Bristol Bay Remote Workforce Development Needs Assessment

Prepared for

Bristol Bay
Native
Association

by

information
insights

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Executive Summary

Bristol Bay is a region full of multiple organizations working towards a healthy and robust local and regional workforce. Each of these organizations understands that without being able to train and hire regional residents, the outmigration to out of region locations offering training and hiring will continue to happen. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the region enacted and realized that remote work 1.) was possible (pending internet access), 2.) could be a solution to the current minimal amount of employment opportunities in smaller villages and 3.) enable residents to remain in their home communities in the region.
In order for these potential opportunities to become a reality in Bristol Bay, the access to reliable and high quality internet and phone service needs to increase, the average digital skills in the region need to increase, and the region needs to increase its capacity to transition organizational structures to accommodate remote work.

With the federal funding to support expanding broadband networks nationally, higher quality and more reliable internet is predicted to become a norm within this generation. Workforce training on digital skills and competency, a foundational requirement for a virtual economy, is generally absent in the Bristol Bay region. Digital skills training for all ages is a digital inclusion[1] service. For the organizations in the Bristol Bay region and for many nationwide, providing digital skills training and addressing digital equity gaps is not a stated goal of their organization and not a fully-resourced element of their programming. While many organizations have stated the benefits of remote work, few have systematically changed organizational structures and policies to enact a supported remote work environment. While some of these action steps could be taken on an individual organizational level, this study reflects the reality of organizations being short staffed, at capacity, and unable to add something new to their plates. There is also a high need for outside of region funding to support the needed infrastructure to make remote work possible in Bristol Bay.

This assessment is an inventory of regional assets (organizations trying to fill the gap in digital skill training in the Bristol Bay region) and calls for action and need in the same digital skill space. Initial recommendations focused on workforce development outline possibilities for future programs to support remote work in Bristol Bay.

Current State of Remote Workforce Development Trainings in Bristol Bay

In recent years and despite connectivity challenges, changing practices forced by the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly impacted workforce development programs in the Bristol Bay region, resulting in a shift towards online work and distance learning opportunities. In response to these changes, regional workforce development organizations have focused on providing hands-on training opportunities in skilled trades while supplementing learning with online resources. Employers in the region see the need for more digital skills and deeper competency throughout the region and are willing to provide

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[1] "Digital Inclusion," as defined by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance, refers to the activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). This includes five elements: 1. Affordable, robust broadband internet service; 2. Internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user; 3. Access to digital literacy training; 4. Quality technical support; and 5. Applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration.

training opportunities, but often lack the capacity, coordination, or funding to host necessary trainings.

Training institutions such as Southwest Alaska Vocational and Educational Center (SAVEC), Bristol Bay Region Career and Technical Education Program (BBRCTE), and UAF Bristol Bay Campus are arguably the institutions that could house such a training, but are currently unable to, due to limited staff capacity and internet access.

At the time of this study, workforce training on digital skills[2] (such as creating login accounts, updating passwords, checking emails, online ordering, etc.) is informal and not housed within any of the training organizations contacted for this assessment. Individuals at organizations, often (or always) without formal training themselves, teach digital skills as needed and on top of their regular job responsibilities and requirements, straining individuals providing the service.

Recommendations
- Regional Collaboration to:
  - Prioritize funding for broadband infrastructure
  - Share IT support positions that would allow multiple organizations to support one IT position
  - Establish remote work policy standards
  - Create a region wide job board
  - Build a remote work clearinghouse for remote work resources
  - Address digital skills gaps by:
    - Utilizing the digital navigator program
    - Enacting a cross generational training programs
- Local Collaboration to:
  - Recycle current infrastructure

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[2] "Definitions," National Digital Inclusion Association (NDIA), 2023, https://www.digitalinclusion.org/definitions/

Methodology

The study conducted involved a needs assessment and asset mapping. A needs assessment has the goal of identifying 'gaps' or 'holes' between current and desired outcomes, ideally leading to areas for improvement. Asset mapping provides information about the strengths and resources of a community to help uncover solutions. When these two study types are paired together, it highlights the gaps and solutions all in one.

The regional assessment employed a two-phased data collection approach. In the first phase, nine interviews were conducted with workforce development and education organizations in the Bristol Bay region. These interviews were held via video call and lasted between 30 to 60 minutes. The interview questions were designed to elicit information on the organizations' current training programs, challenges faced, and potential opportunities for remote work readiness training. *Organizations interviewed are listed below.*

For the second phase, an inventory of existing assets and gaps was created based on interview responses. More detail on assets and opportunities to fill the gaps were gathered through online research and consultation with local experts.

The data collected in both phases were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. This involved identifying key themes and patterns in the data and organizing them into categories. These categories were then used to create a summary of the current state of workforce development training in Bristol Bay, including key takeaways and potential opportunities for remote work readiness training.

