

Title: “Where did our people go?” – Alutiiq: Natmen Suupet agellriit?

Demographic data shows that from 2010 to 2021, there was a 41% decline in the Prime-age group of 25 to 54 in the eligible areas in the Kodiak Archipelago. This compares to a decline of 19% in the total population in the same period. The loss of this population has placed significant economic and social distress on our village communities with limited human resource capacity, leaving unfilled essential jobs with Tribal and municipal governments, healthcare providers, schools, and more. Economic distress hindered participation in organic growth opportunities and limited local capacities to benefit from the once-in-a-generation Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure, Inflation, and Jobs Act. The population loss trends have also led to the closure of schools in the eligible areas when student populations fall below 10 pupils, having closures occurring in two schools within the eligible areas in the last five years.

Population loss among residents aged 25 to 54 has multiple causes, with a significant factor linked to reduced access to fisheries. The decline in access stems from the implementation of the limited entry program for salmon by the State of Alaska in the 1970s and the Pacific Halibut and Sablefish Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) catch share program in the 1990s. Both programs resulted in the degradation of Sugpiaq/Alutiiq community traditions that have been based on marine resources for over 7,000 years, a loss of food security, and significantly reduced career opportunities for young community members aspiring to enter the commercial fishing industry.

Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) is seeking to participate in the Recompete Pilot Program, Phase 1, with the objective of formulating a Recompete Strategy Development Plan, becoming more competitive for future approval of our Recompete Plan, and ultimately pursuing implementation funding for transformational investment in the region to reverse the course of the detrimental population loss and save the communities.

If funded, this Strategy Development will support KANA’s Economic Development program in learning more about why this population loss has occurred and developing intervention strategies: creating new jobs; training workers to fill new and existing jobs; and identifying how the target age group can return home to their village communities.

Though KANA’s service area includes the seven communities on Kodiak Island: the City of Kodiak and the six remote village communities of Akhiok, Karluk, Larsen Bay, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, and Port Lions, only the six villages are eligible to receive the benefit from this program: The Alaska Native Village Statistical Areas (ANVSAs) are eligible Local Labor Market geographic areas of which there are six within the Kodiak Region: Akhiok ANVSA, Karluk ANVSA, Larsen Bay ANVSA, Old Harbor ANVSA, Ouzinkie ANVSA, and Port Lions ANVSA.

Please see the screenshot of the Mapping Tool as evidence of eligibility following this narrative.

KANA is an Eligible Entity: KANA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that acts in cooperation with the officials of the relevant political subdivisions and serves the eligible areas indicated through the Recompete Eligibility Mapping Tool. KANA is uniquely positioned to

serve the region given the significant scope of wrap-around services provided and serves with the support of the eligible areas. KANA has the capacity and leadership to meaningfully increase prime-age employment in our eligible areas.

KANA can engage broadly and support the implementation of a wide range of targeted

actions: KANA has a long history of engaging with eligible village communities through health and social services. We are the recipient of the EDA Planning Grant which provides resources for an Economic Development Program Manager to write and maintain the Kodiak Rural Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS); the CEDS is updated annually with broad and long-term community engagement required to collect content and develop and understand the significant challenges to overcome to reduce the PAEG in the eligible areas.

KANA also engages the eligible village communities while delivering a variety of additional services. Services include Medical, Dental, Behavioral Health, Child and Family Services, Environmental Management, Economic Development, Elder Services, Workforce Development, Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation, and Village Public Safety Officer programming. Our focus is on cultivating thriving communities by encouraging career development, promoting economic self-sufficiency, addressing Tribal environmental concerns, fostering healthy families, providing Tribal services, and ensuring immediate emergency response in our village communities.

The breadth of services KANA provides is evident in the following applicable wrap-around services currently available in the grant-eligible areas.

