



Annual Narrative Report for 2014

ORUTSARARMIUT NATIVE COUNCIL

By: Moses Tulin
477 Programs Director

Our Vision: “We represent our members, protect our rights, work to make our community healthy, care for our elders, and make sure our children have a strong promising, positive future.”

Our Mission:

“Enhance the quality of life for our Tribal Members, preserve cultural and traditional values. Promote self-sufficiency, self-motivation, a strong work ethic, and working together to strengthen the tribe. Exercise tribal authority and preserve and protect traditional resources.”

The following report will provide information on the program goals, outcomes, and unmet needs of the Orutsararmiut Native Council for the program year 2014.

ONC has participated in the PL 102-477 Demonstration Project since 1998. Through the consolidation of funds under PL 102-477, ONC’s Education, Employment, Training and Other Related Services administers a combination of services, including The Bureau of Indian Affairs’ Higher Education (HE), Adult Vocational Training (AVT), Direct Employment (DE), Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Assistance (GA), Johnson O’Malley Program (JOM), Department of Labor’s Workforce Initiative Act (WIA), Comprehensive and Supplemental and Youth Services, and the Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Development Fund (CCDF). ONC provides much needed assistance to its tribal members. The GA program is administered by a 477 Specialist employee and uses a separate reporting form with the Office of Self Governance. Those figures are not included here nor are they entered on the Statistical Report.

Economic and Employment Issues:

State and Federal Government Offices continues to employ the largest population of the workforce in Bethel. Bethel is the ninth largest community in the state of Alaska. Although there are lots of employment opportunities available, the majority of the higher paying positions are filled by those hired outside of the community, based upon professional qualifications, skills and talents.

We can see some small changes. Our tribal members are attaining the required credentials for those higher paying positions, taking on available jobs requiring a post secondary degree or vocational training certifications. These positions include counselors, health care specialists, correctional officers, financial managers, office managers, social services employees, educational instructors, construction workers, and small business enterprises.

Our tribal members' achievements are improving. A majority of our unemployed tribal members remain in the unskilled labor force and have low income issues prevalent throughout southwestern Alaska. Some of *them* have family care issues that our limited assistance cannot sufficiently address to benefit those in extreme need due to budgetary constraints. With the high cost of living particularly in rural Alaska, limited assistance budgets create a lack of adequate assistance to eligible tribal members regardless of the program services.

Bethel still had more than 60 percent of the region's private jobs in 2014. The city hosts the region's large health and social care centers, housing authority, and air transportation headquarters. Breaking down Bethel's impact as the regional hub is difficult – for instance, the regional health center's coverage area includes all communities but the jobs and wages are counted in Bethel. The same is true for Grant and RAVN Aviation, whose pilots provide essential air transportation between villages. A movie theater and a swimming pool in the region's and other capital improvements resulted in minor growth for private employment

The Swanson's Grocery Store closed in March 2015 resulting in a loss of work for 80 full-time and part-time employees who are currently looking for another job.

Another dilemma surfaced with the State of Alaska facing a 3.5 billion dollar budget shortfall made cuts to millions of dollars of funding throughout the Alaska. With more State of Alaska budget cuts in the next few years for we can only anticipate reduction in services and employment opportunities for the entire region.

Community/Agencies Collaboration:

ONC continues to be a member of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Workgroup Team. This group consists of local agencies that provide employment and training, social services, and educational opportunities for the residents of

Southwestern Alaska. Current membership includes representatives from various State of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development: Department of Health and Social Services, UAF Kuskokwim Campus: regional non-profit human service organization, Association of Village Council Presidents, Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation, Yuut Elitnaurviat, and Orutsararmiut Native Council.

The workgroup is active and meets monthly. It was created to provide leadership and to:

- Identify customer needs
- Identify gaps in services
- Modify services as appropriate and agree on partner roles
- Share resources in providing assistance to eligible clients
- Share information about services
- Streamline and coordinate customer services for job seekers and employees

Job Fairs are scheduled in Bethel every spring. Many presenters and/or vendors are invited from universities and vocational schools as well as local businesses. Besides sharing potential resources, it has been used to successfully recruit potential employees on the spot by several organizations.

ONC PL 102-477 Programs continue to collaborate with local businesses in providing program services to eligible clients. This working relationship has been in place since the organization was officially established. ONC's 477 staff participates in any community session that appears to be in ONC's offered program service areas.

ONC's 102-477 new staff members: Moses Tulim (EET Director), Frank Mojin, (477 Specialist), and Vivian Glore (477 Specialist), started working for ONC last summer of 2014. The 102-477 staff continues to improve delivery and efficiency of 477 programs with training and on the job experience to ONC tribal members.

Staff participation in numerous scheduled meetings or sessions with other service agencies is encouraged and supported by ONC Administration for tribal visibility.

ONC produces a quarterly newsletter that's mailed out to tribal members, emailed to E & T clients as well as posted to its website (<http://www.nativecouncil.org>) for sharing program information with public. Also on the ONC website is the 477 application, required paperwork list for easy access by tribal members.

Program Goals:

Based on ONC's mission statement, the P.L. 102-477 staff better serves its clients by offering them appropriate services needed for successful enhancement of independence, self-sufficiency, self motivation and quality of life. We believe that the selected programs to integrate into the PL 102-477 plan are well balanced as each program allows participating clients to benefit to their fullest regardless of each client's various levels of education or work experience. This service is accomplished by offering one or a combination of several essential services for our participants to be successful and become self-sufficient in today's world.

Barriers and Unmet Needs:

The Yukon Kuskokwim Delta has the highest communal problems in the entire state of Alaska. Unemployment and underemployment, together with the high cost of living still in existence have direct effect on social issues in Bethel and surrounding area.

