

Nome Community Center Organizational Capacity Statement

...serving elders, families, and youth since 1910

For over a century, Nome Community Center has worked to uphold the spirit of its mission to “enhance the quality of life for people of the Bering Straits Region.” Nome Community Center strives to fill the gaps in community programming where the need is greatest in Nome and the surrounding region. Our goal is to enrich the unique facets of the community through elder, youth, family and wellness programs.

Background

Nome Community Center (NCC) traces its roots to a reindeer-herding project that began in 1906. Mrs. R. H. Young, Bureau Secretary of Alaska, supplied a generous donation to the Women's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Church to establish a reindeer mission at the Sinuk River. The purpose of the mission was to preserve and protect the tradition of reindeer herding.

The Mission became Nome Community Center in 1970. On November 14th of that year, NCC was incorporated as an independent nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. The move from a church-operated organization to a locally controlled non-profit allowed NCC to gain access to funding sources inaccessible to church-operated programs. Although it became an independent agency, NCC would remain linked to the United Methodist Church through a covenant agreement with United Women in Faith, and remains a UWF National Mission Institution today.

CAPACITY ACHIEVEMENT ON SOCIAL SERVICES SECTORS

(NEST) Nome Emergency Shelter Team

NEST began in response to several freezing deaths on the streets of Nome. Creating a shelter was a community grassroots effort to prevent exposure related death by providing a warm, safe place to sleep for anyone in need. With no operating funds and donated space in a local church; an entirely volunteer staff, NEST opened its doors on nights when the weather was predicted to reach -10 F, or wind-chill of -10, the temperature zone of highest risk of exposure-related death. Funded through State and federal grants, local donations and community support, the shelter located at the Karmun Center of Nazarene Church, now operates for six of the coldest months of the year. Local churches provide hot soups each night to provide a warm meal to our shelter guests.

This homeless program is a “wet shelter” for chronically unhoused, many of whom are dependent upon substance use to cope with mental and physical health challenges, repeated trauma and poverty. The shelter serves an average of 40-45 individuals each night with nearly 250 unique individuals among those who use the shelter during the season.

Family Services

Family Services is an agency referral program that assists parents and families. Family Service Coordinators work directly with the Alaska Office of Children’s Services to assist families who are at risk of separation from their children. Parenting support groups are a major focus of our work in identifying what is strong, not wrong. We believe that we all have within us the wisdom and cultural competency to manage even the most difficult challenges that confronts families. With the support and encouragement found in these groups, we can tap into a deep knowledge reservoir to help us discover practical applications to grow and strengthen the most important to us - our families.

Parenting workshops offer practical application to help individual men, women and couples develop skills. These workshops are modular and can be adapted to large groups, small groups and one-on-one. Sessions have been held at the state correctional facility, domestic violence shelter, half-way house and for those in the community who want to strengthen their competence as parents.

The caseload of at-risk families averages 30 each year. In addition, parenting workshops are attended by over 50 parents each year impacting more than 100 children.

(Extra Years of Zest) XYZ Senior Center

The XYZ Senior Center functions to offer much-needed services to our community's elders. These services include meals, transportation, shower facilities, and laundry facilities. Occasionally, special services such as vaccination clinics and nutrition seminars are also offered. Activities are available during the day, with staff supervision, including falls prevention and strength exercising, outings, cultural activities, nutritional and health monitoring in partnership with Norton Sound Health Corporation, fishing, and berry picking.

Elders have the opportunity to socialize and gain confidence as they learn to engage with technologies such as the computer lab, tablets and cell phones. Structured activities help program participants to take advantage of all the center has to offer. Congregate meals and home deliveries of nutritious food contribute to the improved health outcomes of our seniors. Community partners help to keep cultural connections as an important component to improve quality of life.

Over 150 seniors in the community are registered participants at the center. In addition, community members stop by to use the computers and laundry facilities.

Food Bank

The Food Bank is supported by Food Bank of Alaska with USDA commodities and by various community and Statewide donors. It is open once a week, (every Tuesday at 5:30- 7pm) offering fresh, frozen, and canned food for those who need extra support to feed their families, and many consider it a crucial lifeline. We depend on community volunteers to assist with food distribution.

