

**Yungnaqlemta Piunarillerkaa**

**“Improving All Our Lives”**



Traditional Ice Fishing in Southwest Alaska.

*Photo: Mike Affleck*

**Native Peoples of Southwest Alaska**

# Southwest Alaska

## Who We Are & What We Face

Together, the Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA) and the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) were established in the mid-1960s and represent 87 Federally Recognized Tribes and one quarter of the Native population of Alaska. BBNA and AVCP are regional nonprofit corporations committed to providing federal and tribal trust services to the residents of the Bristol Bay and Yukon-Kuskokwim regions of Southwest Alaska. The Native peoples of Southwest Alaska are actively shifting away from an outdated model of social service delivery and instead are embracing a social enterprise model that encourages greater self-determination. These two regions span 96,000 square miles, which is roughly equivalent in size to the state of Wyoming. From majestic mountains, muskeg, tundra and coastal plains to flatlands and Boreal Forests, the land and sea of Southwest Alaska have sustained the Native population for thousands of years.



*“The philosophy of our forefathers is rooted in a traditional way of life that is a compass to guide our Yup’ik people.”*

Elder Paul John  
of Toksook Bay

A common linguistic and cultural heritage binds the majority Yup’ik people of Bristol Bay and Yukon-Kuskokwim regions together and has shaped a culture-based model of cooperation at the tribal and regional levels. Bristol Bay and Yukon-Kuskokwim are home to three major ethnic groups; the Aleut or Alutiiq people of the southern islands and coastal areas, the Athabascans to the northeast in the Boreal Forests and the Yup’ik Eskimo people in the coastal northwest. The people of Southwest Alaska have shared the bounty of the land and sea together and have bartered, traded and intermarried for hundreds of years.

## Southwest Alaska Who We Are & What We Face



Salmon are central to the economies & traditional diet of Southwest Alaska Native peoples.

Photo: BBNA & Agnew::Beck

The challenges Alaska Native people and rural communities face are well-documented—and are especially extreme in Southwest Alaska, a region twice declared a Federal Disaster Area due to the effects of failed salmon runs in 1997 and 1998 and the victim of rising out-migration to urban hubs. While progress has been made in the last few decades, Alaska Natives continue to fall short in the areas of education, economic sustainability, poverty reduction and social and community health/wellness. The Native peoples of Southwest

*“AFN pledges to do everything we can to support the Native peoples of Southwest Alaska in this bold initiative. We are behind them 100%.”*

Julie Kitka

Alaska are poised and ready to take ownership of their development process, but they lack the financial tools to affect immediate change. BBNA and AVCP are determined to foster personal responsibility and self-sufficiency within their Native communities and thereby improve the quality of life in Southwest Alaska.

Due to the remoteness of their regions, the Native peoples of Southwest Alaska have successfully maintained and strengthened their land-based culture, language and values for the past 10,000 years. This tradition of self-determination has enabled an impressive history of collaboration and progress in improving their economic and social conditions. This unique group of Americans is truly development-ready.

# Southwest Alaska

## Moving Forward with One Mind, Speaking with One Voice

**B**BNA and AVCP's impressive history of collaboration includes ongoing education, health and housing related cooperation, longstanding partnerships for the protection of their regions' national resources and recent successes with the Sobriety and Wellness Movement. These organizations demonstrate the success of local and regional leadership in combating poverty and promoting a more proactive model of social enterprise.



BBNA & AVCP are committed to educating the youth—the future of this great region of Southwest Alaska.

BBNA and AVCP have been successful in improving access to health care and increasing the number of clinics in their regions. They have contributed to statewide improvements in life expectancy and immunization rates, as well as improvements in disease prevention, diagnosis and treatment. Bristol Bay is home to Alaska's first hospital under tribal administration, Kanakanak Hospital, which serves 34 communities through its main facilities in Dillingham and its 29 affiliated village clinics. Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation serves 51 communities through its main facilities in Bethel, 4 full-service sub-regional clinics and 47 village clinics, and is the largest health compact in the United States.

BBNA and AVCP have identified the most pressing educational needs in their region and are actively working to increase local graduation rates and improve performance on standardized tests. Both organizations recognize the relationship between educational and economic development and are committed to successfully implementing the tenants of "No Child Left Behind". These organizations were also instrumental in the development of the Johnson O'Malley Act to support educational collaboration to reach all young people.