List of Interviewees
- Bristol Bay Borough School District
- BBEDC (Admin)
- BBEDC (Education Employment and Training)
- BBNA (Human Resources)
- BBNA Workforce Development
- UAF Bristol Bay Campus
- Bristol Bay Region Career and Technical Education Program (BBRCTE)
- Lake & Peninsula School District
- Southwest Alaska Vocational and Educational Center (SAVEC)

Current State of Remote Workforce Development Trainings in Bristol Bay

- The impact of COVID-19 has resulted in an increase in distance/online learning opportunities for students and teachers in Bristol Bay.
- Regional workforce development organizations:
    - are focused on providing hands-on training opportunities in the skilled trades, while still utilizing online resources to supplement learning.
    - are seeking to adapt to remote learning by offering virtual courses and trainings.
- Employers and workforce development organizations are willing to provide training opportunities to maintain job requirements and credential needs, but often lack the capacity, coordination, or funding for implementation.
- Workforce development organizations in the region work with schools, employers, and communities to develop learning curriculums and expand vocational and post-secondary education. They also offer scholarships, reimbursements, and funding to support individuals and their learning goals

K-12 School districts: The COVID-19 pandemic increased the prevalence of distance learning, with students taking high school and college courses online. Teachers are also taking online courses to improve their skills and continue working. The ability to work and learn simultaneously has reduced the need for sabbatical leaves for teachers because of the increased flexibility remote learning provides. Lake & Peninsula School District completes most trainings in person, but supplements their programs with virtual professional development opportunities, mentor/mentee programs, and other virtual learning opportunities.

Bristol Bay Regional Career and Technical Education Program (BBRCTE): BBRCTE works with 24 communities spread over a very large area, of which only a few have roads between them. They have had to become creative with their trainings and how their program operates.

BBRCTE includes hands-on sessions with online components for students from Southwest Region, Lake & Peninsula School District, and the Dillingham City School District. They fly students from 30 villages to Dillingham, Naknek, Palmer, and Anchorage for in-person intensive weeks. There is a focus on providing hands-on training opportunities while still utilizing online resources to supplement learning as skilled labor will often still require some form of in person attendance.

Example: Some of those classes have intermediate components that happen in between sessions, where the students are learning online. "Say you're working on a pilot's license. You meet with an instructor occasionally online. And then when you come together during CTE week, you'll have some direct contact with your instructor. So there's sort of a mixture of delivering in those classes."

Hands-on training sessions mentioned in the interview include non-destructive testing, flight training, welding, business classes, CTE and STEM courses. The BBRCTE consortium also recently received a grant and will be teaching high schoolers welding using welding simulators, allowing for virtual practice and testing. The simulators provide "a realistic

experience, allowing the user to see the sparks and feel the weight of the tools."[3] Some of BBRCTE's programs are able to prepare students to enter the workforce immediately after high school while others allow students to get a jump start on their post-secondary education. For those who continue on with their education after high school, their program helps students by seeking a fit for them in one of their many partner training programs.

Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation (BBEDC): BBEDC does not host trainings, but provides funding for expanding vocational and post-secondary education, and scholarships are available for both part-time and full-time students. For example, BBEDC funds the BBRCTE program up to $250K a year for expanding curriculums. BBEDC also has programs that reimburse residents for their internet, and pay for online textbooks. Funding is also offered to BBEDC village, city, and borough governments and accredited or known training providers to provide training opportunities that are fisheries-related or deemed capacity building in nature that will enhance employment skills and opportunities for BBEDC CDQ/region residents through the Community/Group Training Fund. BBEDC also offers several employment programs, with different demographics/age groups of focus. These include:

- Arctic Tern Program: BBEDC grants of up to $6,000 are available to each BBEDC community to be used to support and foster jobs, employment activities or learning opportunities for resident young people up to 17 years of age. The grants result in projects and activities in the communities that impact many young people. The BBEDC Board feels strongly that introducing youth to the workplace can provide a small income as well as a head start on valuable work skills and encourages pride and a sense of community responsibility. Applications are accepted year round.
- Salmon Camp – The Bristol Bay Salmon Camp provides high school and middle school students with an opportunity to learn about Bristol Bay salmon biology and management. Students participate in classroom studies in limnology, fisheries management and research, and work alongside professionals in the field.
- Internship and Apprenticeship Programs: BBEDC works cooperatively with entities in its communities to place resident youth age 14-17 in internships around the Bristol Bay region. The basic fundamentals of good work ethic, application process and interview skills are the emphasis. At each pre-employment step, the youth applicant is coached by BBEDC staff on proper application and interview practices. See all current internships click here.
- Vocational Training & Scholarships: BBEDC provides vocational training programs and scholarships to individuals interested in acquiring specific skills or certifications. These programs support a wide range of industries, including commercial fishing, seafood processing, construction, healthcare, and more.
- Seasonal Employment Program: BBEDC works cooperatively with organizations to create entry-level, seasonal employment opportunities for BBEDC CDQ residents by placing them in temporary positions around the Bristol Bay region. See all current seasonal employment opportunities here.
- Bering Sea Employment – BBEDC recruits individuals for seafood processing jobs on the Bering Sea. Employment opportunities are available on pollock vessels, long-liners, multi-species bottom fish vessels, floating processors and land plants. Positions are available year-round to resident applicants of the Bristol Bay watershed communities.