- **Workforce Development:** KANA offers a range of services within Workforce Development to empower participants and aim to provide comprehensive support tailored to individual needs. Our services are designed to help participants progress toward their goals and enhance their personal and professional growth.
- **Childcare:** Child and Family Services programs provide support and resources to families in communities across the Kodiak region. Our programs create safe, nurturing, supportive environments to empower families on their journey toward well-being and resilience. KANA is actively pursuing plans for daycare services for employees and Beneficiaries to ease barriers for parents to pursue and maintain full-time employment.
- **Behavioral Health:** KANA's Behavioral Health department offers a place where our clients can learn skills to take control of their lives, enjoy healthy relationships, and maintain sobriety. Our substance use disorder services help individuals with alcohol and/or substance misuse. We offer alcohol and drug education, intensive outpatient treatment, and continuing care in individual or group therapy, including Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT). The KANA Peer Support Program is a culturally driven initiative tailored to Kodiak area residents seeking assistance in their recovery journey.
- **Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) and Village Response Training program reinvigoration:** The VPSO Program provides essential public safety support services in the village communities and is supporting the resurgence of a program called Village Response Training to enhance first responder capabilities relying on the local workforce.

Serve Eligible geography: KANA’s main offices are located in Kodiak, Alaska, a hub community to the six eligible geographic areas. Air travel from the city of Kodiak to the eligible village communities is accessible and allows KANA staff to become very familiar with regional issues.

KANA is a consortium of the ten Federally Recognized Tribes in the Kodiak archipelago, including seven Tribes located in the eligible geographic areas. KANA’s Board of Directors is comprised of Tribal Leaders, elected by the membership, of the consortia member Tribes to ensure equitable inclusion of all programmatic offerings throughout the region.

KANA’s Economic Development Program Manager has served in his role for nearly 10 years and developed relationships and trust with rural leaders throughout the eligible areas. These relationships and regional experience provide evidence that KANA can adequately represent the eligible areas and deliver solutions proposed in the potential Recomplete Strategic Plan.

Letters of Support that accompany this grant narrative show Tribal and Municipal governments and regional organizations concur that KANA is serving with the support of the eligible areas, has the capacity and leadership to meaningfully increase prime-age employment, understands local needs and assets, and has a clear sense of relevant necessary for success.

Recomplete Plan Coordinator (RPC): If funded for Phase 1, KANA proposes to hire an RPC to complete the proposed work plan. It is the intention that the RPC will be positioned to lead the development and writing of the Recomplete Strategic Plan and support an implementation grant proposal if KANA is invited to apply. All of the work of the RPC will be under the leadership and participation of the current Economic Development Program Manager. Should an implementation grant proposal be funded, the intention remains that the RPC would provide continuous service for seamless implementation plan deployment.

Workplan: KANA is proposing an 18-month project period:

- Foster regional partnerships with a Regional Advisory Team: Assemble a workgroup of Regional leaders, comprised of Tribal and Municipal leaders throughout the eligible areas and key stakeholder organizations to ensure inclusive development of the Recomplete Strategic Plan (Assemble team in months 1 to 3)
 - Under the guidance of the regional advisory team, develop a comprehensive Recomplete Strategy to address high Prime-age employment gaps in the eligible areas using an inclusive, locally developed planning process (Recomplete Strategy to be completed by month 16)
 - Utilize the CEDS annual update periods to support the alignment of relevant intervention strategies (Months 1 to 16)
- In-depth engagement with KANA’s Workforce Development program, the State of Alaska Employment Department, and Kodiak College to formulate a workforce development strategy that addresses the needs of the intervention strategies (started by month 4)
- Integrate findings in the “Kodiak Island Borough Housing Needs Assessment” and the “2021 Kodiak Island Early Childhood Needs Assessment” into the Recomplete Strategy

Development Plan to support finding solutions to housing and childcare needs in the eligible communities. (Months 6 to 12)

- Collect data on the population of individuals aged 25 to 54 to determine PAEG, including populations of individuals living on and off of Tribal lands; includes data collection on younger adults (aged 18 to 24) that will age into the prime-age target demographic. (Months 4 to 6)
- Develop strategies to return Prime-age individuals with historical and familial ties to the eligible areas back to their home communities:
 - Develop outreach materials on the Recompete Strategy project and intention of implementation projects that may result in informing the target demographic of future opportunities (Months 9 to 18)
- Identify current planning and zoning that may be prohibitive to implement potential intervention strategies, such as housing development and commercial uses; inform regional planning and zoning officials of recommended changes (Months 10 to 18)
- Develop and submit Recompete Strategic Plan for EDA approval and develop and submit Implementation grant funding when/if applicable (Submit Recompete Strategic Plan submitted by Month 16; Implementation Grant proposal completed by Month 18)

Potential Interventions: Through KANA’s knowledge of economic opportunities and economic conditions throughout the eligible areas, the following are potential intervention strategies that have been identified. It is expected that the process of developing a Recompete Strategy Plan will reveal additional intervention strategies worthy of implementation.