One of the 29 village clinics associated with the Kanakanak Hospital, Chignik Lake, Bristol Bay Region.

*Photos: BBNA & Agnew::Beck*

## Southwest Alaska

### Moving Forward with One Mind, Speaking with One Voice

In the years following the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, 16 regional housing authorities were established to improve upon the abysmal condition of rural housing in Alaska. The Bristol Bay and AVCP housing authorities have contributed greatly to improving the quality of life in the communities of Southwest Alaska through their housing related programs. To date, the BBHA and AVCP Housing Authority have constructed almost 2,000 affordable homes.

The people of the Bristol Bay and Yukon-Kuskokwim regions have collaborated extensively to protect regional salmon populations and in rebuilding salmon runs to maintain the world's largest and most abundant runs of wild salmon native to the region. Wild salmon is not only a mainstay of Native diets in Southwest Alaska, but also a primary source



The peoples of Southwest Alaska continue to struggle with poverty and inadequate living conditions.



The Bristol Bay and AVCP Housing Authorities have made significant progress in improving low income housing, with almost 2,000 new constructions to date.

*Photos: BBNA & Agnew::Beck*

of current and future economic growth. Both BBNA and AVCP were instrumental in creating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Natives of the Southwestern region routinely come together to protect the natural resources that provide their subsistence and are vocal proponents of the right of Alaska Natives to hunt and fish on federal lands.

## Southwest Alaska

### Moving Forward with One Mind, Speaking with One Voice



Elders are intimately involved in community organizations, providing ongoing leadership and insight.

Photo: AVCP

Southwest Alaska's Native peoples repeatedly demonstrate their capacity to stretch federal resources and move beyond government dependency through the success of their regional housing authorities, nonprofit organizations, corporations and federally recognized tribes. For example, BBNA and AVCP recently came together to develop a community-based Wellness Program that serves as a catalyst for positive change at the local level, inspiring incredible enthusiasm and genuine community support. Taking up the challenge raised by Alaska's Senior Senator Ted Stevens to work together more effectively and make better use of federal resources, BBNA and AVCP just signed a Memorandum of Understanding to continue their collaboration for the improvement of Native life and expand their original mandate from Wellness and Sobriety to a broader commitment to improving their communities' economic, educational, health and cultural indicators.

*“ We have to look toward the resources in our community and to the Elders, they are our experts.”*

John Pingayak of Chevak

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## “Improving All Our Lives”

**T**hrough a comprehensive development process, BBNA and AVCP’s mutual goal is to improve economic, educational, health and cultural conditions in Southwest Alaska over a 10-year period. To achieve this goal, BBNA and AVCP will merge their community-based knowledge and Native culture with state and federal development resources. This innovative strategy will fully utilize the strengths of all involved and will build upon a community-based vision where all things are possible, ensuring that improvements in all their lives extend beyond the next 30 years.