The organization also works with employers on recruiting, media, outreach, advertising, and reimburses employers for expenses for employees that participate in BBEDC programs.

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[3] Quote from Interview with Chris Napoli, Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation

Bristol Bay Native Association: BBNA offers a variety of programs related to training from early childhood to adulthood.
- Early Childhood programs prepare children for primary school and access to healthcare.
- Summer youth employment programs create employment positions for youth in different tribes. It includes a curriculum that prepares them for the work world and they receive payment at the end of the program. BBNA works closely with high schools in developing learning curriculums for youth to build their preparedness for the world of work, whether it be formal college education or a different technical track.
- Bristol Bay Ciulistet program supports young leaders from Bristol Bay by placing them with local internship opportunities, building Bristol Bay specific leadership skills and knowledge, and connecting them with a network of peers and mentors across the region. The program is designed to support Indigenous young people ages 18-28 in becoming the next generation of Bristol Bay leadership.

Table 1. Inventory of Workforce Development Resources in Bristol Bay

Organization	Population Served	Resources Offered		Gaps Identified
		Programs	**Skills / Certifications**	
BBNA	Children, young adults, and adults in 31 Tribes in the Bristol Bay Region	• Head Start (3-5) • Youth Employment program (14-24) • Bristol Bay Ciulistet program (18-28) • Adult Vocational Training Program • Financial assistance	• WFD providing toolkits out to the region and looking at hosting courses in remote work to teach both hard and soft skills • Excel trainings	• Regional coordination • Technical set-up and installation support
BBEDC	High school students, middle school students, and adults in 17 villages in the Bristol Bay region	• Seafood processing employment and training programs • Internships (14-17) • Vocational training • Higher Education Scholarships	• Work ethic / soft skills • Application processes • Interview skills	• Training on remote work best practices and transitions for employers • Training for new remote employees • Digital Literacy Training
SAVEC	High school students or adults in the Bristol Bay region, courses located in Naknek or remote	• Construction Technology • Welding Technology • Heavy Equipment Operation • Net-Hanging & Fur Skin Sewing • Marine Drill Conductor, Refrigeration • Mariner's Captains Training • Computer Technology	• Commercial Driver's Licensing Class A/B • HAZWOPER 40 Hour & 8 Hour Refresher • HAACP Fish Processing Sanitation • CPR / AED / First Aid • QuickBooks • Microsoft Word/Excel	• Recruitment and retention support • Job placement • Regional coordination • Additional staff (positions are currently open and unfilled)

BBRCTE	High school students in 23 communities, participating in-person in Naknek, King Salmon, Dillingham, Anchorage, Seward, Palmer or hybrid	• Aviation • Fisheries • Culinary Arts • Welding • NCCER / Construction • Fabrication • Boatbuilding • Electrical • Survival/Wilderness Responder	• College credit • Industry recognized certifications	• Regional coordination around remote work
UAF Bristol Bay Campus	High school (14-18) to higher education (typically 20–34) Non traditional students (34+) in Dillingham or remote	• Alaska Adult Education • Environmental Studies • Sustainable Energy • Marine Advisory • Nursing and Health Care • Alaska Native Studies • Associate of Science	• Child Development and Family Studies • Content Creation • Ethnobotany • Human Services • Indigenous Studies • Rural Development, • Sustainable Energy • Tribal Governance • Tribal Justice • GED	• Need for basic tech/internet "how to" trainings
Bristol Bay Borough School District	K-12 students in Naknek, South Naknek, and King Salmon	• Distance education - students earning high school and college credit online	• Teachers are taking online courses to improve their skills and advance in residency programs while they continue to work	• Workforce navigation • Job searching, especially online • Negotiation • Onboarding
Lake & Peninsula Borough School District	K-12 Students in Chignik Lake, Chignik Bay, Chignik Lagoon, Igiugig, Kokhanok, Levelock, Meshik, Newhalen, Nondalton, Pilot Point, Perryville, and Tanalian	Distance education - students earning high school and college credit online	N/A	N/A

How do Bristol Bay workforce development organizations prioritize developing new trainings/areas of program focus?
- Organizational, staff, and district goals
- Evaluation of vacant positions
- CEDS
- Number of people signing up for a class
- Faculty interest in teaching
- Polls, surveys, and interest inventories of potential students & employers
- State of Alaska data on growing industries / positions
- Observations, word of mouth, and community feedback

