



## Village Infrastructure Protection Program



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### Basis for Program

GAO Reports 04-142 and 09-551  
Motion passed by Commissioner's in August 2015  
Assignment from President Obama in September 2015

### Contact

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### Commission Funding to Date

FY2016: \$6.9 million  
FY2017: \$5.0 million  
FY2018: \$5.0 million (proposed)

### Scope

**Newtok/Mertarvik:** Due to the combined effects of melting permafrost and erosion by the Ninglick River, the US Army Corps of Engineers estimates that critical infrastructure (water source, school, airport) in Newtok will be destroyed and/or unsustainable by 2020. Recognizing this imminent threat, Congress transferred 12,000 acres located 9 miles upriver to the Newtok Village Corporation in 2003 so the community could develop a new, safer village site on high ground. The Commission is assisting this community of 450 in their relocation efforts, both through direct grants and coordination with other State and Federal agencies that will eventually be called upon to implement.

**Kivalina, Shishmaref, Shaktoolik:** These three communities face imminent threats to life and property due to winter storm surge, exacerbated by the reduction in sea ice, which provided a measure of protection in the past. Kivalina and Shishmaref are working on relocation plans, but acknowledge that some interim protect-in-place projects will be required. Shaktoolik is focused on long term protect-in-place measures. The Commission is actively assisting all three communities, which have a combined population of 1,300, with mitigation strategies/projects and relocation planning.

**27 Additional Communities Identified by GAO:** These coastal and riverine communities are particularly threatened by flooding, erosion and/or melting permafrost. They have a combined population of 16,300. The Commission is assisting these communities with mitigation planning and funding for small projects that do not meet minimum requirements for other state or federal emergency or disaster response and recovery programs.

**Statewide Initiatives and Coordination:** Initial development of the VIP Program and additional data collection/analysis related to flooding, erosion and permafrost degradation. Collaboration and coordination with State and Federal Agencies that have a role related to public safety and community resilience related to the protection of private and/or public infrastructure from the referenced threats.

### Accomplishments to Date

**Newtok/Mertarvik:** Grants and Cooperative Agreements totaling **\$3,570,000** to develop a final layout for the new townsite, preparation of design documents for critical infrastructure (water supply, sewage collection/treatment, power plant), completion of a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement that addresses development of the new townsite, evaluation of excess military barracks located in Anchorage that could potentially be used for housing, professional private sector project management services, salary and travel support for the Local Coordinator, and other misc. gap funding.

**Kivalina, Shaktoolik, Shishmaref:** Grants and Cooperative Agreements totaling **\$2,150,000** that has been used for such things as; US Army Corps of Engineers local match requirement for flood studies and revetment design, design of a new bulk fuel facility, setting up A/E design contracts for individual communities, salary and travel support for a Local Coordinator, emergency kits and drills, and other misc. gap funding.

**27 Additional Communities Identified by GAO:** Grants and Cooperative Agreements totaling **\$860,000** for the following; establishing a Grant Writing Technical Assistance Center at ANTHC that focuses exclusively on infrastructure protection grants, developing/updating FEMA sanctioned Hazard Mitigation Plans, Disaster Response Plans, and small mitigation projects in four specific communities.

**Statewide Initiatives and Coordination:** Grants and Cooperative Agreements totaling **\$1,865,000** that among other things; established a joint VIP Program Office with ANTHC, funded small mitigation projects in 12 specific communities, and tasked the University of Alaska and Army Corps of Engineers to assemble statewide data on flooding, erosion and permafrost degradation into a single database and then use said data to develop a statewide risk assessment index that can be used by other agencies to prioritize investments in their formula driven grant and loan programs.

Over the last two years, our coordination activities have focused on the following.

- Participation in the Community Resilience Work Group (CRWG), established by the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy / Arctic Executive Steering Committee (OSTP/AESC)
- Hosted two Detailees from USDO and USDOT in 2016
- Updated the Catalog of Federal Resilience Programs for Alaskan Communities in collaboration with USDOT
- Developing a Federal Village Relocation Framework in collaboration with USDO
- On-going coordination with the family of federal agencies on funding opportunities for communities identified in GAO Report 09-551
- On-going coordination with the Alaska Delegation, OMB and GAO regarding VIP Program responsibilities, policies, initiatives, funding, etc.
- On-going coordination with DCRA and other State agencies on planning and funding issues for Newtok, Kivalina, Shishmaref and Shaktoolik