- Enhance workforce development and training opportunities for existing jobs, some of which are filled by non-resident staff: Medical, First Responder, teacher, construction (to fulfill housing deficiencies as well as energy efficiency/weatherization opportunities); utility operator training/workforce development (electricity and water/sewer operators) licensing and apprenticeship to increase the amount of qualified skilled workers.
 - Housing rehabilitation programs – employ local workforce (home renovation programs already occurring at Kodiak Island Housing Authority);
 - Basic maintenance/repair for younger adults for residential structures to build skills for entering longer-term career workforce
 - Carpentry, Electrician, plumbing/heating services
 - Marine vessel maintenance and operation
- Develop a framework to purchase community-anchored fishing quotas for residents of the six eligible communities.
- Secondary education financial support: Scholarship opportunities, NAHSDA Self-Determination education financial support opportunities
- Place-based economic growth: explore targeted investments in Mariculture industry development (farming, processing, nursery infrastructure, and skill development); Agriculture industry development (increase farmers’ skills, small business operations, and reduced electricity costs to make hydroponic agriculture more economically viable); Art and Culture-bearer workforce development (explore art studio space in the village communities, sales and business training workshops, Alutiiq Museum storefront and online presence expansion to increase sales opportunities)
- Establish a Revolving Loan Fund for entrepreneurs to start businesses and existing small businesses to expand businesses

- Identification and connection to enhance existing and new wrap-around services at KANA in around community as needed.
- Address challenges youth and younger adult populations experience, often resulting in the need/desire to move from eligible areas and not enter the prime-age demographic; which further exasperates population loss while respecting a younger person’s desire to experience life outside of a village (Experience, Learn, and Return strategies)

Existing Community or Regional assets critical for PAEG reduction success:

- Kodiak College: Local college campus that is an extension of the University of Alaska-Anchorage system, offering degree and certificate programs both in-person and virtual
- KANA Workforce Development and Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation: provides wrap-around services
- Experienced KANA Economic Development Program Manager who maintains experience in renewable energy development in rural communities
- Kodiak Island Housing Authority: Operates the “Life Builders” programs for younger adults and is the Kodiak region’s Tribally designated housing authority
- Alutiiq Museum: An archaeological repository and museum with a gift shop specializing in Alutiiq artists and crafts people’s goods; recognizes economic development as a growing outcome of the Alutiiq Museum’s arts and culture programs.
- Koniag: Alaska Native Corporation with a region that encompasses the Kodiak Island area in the Gulf of Alaska with approximately 4,400 Alaska Native Shareholders
- Tribal and Municipal government leaders in the eligible areas: people committed to working together to course-correct their economies and work to bring our people home.
- “Kodiak Island Borough Housing Needs Assessment”: Report by McKinley Research under contract with Kodiak Island Housing Authority from May 2022. Informs of housing gaps and needs throughout the Borough, including the eligible village communities.
- “2021 Kodiak Island Early Childhood Needs Assessment”: Report written by Stellar Group under contract with Kodiak Early Childhood Coalition. Informs of childcare needs and gaps through the Borough, including the eligible village communities.

Methods of Engagement: The proposed budget includes three trips to each of the six village communities for the Recompete Plan Coordinator and the Economic Development Program manager in the eligible areas. The dates of travel are not yet determined, however, will be spread evenly throughout the 18-month period with the first round of village meetings to be held in months 1 and 2. Further stakeholder engagement will be conducted through a virtual format at more frequent intervals than in-person meetings.

In-state, Off-Island Travel: The proposed budget includes funding for travel for the Recompete Plan Coordinator to attend the Alaska Small Business Conference and one Economic Development meeting or training event yet to be identified.