Gaps for Remote Work Implementation

Technology Access

- **Poor internet bandwidth and cell/landline service:** Installing reliable and affordable telecom services in the Bristol Bay region has not been a priority for federal, state, or private telecoms to the level it needs to be to reach the demand of the region's residents. While many companies advertise that this service exists, community members report otherwise (*see Community Case Studies Report*). The most reliable of internet service providers is currently Starlink - satellite internet - which comes at a high cost. While tribal organizations have submitted multiple funding applications to increase broadband access for the region, funding continues to be delayed, keeping Bristol Bay further from the remote work world.
- **IT support parity:** With the need for IT positions growing nationally, the Bristol Bay region is no different, especially with the implementation of remote work. With in-person work, there is the ease of crowd sourcing this information from coworkers and remote work makes it more challenging, highlighting the need for each staff person to be sufficiently trained with necessary IT skills.
    - Many organizations do not have the capacity to provide IT support to their own staff. There is currently about one person servicing the whole Dillingham Census Area.
    - There needs to be a baseline training that goes over IT necessities, new programs, digital security, and continued education opportunities around computer, software, and IT updates.
- **Data Security:** When increasing digital skills in the region, security becomes of the utmost importance, especially for those in professions of sharing and discussing confidential information. Each organization needs to make the decision about whether to house data in an on-premise or cloud-based solution, keeping remote work potential in mind.
    - As internet infrastructure becomes more robust, cloud-based solutions that are accessible to everyone may become more favorable.

Remote Work Navigation

- **Remote Readiness Training:** Though BBNA's Regional Remote Work Opportunity Assessment found remote work to be already prevalent in the region, local organizations have not established formal training in remote readiness. The closest thing is virtual or site-based tech liaisons with the school districts, often teachers that are familiar with technology teaching other teachers and students. Remote work is a new(er) concept to Alaska and therefore takes intentional preparation. There is a clear need to develop / offer / require trainings for remote staff, ensuring that they can work independently and troubleshoot minor technology challenges as they arise. According to the Global Virtual Jobs Assessment, managing and being a remote employee takes a different kind of communication and people skill set (also known as 'soft skills').
    - Trainings would look different depending on the position, organization, and level of IT support that is offered with hire
    - Pairing these two skill building areas - soft skills and digital skills - into one training would be the most efficient

- **Communication:** With remote employees, comes the adjustment in communication flow between remote and in-person coworkers and supervisors. Things that need to be considered are:
    - Phone call technology for remote workers: How will office calls be transferred to remote employees? Reception, VoIP, work cells etc.
    - Communication of availability and meeting logistics, particularly with external clients or contacts
    - Maintaining confidentiality in remote spaces (homes and co-working areas)
    - Checking in on employees well being as a remote worker and monitoring work output and quality
- **Tool Implementation:** As the workforce needs change, new tools will need to be introduced and utilized to keep up with productivity and collaboration within organizations and externally.
    - Not all new tools are necessary to adopt and utilize, the most important evaluation is whether it would fit the culture, needs, and capacity of the organization considering
- **Tribal council buy-in:** The COVID-19 pandemic has already proven that work can happen remote or hybrid if needed. This is a new work lifestyle that had previously not existed and therefore a culture shift is necessary and takes time. Further information about the benefits, structure, processes, and potential should be prepared and readily available for all regional entities looking to address this culture shift or conduct further research on the feasibility for their organization, village, subregion to embark upon this new kind of employment.

Capacity Limitations

- **Staff ratios and shortages:** One of the attractions of remote work positions in the Bristol Bay region is the offering of employment to people who want to remain in their home communities. Access to living wage jobs is one of the largest reasons the region is facing out-migration, especially in its most remote villages.[4] At the same time, the region is facing staff shortages for open positions. If remote positions were possible, there could be a wider, more diverse, workforce that would be utilized to fill these positions
    - Child and Elder care have been identified as current barriers to Bristol Bay residents working.[5]
- **Funding and Housing / Public Space:** As a predominantly Indigenous, remote, and home to a global industry employing folks from out of state and region, Bristol Bay has been feeling the scarcity around housing. There is currently not enough housing in the region to accommodate those who want to stay and make homes in their communities.[6] Overcrowding in the region is approximately 5 times the national average, and approximately 23 percent of households in the region are cost-burdened.[7] Without sufficient housing, remote work employment will require investment in more public spaces with reliable broadband.

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[4] State of Alaska, "Borough/Census Area Population by Age and Sex, and Components of Change: 2019 to 2045," Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, 2020.

[5] Bristol Bay Native Corporation, 2022 Bristol Bay Workforce Snapshot.

[6] Bristol Bay Native Corporation, 2022 Bristol Bay Workforce Snapshot, page 10.

[7] Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, "Alaska Housing Assessment, Bristol Bay Native Corporation Region," 2018.

- ○ Housing and public spaces need to be offered that allow for jobs handling confidential information (i.e. healthcare, federal and state applications, personal information, etc.) to still be done remotely and in private
- **Child and Elder Care:** This has been identified as one of the barriers to people in the Bristol Bay region applying for jobs.[8]
  - ○ Remote work offers the ability for employees to work from home / remotely so they can continue to provide kin care. This takes trust and communication between the remote employee and their supervisor / organization.
  - ○ Flexibility with employees engaging in kin care is necessary to keep these employees supported and productive.

Local Concerns about Remote Work

- **Supporting students in meeting class requirements:** Some educational organizations are concerned because minimum student class requirements, such as prior logins and pre-coursework requirements are harder to manage with entirely remote classes. "When students drop out in an in-person class, there are people readily available on stand-by status that can be called in. Not so in a remote village, where we may not hear until several days later, that a student who has registered and committed to taking a training, doesn't show."[9]

- **Time management with remote work:** Some organizations have addressed this concern by having employees call in or send an activities report at routine times.

