

ExhibitAExecutiveSummary

State of Alaska

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Alaska is a well-known “ground zero” for climate change. The National Climate Assessment notes changes in sea ice and resultant increased vulnerability of Alaskan coastal communities to the effects of storm surges and accelerated erosion; and regional warming and subsequent permafrost thaw, which destabilize residential, public and commercial structures and infrastructure. HUD’s recognition of Alaskan communities’ unmet needs and potential for unique culture-sustaining resiliency actions through invitation to Phase 2 and award would result in model resiliency outcomes.

For this application and ongoing and future resiliency efforts, the State of Alaska acknowledges the hazards of storm surges, erosion, severe winds, flooding and permafrost degradation. These hazards damage infrastructure, housing and commercial and public buildings, and disruption of food supply. Conditions and vulnerabilities are exacerbated by climate change, lack of cash economy, dependence on wild food supplies, high rates of domestic violence, low quality housing stock, and severe weather.

Building resilience, particularly to the effects of erosion and repetitive flooding, reduces community public health risks from hazardous material spills, contaminated drinking water and exposure to mold and debris from flooding. Improving infrastructure and residential design will reduce local environmental and community impacts. A secondary effect of building local resilience is that these communities can act as regional resilience centers for less robust regional communities, providing food, shelter and aid to evacuated neighbors.

With the exception of a few regional centers, most Alaskan communities, specifically those in this application’s target areas, are remote (no road access), rural (population 400-800), and tribal (subsistence culture) communities. These conditions amplify the actual effect of what may be conventionally perceived from an urban or even rural “lower 48” perspective, and deserve a broader understanding of the effects on Alaskans living in impacted communities. Investment in resilience

planning and projects has significantly greater impacts on local resilience and, in some cases, can even affect cultural survival.

Economic resilience is measured by survival, which is measured by the ability to shelter from extreme arctic conditions; hunt; fish; gather; and preserve and store enough food, water, fuel and other resources (called subsistence) to sustain families for the long arctic winters. Employment is often seasonal and resulting cash economy is limited. There is usually only one community store which stocks limited supplies of food and other commodities, which are available at exorbitantly high prices. Prices are driven by the logistics of lack of roads and limited access by large planes and barges. Prices are also influenced by high fuel cost. It is not uncommon for communities to go weeks without resupply due to temperatures below -40F, high winds, low clouds and limited visibility. Alaska Native peoples settled near rivers and coastal areas to be in proximity to subsistence resources. Thus, their communities and infrastructure are in coastal and riverine floodplains threatened by periodic and progressive flooding and erosion. In the arctic environment, many communities sit on thawing permafrost which destabilizes overlying infrastructure. Also, as described for Newtok in Exhibit D, pages 10-11, many communities lack what are considered basic services. They lack reliable freshwater, running water/waste water, or easy access to solid waste disposal. Finally, of note is the occurrence of “ballistic ice” during riverine ice jam flooding, where flooding is accompanied by the devastating effects of vehicle-size chunks of ice which can knock buildings off foundations and crush vehicles. See Attachment E, TCC.

These risks have disproportionate effects on the elderly, functional needs, and young. They are at higher risk when lack of resiliency leads to home and/or community evacuation, limits access to emergency and medical care and supplies, and limits access to cultural food and items such as baby formula and diapers. An important lesson in providing emergency food for Alaska Native populations is that similar food sources should be supplied. Non-subsistence food for extended periods of time can substantially affect the physical and mental health of Alaska Native populations.

The State will build upon pre-NOFA relationships with local jurisdictions, tribes, regional non-profits, federal entities, volunteer organizations, and contractors. Alaska is a very large state with small, isolated communities with limited infrastructure where climate change impacts on extreme weather events is more dramatic than most places. Challenges of severe weather and adaptation are hampered by geologic hazards and limited government capacity to address all needs. Leveraging all agencies and their resources is a matter of necessity to effectively plan and complete projects. Local jurisdictions and tribes are at the heart of local project collaboration. Projects require local commitment and input. Local jurisdictions are involved from initial engagement to planning, project management and closeout.

Our application is organized by two sub-county target areas. These are the Association of Village Council of Presidents (AVCP) and the Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) Tribal Regions. These tribal regions are geographic and share similarities in hazards, risks, vulnerabilities, and resiliency strategies.

An established planning process is key to our resiliency. Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA) has successfully engaged a resiliency planning model for Newtok, which is threatened by progressive erosion. The Newtok Planning Group, its strategic management plan, and efforts to leverage funding through its partners are all model processes for community resiliency planning.

All projects will meet the national objective by benefiting low- and moderate-income persons and meeting community development needs having particular urgency. Existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the community health or welfare, and financial resources are not available. For overall benefit, at least 50% of all monies from this grant will assist in activities that provide sufficient benefit to low/moderate-income persons in the form of services, area benefits, housing or jobs.

Our Dropbox link with attachments and references can be found at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/27acwr7vu7h9ewj/AACOBuxWNmsGfQFFn43gr6B4a?dl=0>