food security planning. *
- **ADD:** Identify who in the region has a food security plan. Support communities to develop plans for food security.
 - Develop a Tribal food security template.
 - YKHC has a food security program. *
- **Under #3:** Add the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)'s [Tribal Cooperative Extension](#).
- **Under #4:** Identify land to build farms (house, facilities, and land). Develop 5-acre farms (cabbage, potatoes, carrots, onions, chicken).
- **Under #9:** Include Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can be used for seeds/starts.
- **Combine #10 & #11:** And include drinking water.
 - **Under #11:** Develop regional food storage that can be accessible to the community and support disaster planning.
 - Educate communities on canning and food preservation; increase preserved food stores in the region.
- **Under #13:** Include school gardens and food sold to schools, e.g. Tok, Chickaloon, Tyonek, Sitka?.
 - Expand on education regarding traditional foods in schools/communities, such as identifying plants.
 - Consider refuse, compost, and fish compost.
 - The Osage Nation (Oklahoma) set up their own butchering.
 - [Indigenous Harvesting & Meat Processing Grant Program](#) – Alaska received \$7 million, which was allocated to the Tribal Government of St. Paul to support a reindeer harvest and meat processing facility.
 - Eek caribou herd is struggling.
- **ADD:** Develop a [guide](#) for how to do a startup with grants for a food security program or project.
 - Potential partners and resources: Intertribal Agriculture Council, Alaska Chapter; Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium's Food Sovereignty Program; Alaska Food Policy Council.
- **ADD:** Evaluate food resource access. Any restrictions or limited opportunities directly impact regional food security.

How can we collaborate to make progress?

- Identify champion responsible for implementation → The Kuskokwim Corporation and/or Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association?
- Orutsarmiut Native Council → subsistence data collection.
- Alaska Department of Health and Welfare → nutrition.
- Tanana Chiefs Conference → subsistence calculator.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture → finding ways around regulations to include subsistence foods at schools and other institutions.

- Alaska Native Medical Center, Kotzebue & Yukon Koyukuk Elder Homes, Southeast Fish to School program -> traditional food access.
- Yukon Kuskokwim Health Consortium food security program – Beth Tressler, Brian Lefferts.
- Tribal Cooperative Extension -> support the local development of farming and community gardening resources.
- There is a TANF program at the Association of Village Council Presidents. Consider other Tribal programs that could be used as resources.
- Tok, Chickaloon, Tyonek, Sitka -> school gardens and food sold to school.
- Osage Nation (Oklahoma) -> set up their own butchering.
- [Intertribal Agriculture Council, Alaska Chapter](#); Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium’s Food Sovereignty Program; Alaska Food Policy Council -> produces a guide for how to do a startup with grants for a food security program or project.
- Alaska Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management -> might have data to provide.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture grants, Natural Resources on Conservation Science, transfer to Commission -> funding to get started; diabetes grants.
- Kotzebue Elders Home -> pay locals to harvest food.
- [Produce Prescription Program](#) -> grant opportunity.

Additional Discussion

- Key Take Aways
 - Develop a few regional farmers, not everyone needs to be a gardener.
 - Establish subsistence advocacy to get political and protected access to foods, e.g. getting subsistence foods in schools.