- **Organizational budgets for laptops, printers, internet etc.**
  "Access to laptops and technology training [is necessary], it would take agency partnerships willing to build infrastructure for their desired workforce for whole communities"[10]
  "The bandwidth caps here are so low, and the cost of the internet is so high, particularly when you go over the top of your cap, that it has been really very difficult to do distance learning."[11]

- **Security & Accessibility**
  "I think one of the barriers that we have is we've got to create a security system with the main server that everybody has access to, including our remote workers, in order to do proper research and take a look at documents that we store on the server. With today's technology, there's got to be a way that we can protect the integrity of the system, but still allow that remote access. And if we can do it for senior management, you should be able to increase the ability for anybody that works for the company to access those documents, if you want to know about what healthcare you have, all those documents are on our server. You know, if you want to know what kind of retirement 401Ks we have, and what that's that all that information gets updated on our servers. So, you know, just those basic information tools. And I'm not even getting into the travel authorizations and the purchase orders and the other things that are necessary to do your job."[12]

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[8] Bristol Bay Native Corporation, 2022 Bristol Bay Workforce Snapshot, https://bbna.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/BBNC-Workforce-Development-Report-2022-small.pdf
[9] Information Insights, 2022, Interview with a SAVEC representative.
[10] Information Insights, 2022, Interview with Wanda Wahl, UAF Bristol Bay Campus.
[11] Information Insights, 2022, Interview with Bill Hill, Bristol Bay Borough School District.
[12] Information Insights, 2022, Interview with Chris Napoli, BBEDC.

"Lack of physical access to a PC while troubleshooting [is a barrier]. We can mitigate this challenge with remote access, but that only allows us to interact with the software, not hardware. It is also not an option if the issue being experienced denies us a network connection."[13]

- **Outsourcing**
"Well, I think it's kind of a two-sided coin. The benefit being, it allows our state to have a bit more unity for particularly rural populations, because we're able to move those jobs and positions, or from a certain point of view, keep those jobs in positions in those rural locations where they may be serving rural communities and it doesn't make a lot of sense for those positions to move to larger population centers like Anchorage, or even Dillingham, when they're serving their direct community from the location of their community. It makes more sense to us to enable that if we have the technology and the policies to be able to do so.

The other side of the coin is if we're able to do that as an organization other organizations may also be able to outsource their positions outside of Alaska entirely. For example, they might have, and I know, a lot of organizations have IT staff that are contracted out to manage service providers that are based in California, or Washington, or even outside of the United States and each one of those positions is a position that would would traditionally be region locked towards the the organization's headquarters for example is being served remotely largely in part because of this new technology. and I know that you can't really put the genie back in the bottle when you're dealing with a technological revolution.

All you could try to do is try to foster positive use of that technology. So I think there will always be an incidental element of organizations that do choose to outsource their support staff outside of Alaska. But I think that all that we can do is try to make all the opportunities available that we can, so that our local workers, and particularly our local youth, are able to get the training and skills that they need to compete with those outsourced possibilities."[14]

- **Policy Changes**
"Policy changes around cell phone/technology (UAF doesn't allow cell phones for employees), technological security. We lost an employee because they moved to the Lower 48 and UAF has a policy that all employees must live in Alaska"[15]

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[13] Information Insights, 2022, Interview with Kyle Hardin, BBNA.
[14] Information Insights, 2022, Interview with Kyle Hardin, BBNA.
[15] Information Insights, 2022, Interview with Wanda Wahl, UAF Bristol Bay Campus.

Filling the Gaps for Remote Work Implementation

Local IT Support / Trainings
- Tech installation & set up
- Internet "how to" trainings
- Everyday troubleshooting techniques
- Hiring a (new) multi - organizational IT position
  Could be offered by:
    - School districts (Lake & Peninsula currently employs technology liaisons),
    - Alaska Job Center Network
    - Adult Education Program at UAF Bristol Bay campus, SAVEC, or AVTEC
    - BBNA, BBEDC, or BBNC in workshop settings

Remote-Readiness Training
- Training on remote work best practices and transitions for employers
- Thorough onboarding training with employee engagement opportunities to ensure the employees know the value of their position
- Everyday technological skills: typing, using email, web browsers, software and application suites (GSuite, Office, Outlook) video conferencing, online applications and e-forms, and creating accounts
  Could be offered by:
    - Consulting firms or organizations specializing in remote-readiness training (i.e. Foraker Group),
    - People within the organization that have the skills and capacity, or
    - A new position for the region or organization.

Regionally Coordinated Workforce Support
- Recruitment and retention support
- Job placement coordination (workforce development organizations themselves are facing issues with understaffing / low capacity)
- Workforce navigation
- Job searching, especially online
- Contract negotiation
- Onboarding
  Could be offered by:
    - The University of Alaska Fairbanks Bristol Bay Campus
    - Bristol Bay Native Association
    - Local cities, boroughs, municipalities, and tribal organizations

Acquiring technology and remote work equipment: This could begin with a regional inventory of what equipment is available and which organizations have the capacity and ability to apply for grants or raise money to increase the inventory. Agency partnerships will be key in making this process as efficient and cost effective as possible. For the infrastructure of broadband to the region, federal or state funding is vital.

