

Recommendations

1. We recommend the U.S. Congress take immediate action to close the \$80 million annual funding gap by providing a single, committed funding source to fully cover the costs of protection-in-place, managed retreat, or relocation of threatened Alaska communities. To be effective, we recommend the entity that receives the gap funding has Alaska-based staff and leadership, has significant experience supporting community infrastructure development and environmental threats in rural Alaska, and the entity's funding can be used as a non-federal match to leverage other resources. A viable alternative to a single funding source is dedicated funding to multiple agencies who collaborate and fund projects from a common priority list. An example of an existing collaboration is the Alaska Sanitation Facilities Program. The single funding source or collaboration should provide 100 percent federal funding and should be based on a risk-based prioritization. One hundred percent federal funding should be provided for the following needs in order of priorities in the graphic to the right:



Figure 2: ANTHC • DCRA • Unmet Needs Report 2023

2. We recommend that agencies and the U.S. Congress remove programmatic and legislative barriers for small Tribal and rural communities. Identified barriers for more than 25 federal programs are listed in Appendix C. Top priorities include:
 - » The design of many funding programs unintentionally limit small, rural community access to federal programs. Examples include cost-sharing requirements, competitive applications, and benefit-cost requirements that do not fit rural Alaska.
 - » We recommend the U.S. Congress implement changes in enabling legislation that prohibits program support for mitigating climate and environmental threats. Examples of programs that would significantly benefit Alaska communities include: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers programs, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)/National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) National Coastal Resilience Fund, U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).
3. We propose Congress establish a lasting, all-encompassing framework to help Alaska communities combat environmental threats. This framework should be permanent in law to ensure continuity across administrations and agencies. Chapter 6 outlines specific agency roles, aligning government functions to aid threatened communities. A pilot framework in Alaska, in line with GAO suggestions, could inform a nationwide system. (GAO, 2020; GAO, 2022).