NCC desire is to assist in addressing hunger not just in Nome, but in this arctic region by providing administrative support to rural villages to strengthen their food security, increase health and provide easy access to food for families currently unmet by EBT/SNAP benefits.

Over 400 households are served by the Nome Food Bank helping to feed nearly 1300 adults and children each year.

Housing and Homeless Prevention

Permanent Supportive Housing is a proven solution to homelessness for the most vulnerable chronically unhoused community members. It pairs housing with case management and supportive services. Leases are help with local landlords in the community in which we place individuals who have been chronically unhoused. Tenants are visited frequently and provided with support services, practical helps and connection to other services in the community.

Homeless prevention efforts support families struggling to pay rent and utilities due to crisis, unemployment, or life-altering events to keep individuals and families housed. Research shows that the cost to keep a family housed is much less than attempting to re-house later.

A housing coalition is facilitated by Nome Community Center to address housing solutions, meeting with community decision makers and interested parties involved with housing in some capacity. The severe shortage of housing stock in Nome and the region has resulted in poor outcomes for many struggling to provide safety and security for their families.

Over 50 households are assisted each year with back rent, utility and heating assistance. Eight chronic homeless are currently housed, some have gained employment, some are on a path to sobriety and others are getting the behavioral health services they need.

Home Plate Nome

HomePlate Nome, LLC is a Housing First project designed to provide a path toward housing permanency for Nome's most vulnerable chronically homeless population. HomePlate is 15-unit studio apartment building for single occupancy with an on-site property manager's unit. The design includes an onsite medical and mental health clinic with space for individual counseling. Nome Community Center's experience in caring for Nome's homeless individuals through the NEST (Nome Emergency Shelter Team) operations and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program, has been the springboard to the development of the first supportive housing project of its type on the western edge of the state.

Construction of the HomePlate Apartments is expected to be completed by December of 2023 with a projected move in date of January 2024. Ground breaking was held in early September at the site of the building. The location provides easy access for tenants to the public safety services, the Wellness Center and the hospital.

We estimate that there are 30 chronic homeless on the streets of Nome. This project will house half of them. Future efforts to end homeless in Nome will require additional supportive housing.

Nome Children Home

The Nome Children's Home is a 10-bed emergency housing facility for children who have been removed from their parents' homes by the Office of Children's Services due to reports of harm or unsafe conditions in their home. For many children, those unsafe conditions include neglect and abuse. The Nome Children's Home seeks to keep the children in the region, minimize the effect of trauma, and support the success of families. Children are welcomed into the home under a variety of different circumstances, and often times are provided with clothing, appropriate weather gear and other items to provide them comfort in their protective spaces.

NCC ensures the safety, permanency and well-being of children by strengthening families, engaging communities, and partnering with tribes.

As many as 40 children have cycled in and out of the care of the staff at the Nome Children's Home in a given year. School attendance, health care and behavioral health interventions are the priority for those who become residents of the home.

Boys & Girls Club

The Boys and Girls Club (B&GC) of Nome is a safe place that provides snacks, after-school care, tutoring, and valuable educational and emotional support for youth. The B&GC serves anywhere from 20 to 30 youth each weeknight. The youth of Nome benefit from building healthy social connections.

B&GC is open Monday through Friday for youth ages seven to 18 years of age. Regular activities include Power Hour (homework tutoring), S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), arts and crafts, field trips, Triple Play, cultural activities, Native Youth Olympics, reading improvement programs, and more! The Nome Clubhouse Facebook page features regular updates and reminders.

Registration is required for participation in the program. There is no charge to become a clubhouse member. Data collected and outcomes support the funding that Boy & Girls Club of Alaska received to support the salaries for the program staff. Nome Community Center absorbs the cost for building space and expenses related to operations of the facility. Nutritious snacks are offered to all youth under the age of 18 as part of the health and nutrition program to combat youth obesity, promote physical activity and improved academic performance.

Newly 200 youth register each year to participate in the clubhouse. The current need in the community is to provide safe out-of-school activities for younger children. Outreach to teens has been challenging since the pandemic when youth were offered unlimited use of screen time, eSports and other technology driven activities.