Advertising Remote Work Positions: Once remote work is ready for implementation, letting residents know that these positions are being offered and how the organization will support them working remotely - including training processes, will be a key to success.

Training Resources

Table 2: Organizations currently offering Remote Work & Remote Readiness Trainings

Organization / Offerings	Cost / Availability
Remote-how: Remote-how offers training and consulting services to help individuals and organizations prepare for and navigate the challenges of remote work. They offer courses on remote leadership, remote team building, and remote productivity, among other topics. [16]	Certified Remote Individual - $99 and 12 hours of content available online Certified Remote Human Resources - $449 and 5.5 hours of content resources available online Certified in Distributed Management (Master Managing Remote Teams) - $449 and 6 hours of content available online
GitLab: GitLab is a software company that has been fully remote since its inception. They offer a variety of resources on remote work, including an ebook on remote work culture, a remote work summit, and a remote work certification program.[17]	Remote Foundations Certification - Free as long as you make an account in Level Up (GitLab Training) TeamOps Certification - Free as long as you make an account in Level Up (GitLab Training)
Automattic: Automattic is the company behind WordPress, and has been fully distributed since its founding. They offer a "distributed work" course that covers topics such as communication, time management, and productivity in a remote environment.[18]	A crash course in remote management is an hour long video on Youtube (free)
Zapier: Zapier is a software company that is fully remote and specializes in automation tools. They offer a "remote work for teams" course that covers topics such as building trust, effective communication, and setting boundaries.[19]	They offer the ultimate guide to remote work (EBook) which is free and available online.

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[16] "Virtual Training Services for Hybrid Work Environments," Remote-How, 2023, https://remote-how.com/

[17] "GitLab Learn," GitLab, 2023, https://about.gitlab.com/learn/

[18] "We are Passionate About Making the Web a Better Place," Automattic, 2023, https://automattic.com/

[19] "The Ultimate Guide to Remote Work," Zapier, 2023, https://zapier.com/resources/guides/remote-work

FlexJobs: FlexJobs is a job search website that specializes in remote and flexible work opportunities. They offer a variety of resources on remote work, including a remote work certification program, a remote work resource center, and a blog with tips and advice for remote workers.	Remote Work Certification - $195 and 4-5 hours of content available online[20]
Trello: Trello is a project management tool that is used by many remote teams. They offer a "remote work" course that covers topics such as time management, communication, and staying productive while working from home.	Remote Work Playbook for Success Webinar - Free with an account on the website[21]
Virtual Work Insider: Virtual Work Insider is a consulting firm that specializes in helping companies transition to remote work. They offer a variety of services, including remote readiness assessments, remote team building workshops, and customized training programs.[22]	Leadership Training for Hybrid & Remote Work - Cost unknown, had to send a email request for pricing

Table 3: Organizations offering Tech Necessities Trainings

Organization / Offerings	Cost / Availability
National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA): The NDIA is a non-profit organization that works to promote digital equity and inclusion for all Americans. They offer a variety of resources and training curriculums for communities that are new to technology, including a "Getting Started with Computers" course and a "Basic Internet Skills" course.[23]	The Digital Inclusion Startup Manual is free to access online. [24]
TechSoup: TechSoup is a non-profit organization that provides technology products and services to other non-profit organizations. They offer a variety of free and low-cost training resources for non-profit organizations and their communities, including courses on basic computer skills, internet safety, and social media.[25]	All available online Organizing your Remote Working Team - $70 for 3-4 hours of content Grant Writing and Management - $250 for 8-16 hours of content Project Management Basics - $50 for 2-3 hours of content

[20] "Workplaceless Introduces Remote Work Certification for Job Seekers and Company Onboarding," FlexJobs, 2023, https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/save-now-on-workplaceless-remote-work-certification/
[21] "Remote Work Playbook for Team Success," Trello, 2023, https://trello.com/remote-work-playbook-for-team-success
[22] Leadership Training for Hybrid and Remote Work," Virtual Work Insider, 2023, https://virtualworkinsider.com/
[23] "Digital Literacy Training & Employment," National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA), 2023, https://www.digitalinclusion.org/digital-literacy-training-employment/
[24] "The Digital Inclusion Startup Manual," National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA), 2023, https://startup.digitalinclusion.org/
[25] "TechSoup Courses," TechSoup, 2023, https://www.techsoup.org/courses

Recommendations

Regional Collaboration
Partnership and collaboration are necessary when trying to address region wide gaps.

Prioritize Funding for Broadband Infrastructure: Organizations and employers with the capacity to, must apply for federal funding available for broadband infrastructure and advocate for the State of Alaska to assist in meeting these needs. This will take a statewide digital equity plan to make sure funds are divided up appropriately. While fiber infrastructure is preferred and recommended for reliability and bandwidth, utilization of LEO technology while fiber gets funded and built could be a temporary solution.

