



Yukon Kuskokwim

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

April 19, 2024
**Business Development &
Entrepreneurship
Working Group Meeting**

*We will be recording
today's conversation for
those unable to join
today.*

Welcome



Land Acknowledgement



Introductions (*invited participants*)

Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities	Nuvista
Alaska Energy Authority	RurAL CAP
Alaska Federation of Natives	Small Business Administration
Alaska Municipal League	Southwest Alaska Art Group
Association of Village Council Presidents	The Kuskokwim Corporation
Bethel Chamber of Commerce	Univ. of Alaska Center for Economic Development
Bethel Community Services Foundation	U.S. Dept. of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship
Calista	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development
City of Bethel	YK Regional Tribal Government
Denali Commission	Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation
Donlin Gold	Yupit Piciryarait Cultural Center
First National Bank of Alaska	Yuut Elitnaurviat

Facilitation and support provided by Agnew::Beck Consulting

Today's Meeting Objectives

- Short review of the Purpose and Process of the YK CEDS.
- Reminder of the 2020/2021 YK CEDS Business Development Strategy and Actions.
- Share what we've learned based on the YK CEDS Work Session and a crafter survey from spring 2024.
- Discuss solutions to the business development and entrepreneurship needs of the YK region and priority topics for collaboration.

General Meeting Guidelines

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

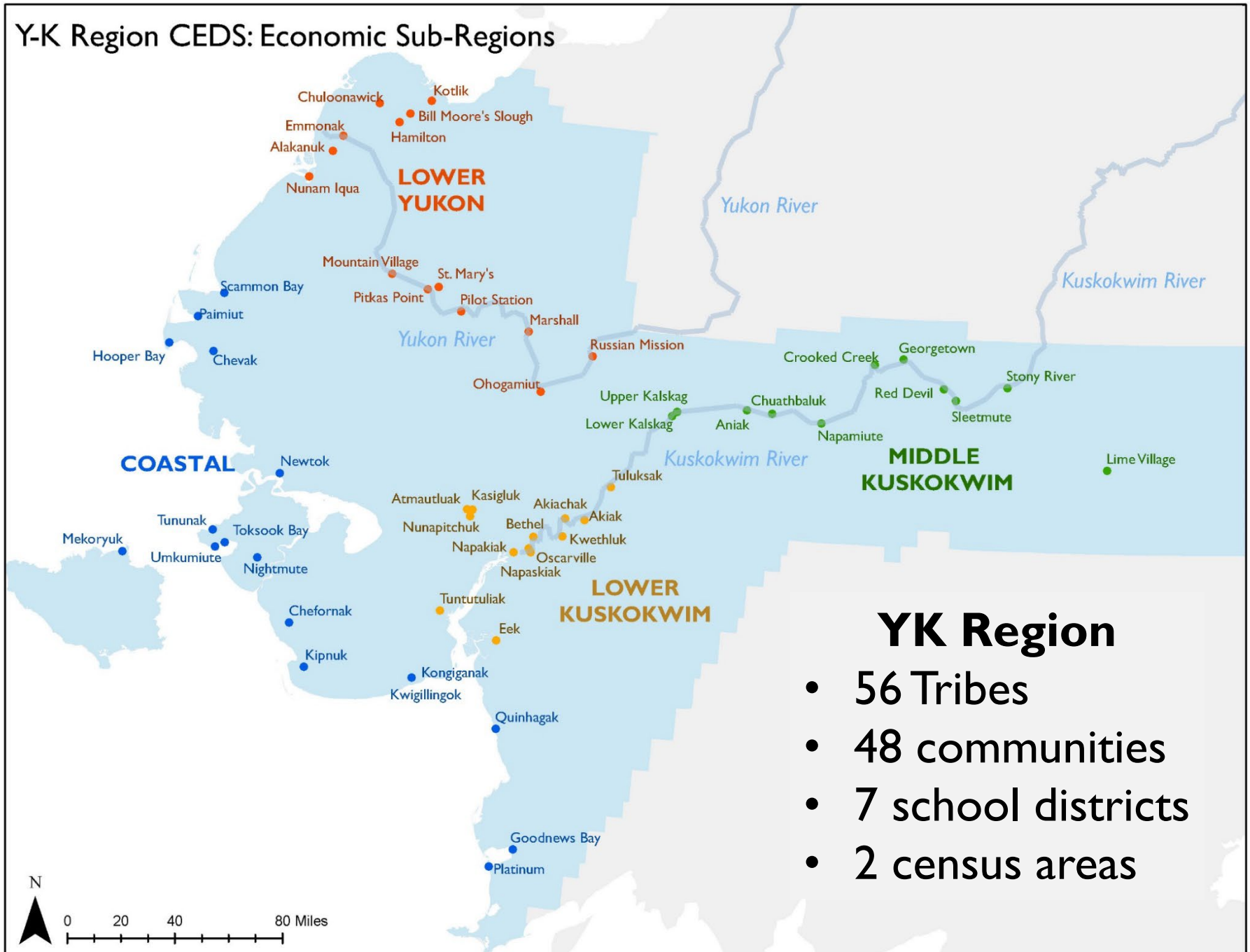


We'd love to see you! We are hoping for this to be an interactive meeting. Please turn your video on if your bandwidth allows.

Review Purpose and Process of YK CEDS



Y-K Region CEDS: Economic Sub-Regions



What is a CEDS?