Nome Youth Court

The Nome Youth Court gives first-time juvenile offenders the opportunity to keep their crime off the record by agreeing to go on trial before their peers. The Nome Youth Court is a restorative justice system approach in which sentences focus on rehabilitation and on repairing the damage their crimes cause to the community. Sentences promote responsibility much more than solely serving punishment. The recidivism rate for those who complete their sentence is much lower than those who are at the mercy of the traditional court system.

Student volunteers learn about the legal system and sit for a bar exam. Acting in the roles of judges, attorneys and other court personnel, these students conduct hearings and help their peers navigate this alternative to the legal process.

Each year the court attracts 10 to 15 students who train to perform the duties of the players in the adult system of justice in the state. Referrals come from the court system, the department of juvenile justice and from the school district. The number of hearings conducted in a given year.

Youth Camp CRAVE

Youth camp was originally started as a tobacco prevention camp and evolved into CRAVE in 2013. CRAVE is a 4-day summer camp that focuses on healthy living. CRAVE stands for Culture, Recreation, Active, Values, and Education. Some of the activities include: tobacco prevention, campfire activities, alcohol awareness, hiking, paddle boarding, social/ emotional learning, swimming, fishing, nutrition education, group games, archery, cultural activities, and more! There are three sessions each summer: Foxes (ages 8-10), Wolves (ages 10-12), and Bears (ages 12-14). Foxes Camp is a day camp with one overnight stay at the Alaska Missions & Retreats (AKMR) cabin in Nook, just 18 miles outside of Nome. Wolf Camp and

Bears Camp are sleep-away camps held at Bear Creek Fish Camp in Council, Alaska. For many youth in Nome, camping experiences like those offered at Camp CRAVE would not be possible. Youth learn team building skills, service and citizenship, and how to enjoy what nature around them has to offer.

Each camp hosts up to 20 children for a total number of 60 children who get to enjoy a camping experience. Most years there is a waiting list of those who want to attend, but capacity is limited.

Grants Management

Transparent management of the funding resources is a sacred trust, not just for accountability and strengthening partnerships with our donors, but more importantly because of our calling to respond to the needs of community members and to fill service gaps not supplied by other agencies in Nome. One of our top priorities is to be the trusted partner of choice, in the non-profit sector, leveraging our financial resources for positive and lasting impact.

Our partnership with The Foraker Group provides support for financial and internal control following guidelines on grants management and expenditure based on Generally Acceptable Accounting Principles (GAAPs). Combined with our experience in Alaska with government funding, institutional donors and supporting corporate partners, NCC is strategically positioned as an organization with strong financial management, donor compliance, ensuring the highest levels of accountability and risk management.

Partnerships

Nome Community Center supports non-profit coordination networks and civic coalitions in Nome region and Statewide level partnerships and alliances to make its actions more rights based, effective, collaborative, and sustainable. At the community, tribe, City, Borough, Region and State level of action we practice a high commitment to State and donor regulations, coordination mechanisms among community of action groups and coalitions of advocacies allowing us to serve the best interest for all Alaskans. NCC is licensed with the state for the operation of our residential home for children. We are accredited through CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) for quality performance improvement. We are members of the Association of Homes for Children and members of several coalitions in the region.

Nome Community Center has been able to establish and nurture good relationships with key donors to strengthen the grants portfolio. In spite of a difficult funding environment, NCC was able to attract funding of an estimated \$13 million, and reaching hundreds of beneficiaries between 2020-2023. Major funders include the following with many additional financial supporters with smaller contributions:

1. State of Alaska
2. USDA- United States Department of Agriculture
3. AHFC- Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
4. City of Nome
5. Food Bank of Alaska
6. US Department of Housing & Urban Development
7. NSHC- Norton Sound Health Corporation
8. NSEDC- Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation
9. BSNC- Bering Straits Native Corporation
10. SNC- Sitsnasuak Native Corporation

11. UWF- United Women in Faith
12. Alaska Mental Health Trust
13. Rasmuson Foundation
14. Alaska Department of Transportation
15. RuralCap
16. Alaska Children's Trust

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