Consider a shared IT position for multiple organizations: Qualified IT professionals are a necessity of having remote workers and an identified gap in this assessment. While workforce staff are at capacity, adding a position, housed at one organization, serving multiple employers could be a consideration for budgets, staffing, and employer partnerships. This position would also ideally be able to manage data security systems.

"I remember, just five years ago, that the IT folks that we have were adamant that we couldn't access Facebook from our computers. We couldn't access LinkedIn, we couldn't access Twitter, we couldn't access any social media, because all those that's where the hackers can come in. Wow, look at now. Yeah, we have Facebook pages. The company has a Facebook page and Twitter and you know, every social media network and we manage it right through our computers. So yeah, that's what I'm saying. And now we're advancing so quickly. I don't think there's going to be very many barriers"[26]

Establish policies and procedures that support remote work: Developing policies and procedures for remote work, including communication protocols, performance expectations, and security measures, can help to ensure a successful remote work program. This could be developed by each employer with the recommendation of 1.) a cross-regional and employer working group to draft policies that all employers can agree upon or choose from and / or 2.) one or two employers drafting policy changes, sharing it with others, and every employer adjust the policies for their work environment norms and culture
> These policies should address:
> - Communication expectations
> - Working hours and schedule (identifying where there is flexibility for kin care)
> - Confidentiality guidelines
> - Potential tools to utilize
> - Why tribes should embrace remote work (to increase buy-in)
> - Training processes and offerings

Regional Job board: Job board that is available to everybody who lives in the region, where posts consist of positions available with detail on location, option for remote work, and anticipated internet speed and equipment needed to fulfill the job requirements remotely

Regional Remote Work Clearinghouse: This would include cross regional access to updated best practices and technologies for digital skill training and remote work practices

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[26] Information Insights, 2022, Interview with Chris Napoli, BBEDC.

Keep a holistic approach in mind: Offering ongoing or wrap-around support alongside digital skills training, such as child care, transportation, job matching, professional development opportunities, and community events, can help to promote the well-being and success of all workers, including remote workers.

Utilize the Digital Navigator program as much as possible: As a part of NTIA's federal funding awards, the Alaska Federation of Natives has been given funding to hire and support digital navigators in each region in Alaska. The digital navigators exist to increase the digital skills in Alaska Native communities from connectivity challenges to device navigation. Bristol Bay organizations are encouraged to recommend that residents take advantage of their local digital navigator to alleviate the individual overload of staff teaching digital navigation in addition to their job responsibilities.

Embrace cross generational training programs: As youth continue to grow up in a world requiring digital skills in everyday life, they are a great resource to utilize in increasing the digital skills within Bristol Bay. Welcoming their knowledge as trainers for an Elders and youth digital skills training program, would allow for cross generational relationships to grow, youths' teaching, communication, and digital skills to increase, and Elders ability to navigate in the ever changing digital world, to increase as well as their relationship with youth in the community.
- *Example of Successful Elders & Youth Computer Training:* Connected Elders and Youth is an intergenerational digital skills program developed by HelpAge Canada, with support from Pinnguaq Association and Connected Canadians. Uniquely designed for Nunavummiut in the Kivalliq region, the program pairs youth and Elders to support Elders in building digital skills for connecting with friends and family. As part of the custom education program, 250 tablets with accompanying data plans are provided to program participants and employees.
    - This program is created for the seven communities of the Kivalliq region of Nunavut and has already expanded to the Hamlet of Clyde River in Nunavut's Baffin region. Training will prepare the youth for their teaching roles. Learning modules are unique to northern life and encompass *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, the Inuit principles for societal values.
    - Program delivery commences September 2021 and will focus on building essential digital skills like navigating tablet settings and menus, searching on the internet, using applications and digital photography. *Connected Elders and Youth* is currently recruiting 22 youth in the Kivalliq communities for paid internship to support Elders' digital skills learning. Elders are encouraged to register for the program which will be delivered on a weekly schedule in a group setting. Upon program completion, graduates will enter a draw to be able to keep a tablet. This program is available for youth employment and Elder participation is Arviat, Baker Lake, Chesterfield Inlet, Coral Harbour, Rankin Inlet, Naujaat, and Clyde River.

  This program has been developed in collaboration by leading non-profit organizations:
    - **HelpAge Canada** works in partnership with communities and other organizations to improve and maintain the quality of life of vulnerable older persons and their communities in Canada and around the world, with a vision where all older persons will lead secure, healthy, active and dignified lives.

- **Pinnguaq Association** works alongside rural, remote, and Indigenous in the development of STEAM skills. They support program delivery and the intersection of cultural knowledge in the teachings of technology.
- **Connected Canadians** was consulted during program development; ensuring that learning modules are best suited for older adult learners in a technology context.
  - *"Connected Elders and Youth creates opportunities to gather, to share language and culture, to speak with friends and family in other communities, to join online communities, and for participation in the workforce."*

Local Collaboration

Recycle current infrastructure: The need to have more housing and access to public space where remote work could happen is a great barrier for this regional transition. While brand new buildings and housing is ideal, people and culture in Bristol Bay have always needed to recycle and pivot to accommodate the needs of the community as times change. As seen in the Community Case Studies Report, Bristol Bay villages are remodeling old buildings, using vacant housing, and expanding already existing infrastructure to make remote work public spaces possible.