Substance abuse continues with all of the negative social effects and affects (domestic violence, suicide, homicide, child neglect and abuse, etc.). A city swimming pool with exercise equipment was a welcome opportunity for youth & young adults to socialize and exercise. The lack of local places for good social interaction for our older youth continues. There are limited opportunities with local schools and churches or youth groups but not everyone is a "joiner" and not everyone likes to be around large, planned gatherings. There are adult oriented evening activities but several discourage youth participation. There is really no location for even young adults to gather!

There continues to be an on-going shortage for housing units in our community though there are planned additions in the future. Since Bethel is a hub community, the in-migration continues to grow from surrounding villages. The added pressure of moved-in People seeking jobs and housing makes even local community members having a tough time to find suitable housing.

As our tribal members come of age, the creation of job or employment opportunity shortage also takes place. The workforce shortage is for the medium skilled or qualified prospective employee – available positions are at both ends of labor force – either for the very unskilled or the very degreed and professionally qualified positions. As mentioned, many of our unemployed work-force fit into the unskilled or low qualified sector of the population.

With the subsistence Way of Life being an integral part of providing food for the table year round, the challenge of work time and subsistence activities continues. If a person can find a suitable job then participation in subsistence and cultural activities suffer due to the western world's use of time clock, work hours and many times unyielding requirements for attendance at work station.

The community of Bethel's high cost of living expenses creates a problem for tribal members who cannot or do not participate in any cash economy activities (jobs, entrepreneurs) for whatever reasons. While personal motivation lies at every edge of anyone seeking Life improvement based upon employment or training activities, *ONC did have to turn away applicants due to budgetary constraints.*

ONC's limited resources create situations of having to deny potential clients and/or refer them elsewhere for financial assistance. While some did not complete the eligibility process, at least half of them were eligible for some type of ONC award or assistance. The creation of a successful community and its families lay in having adequate funding resources to educate and train individuals in all aspects of Life. And for this past funding cycle, we did not have that available.

For many residents, the acquisition of updated skills is necessary particularly if not participating in workforce employment for a while. And many are in need of facilitated instruction for the return to the normal and acceptable work place ethics and habits. Our collaboration with the local Job Center is important for use of its planned sessions.

Programs Services:

ONC and the State of Alaska's Adult Basic Education Program with the University of Alaska still have a strong working relationship. Yuut Elitnaurviat took over the ABE program after University of Alaska decided not to continue the program. We continue to pool resources, and as a result, continue to see drop-outs return to acquire a GED, or just enhance their working skills. The Bethel ABE and ONC have a Memorandum of Agreement to continue to assist those in need of a better education. ONC contributed \$15,680.00 for the 2013-

2014 calendar year to the Bethel ABE Program. The Adult Basic Education Program has been used for educational gain, acquiring a GED, obtaining employment, retaining employment, learning life skills, and limited placement testing for entering post-secondary educational programs. The Bethel ABE center continues to have a high success rate, especially since the secondary level of drop-out rate continues to remain high.

For **Higher Education and Vocational** participants receiving services under ONC's PL 102-477 for the 2014 calendar year was 30 Adults. ONC had continued through 2014-2015 calendar year with 23 assisted individuals continuing to pursue their educational and training goals.

We have 2 - vocational training participants and one individual completed the program. He earned his CDL and is now working as a truck driver for the City of Bethel.

In the past, vocational training participants have attended the Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC) in Seward, Alaska, Charter College and Career Academy in Anchorage, Gary Manuel AVEDA Institute in Seattle, and Yuut Elitnaurviat. As you recall from last year's report, the Yuut Elitnaurviat is the regional training center based in Bethel. ONC also collaborates with the Alaska Job Center and its services to better serve local tribal community members.

ONC's governing body appointed Education Committee monitors the PL 102-477 program. This group meets at least quarterly or at the call of the chairperson to take up educational and training issues. The Education Committee also sets scholarship amount and awards. E & T Program Director coordinates the committee.

The regular **Summer Youth Employment & Training Program** had many applicants with 11 youth participating with local worksites.

All eligible participants and some parents attended the required orientation. At this scheduled half-day, forms were completed, worksites designated and Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation Human Resource staff made several presentations on workplace ethics and requirements. Eleven (11) youths were hired full time at their designated worksites at the end of the SYP until the academic school year began!

On the Job Training Program is being revisited to make sure participants are given more meaningful work and skills that will give a more positive outlook on their lives. One of our OJT employees demonstrated great working skills in a short period of time that she was promoted as our second “477 Specialist” and is now working full-time.

The Orutsararmiut Native Council continues to administer the **Child Care Program** under PL 102-477 Department. This department will continue to be directly involved and responsible for the continuing delivery of CCDF services. The program for participant services under this funding source continues to be supportive services.

Parents who are eligible for Child Care assistance within ONC’s guidelines for childcare services will continue to have the option from the following services on an semi-annual basis: (1) Center based Child Care, and (2) Group Home Child Care.

The Childcare program funded 37 children, who were taken care of by qualified childcare providers all year. In accordance with set policies, assistance is provided to foster children with eligible families. Childcare providers are given annual training on childcare issues and improved home care. The providers are also given informational materials and safety gadgets to help keep their homes child-safe.

In the summer of 2014, steps had to be taken when the Relative and in home Child Care Providers were found not in compliance with the requirements of Providing Child Care Services. As a result there are currently 3 – approved Child Care Providers in Bethel today. We are still recruiting to find more Relative Child Care Providers in Bethel to provide needed child care services.