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

A document that identifies ways to

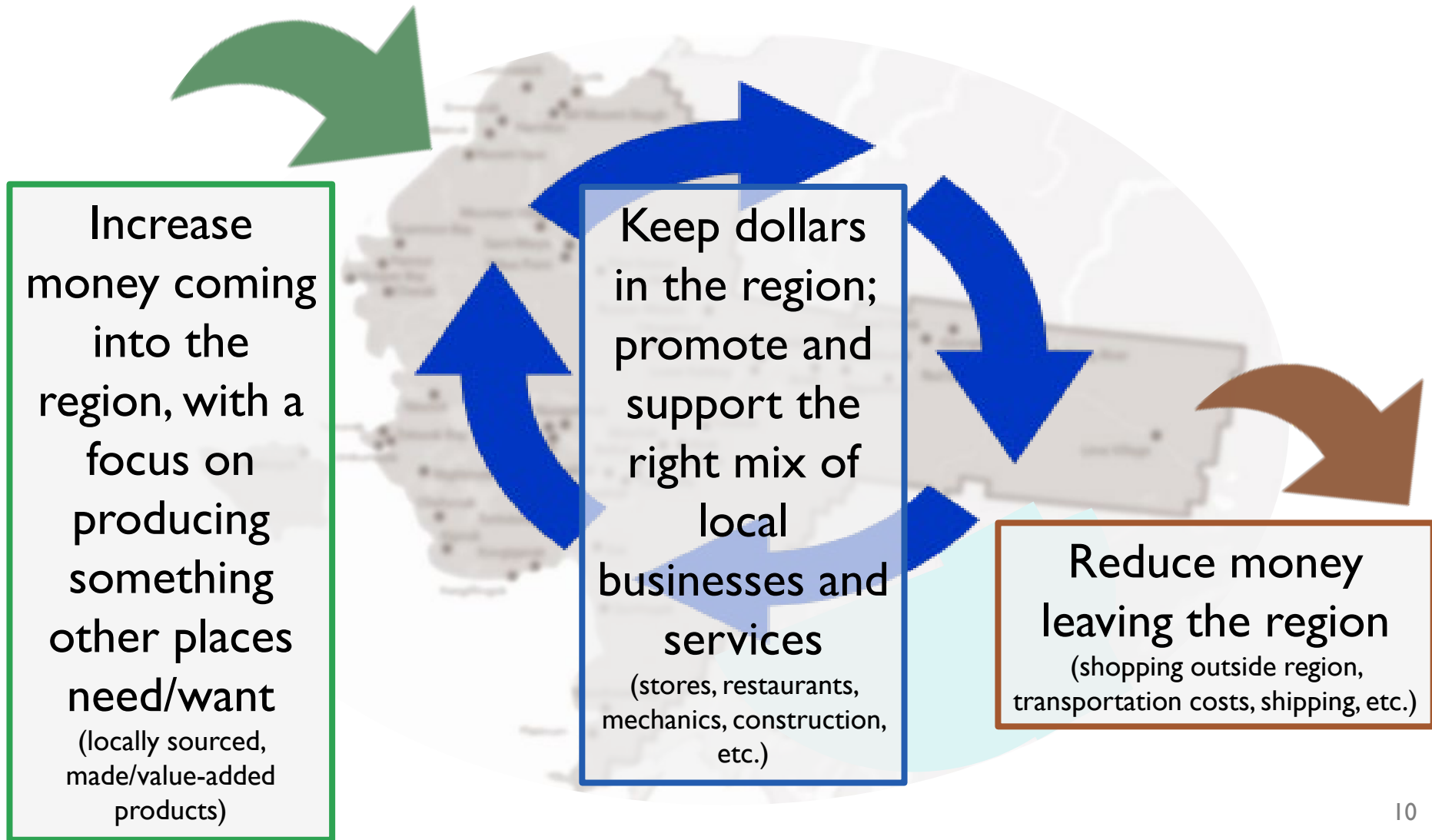
support businesses

create more jobs

improve quality of life and

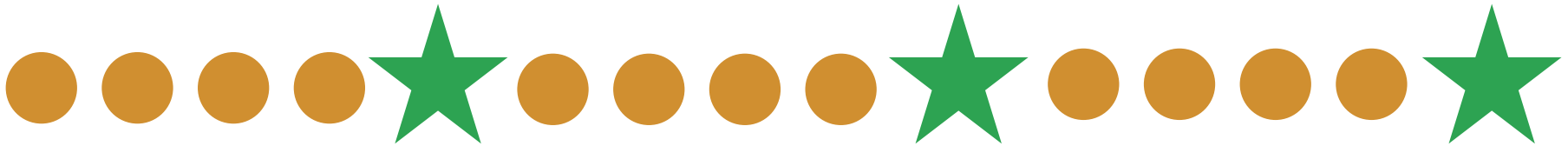
**increase resilience to
changes and threats**

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.



- Process and actions are shared by communities, partners in the region.
- The five-year update will be happening later this year.

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:

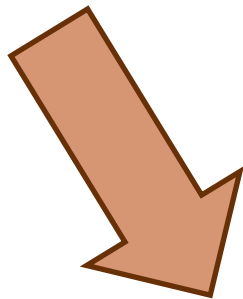
- Discuss progress made, identify needs, propose solutions, and prioritize next steps.