Appendix A: Community Access to Regional Resources

Table 4. Regional Resources by Community

Subregion	Community	Population	Resources
Nushagak Subregion	Aleknagik	125	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBEDC, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Clark's Point	42	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBEDC, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Dillingham	2133	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBEDC, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Ekuk		Served by BBEDC, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Ekwok	53	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBEDC, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Koliganek	238	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	New Stuyahok	572	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Portage Creek		Served by BBEDC, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
Togiak Bay Subregion	Manokotak	705	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBEDC, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Togiak	866	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBEDC, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Twin Hills	69	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBEDC, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
Iliamna Lake Subregion	Igiugig	60	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Iliamna	35	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Kokhanok	109	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Levelock	34	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBEDC, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Newhalen	100	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Nondalton	50	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC

	Pedro Bay	18	Served by BBNA, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Port Alsworth	116	Served by BBRCTE, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
Chignik Subregion	Chignik Bay	44	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Chignik Lagoon	31	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Chignik Lake	40	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Ivanof Bay	0	Served by BBNA, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Perryville	74	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
Kvichak Bay/Peninsula Subregion	Egegik	47	Served by BBNA, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Kanatak		Served by BBNA, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	King Salmon	399	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBEDC, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Naknek	394	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBEDC, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Pilot Point	86	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBEDC, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Port Heiden	65	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBEDC, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	South Naknek	56	Served by BBNA, BBRCTE, BBEDC, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC
	Ugashik	3	Served by BBNA, BBNC (Shareholder Development and Bristol Bay Foundation), and SWAMC

Appendix B: Sample Tech Basics, Digital Skills & Remote Work Training Curriculums

Digital skills can be defined as being able to do a variety of beginner tasks such as:
- Sign up for classes, training, newsletters, subscriptions etc.
- Sign or submit online forms
- Email: creating, logging in, accessing, and navigating
- Reviewing documents / assignments via an online platform
- Create logins on different platforms and websites
- Order items online

1. **Introduction to the Internet**
- Understanding what the internet is and how it works
- Basic internet terminology (e.g. browser, website, URL, search engine, etc.)
- How to connect to the internet using a computer or smartphone
- Tips for staying safe online (e.g. avoiding scams, protecting personal information)

2. **Email and Online Communication**
- How to set up an email account
- Writing and sending emails
- Email etiquette
- Online communication tools (e.g. messaging apps, video conferencing tools)

3. **Basic Computer Skills**
- Understanding hardware and software
- Basic computer terminology (e.g. desktop, taskbar, file explorer, etc.)
- How to navigate a computer's operating system (e.g. Windows or Mac OS)
- Basic file management (e.g. creating, saving, and organizing files)

4. **Introduction to Microsoft Office**
- An overview of Microsoft Office programs (e.g. Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams)
- How to create and format a document in Word
- Basic spreadsheet functions in Excel
- How to create a basic presentation in PowerPoint

5. **Introduction to Remote Work**
- What is remote work and how it differs from traditional office work
- Advantages and disadvantages of remote work
- Tips for effective communication and collaboration in a remote work environment
- Time management and productivity tips for remote workers

6. **Job Search and Interview Skills**
- How to search for remote job opportunities
- Resume writing tips
- Interview preparation and skills
- Following up after an interview

7. **Conclusion**
- Review of key concepts covered in the program

- Next steps for continued learning and development

Table 5. National Digital Inclusion Alliance Recommended Resources[27]

Program	Creator	Special Features	Facilitator Support
DigitalLearn	Public Library Association	Provides templates for instructors to build their own courses	Yes
GCFGlobal	Goodwill Foundation		Yes
Digital Literacy Pathway	WebJunction	Provides guidance for instructors on how to evaluate and engage with digital literacy skills resources and programming	Yes
TechBoomers	TechBoomers	Offers a WIDE variety of topics in listicle lessons and video tutorials, much like an early Buzzfeed format. Great for community members looking to answer their own questions.	No
Applied Digital Skills	Google	Offers both a robust curriculum, but also extensive materials for learning to teach digital skills	Yes
Grow with Google	Google	Brings Google resources to organizations and provides career-focused certifications	No
Senior Planet	Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) by AARP	Live, synchronous classes for community members 60+	No
Web Literacy	Mozilla Foundation	Offers lesson plans called "playlists," including offline activities and online instruction	Yes
Microsoft Learn	Microsoft	Presents trainings on Microsoft products with clear prerequisites. Instructor materials focus on building skills as a trainer.	Yes

Other Resources:
- Digital Skills Content and Curriculum - Design, from the Digital Resilience in the American Workforce (DRAW) initiative
- Cyber Safety - Internet Safety Tips To Stay Safe Online : InformED, from Open Colleges

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[27] "Planning to Build a New Digital Skills Curriculum? Read This First,"National Digital Inclusion Alliance, Lo Smith | Aug 31, 2022 | Digital Inclusion News