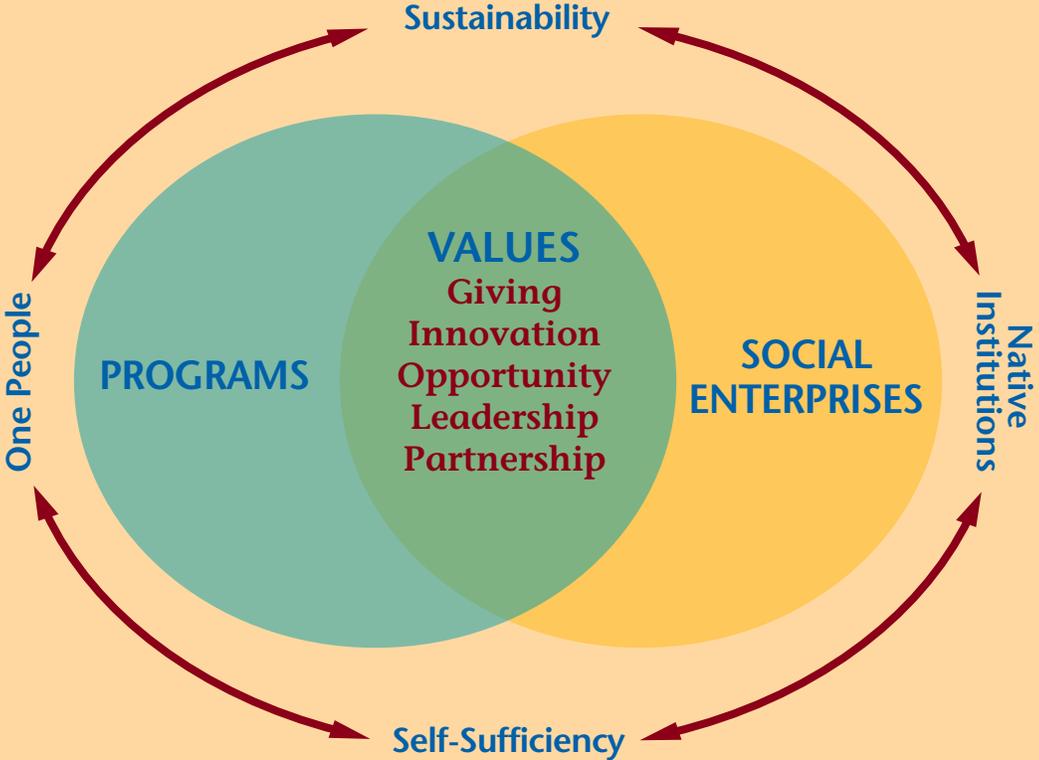


The Native peoples of Southwest Alaska use their cultural strength as a catalyst for progress. *Photo: AVCP*

BBNA and AVCP will take the lead and accept responsibility for four areas of development:

1. Improving the **academic achievement** of Alaska Natives in Southwest Alaska to achieve greater K-12, post secondary and vocational human resources.
2. Developing **economic sustainability** in rural communities by better utilizing local economic resources, pursuing and making changes to existing cost structures to free up existing economic resources in the communities and developing new and existing resources to build private sector economic growth.
3. Improving **social/wellness conditions** of rural people and communities that result in healthier physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well being, and decreased alcohol/drug related crimes and behaviors.
4. Strengthening and maintaining Southwest Alaska Native peoples’ **values, language and culture** in the modern global environment.

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Graphic courtesy of CITC

**VALUES**  
Our values are at the core of operation at Native Institutions, guiding both programs and social enterprises.

**PROGRAMS & SOCIAL ENTERPRISES**  
The organization has two divisions, both focused on Sustainability and Self-Sufficiency of Our People and the corporation.

**POTENTIAL & OPPORTUNITY**  
Our programs and social enterprise are focused on working with Our People to provide jobs and other opportunities that will create an environment of Our People reaching their fullest potential.

*“ We are actively engaged in a shift away from service delivery and are adopting a more proactive social enterprise model. This better develops our capacity for self-determination and empowers community members at all levels.”*

Ralph Andersen



# Millennium Challenge Account Bringing It Home

**I**n March 2002, President George W. Bush announced the creation of the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). The MCA represents a new post Cold War development paradigm. The MCA is the third great development assistance initiative since World War II—following President Truman’s Marshall Plan and President Kennedy’s Alliance for Progress.

The President has shown great leadership in proposing and obtaining his Millennium Challenge Account initiative and subsequent Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) with its broad mandate, incentive-based reform and substantial budget. The MCA has been described as an incentive system for countries to provide their people with the basic tools for their own prosperity. The linkage of poverty-reduction with economic growth is a fundamental tenet and an important U.S. contribution to expanding prosperity in the world. The Bush Administration announced the extraordinary goal to double the size of the world’s poorest economies within a decade.



From regional to village and tribal levels, the Native peoples of South-west Alaska are organized and truly development-ready. *Photo: AVCP*

The Native people of Alaska suffer many of the same dismal conditions generally associated with developing countries and possess the drive and the ability to take ownership of their regions’ development. The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), of which both BBNA and AVCP are members, is proposing an innovative development program backed by the federal government to demonstrate the strengths of the MCA,

the U.S. flagship development assistance program, on American soil. AFN has been briefed by the Millennium Challenge Corporation and has met with the former President/CEO Paul Applegarth. Applegarth has agreed to be on an advisory committee that will address a demonstration project here in the United States, to be piloted in Alaska. AFN representatives have also briefed the White House, including the Office of Management and Budget, on the appropriateness of a demonstration project in Alaska. Both BBNA and AVCP, and their 87 Native villages, are organized and development-ready to take on this demonstration effort and make it a national model.