- Guide data collection and help identify regional targets that can be used to track progress.
- Support collaborative efforts to implement CEDS recommendations with YK Tribes, communities, businesses, and organizations.

YK CEDS Committee Membership

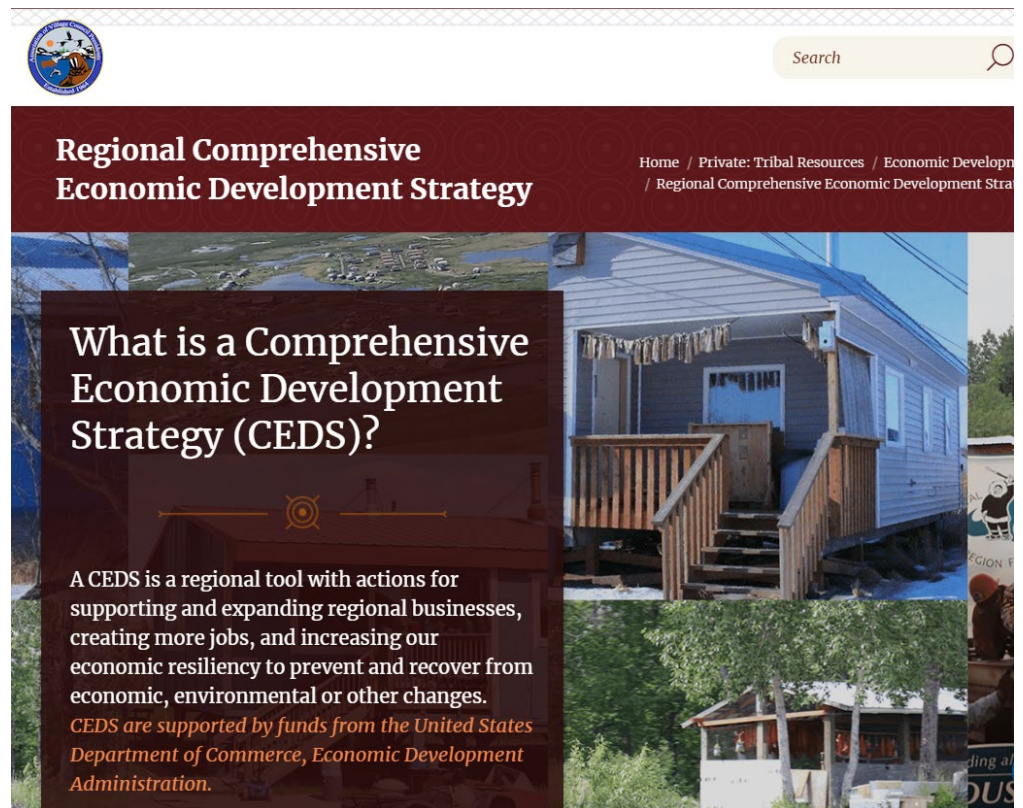
Organization	Representative(s)
Alaska Village Electric Cooperative	Bill Stamm, Anna Sattler
Association of Village Council Presidents	Clarence Daniel, Diane Atti
AVCP Regional Housing Authority	Peter Evon
Bethel Community Services Foundation	Michelle DeWitt
Bethel Native Corporation	Ana Hoffman
Calista	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>

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.

Review and Discuss Past YK CEDS Business Development Recommendations



Priority Strategy *from 2021 Update*

Business Development

Strategy 1: Build interest, investment in, and capacity for locally owned, operated, and innovative businesses.

I-A. Continue the Small Business Development “Best in the West” competitions to encourage entrepreneurship in the YK region.

I-B. Develop and robustly distribute how-to manuals or resource guides that detail success stories, resources, and links for where to find information and assistance for a person or organization interested in starting a local business.

Highlights from February 2024 Work Session Breakout

- How to support small businesses: market demand education, “buddy system” business cohorts, tourism growth
- Shared incubation spaces: garage, shop, kitchen
- Specialty trades: in high demand: home weatherization, energy rating, small engine work, etc.
- Succeeding in business when markets are small
- Supporting existing businesses – not just startups
- Better broadband connectivity will increase opportunities for working remotely

Small Business/Crafter Survey Results, Spring 2024



Overview of Survey Purpose

- **Purpose:** Understand YK business priorities and needs from the perspective of craft fair vendors.
- **How Responses will be Used:** The responses will be used to inform the YK Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and identify small business needs.
- **Content:** The survey asked crafters about their business, what they envision for the future of their business, what has helped them, what barriers they've experienced, and what supports would be helpful.
- **Timeline:** The survey was conducted through in-person discussions and a printed survey tool at one Bethel Saturday market and the 2024 Camai Festival in March 2024.

Response Overview

- There were 24 responses to the survey.
- 18 respondents were male and 6 were female.
- 14 respondents identified themselves as a business and 6 categorized themselves as hobbyists (no business license).
- Of the responses, 21 make and sell crafts, 2 sell food, and 1 provides a service.

What is your vision for your business?



Growth/expansion

“Would love to have more robust stock and not just sell during holidays.”

“Offer after hours snacks for when store close, hopefully expand and open a shop.”

No change

“I like it as it is right now.”

“It's a hobby.”

What's helped you get where you are today?

- Family and community support
- Self will and determination, joy for the work

“Nurtured by elders, friends & those who have touched my life; learned from those who chose to teach me lessons, etc.”

“Being curious & willing to learn”

“PFD, my own earnings from work”

What has been hard about starting and operating your business?

- High cost of supplies
- Right-sizing supply and demand
- Lack of resources and support for businesses/sellers
 - Administrative support (taxes, marketing)
- Business start up
- Lack of supplies available
- Having enough time

“Having to spend money in order to get supplies.”

“Figuring out how much product to make and which markets/ events to attend.”

What kind of help or support do you need for your business to be successful?

- **Resource support**
 - Website development
 - Supply procurement
 - Storage for products
 - Legal guidance
 - Site development
 - Advertisement/marketing
- **Loyal customer/community support**
- **Financial support (loans, upfront materials costs, equipment repair)**

What else would you like to share about operating a small business in the YK?

- Love meeting and working with the community
- This has been challenging – resource navigation would be helpful!

“It's fun because it is appreciated & brings joy to others.”

“Be patient and persistent.”

“I love people when they like my work.”

Priority Topics and Emerging Solutions



(screenshot here)

See focus area summary and notes for details

Wrap Up



Next Steps

- Share notes from today.
- Share updated focus area summaries.
- Reconvene the YK CEDS Committee.
- Prepare the draft and final CEDS later this year.

Closing Comments & Questions

Ideas or questions? Contact us.

Diane Atti

Economic Development Manager
Association of Village Council Presidents

907-588-2278

datti@avcp.org

Molly Mylius

Project Manager
Agnew::Beck Consulting

907-782-8787

molly@agnewbeck.com