

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development**Grants to Municipalities (AS 37.05.315)****Grant Recipient: Northwest Arctic Borough****Federal Tax ID: 920116661****Project Title:****Project Type: Equipment and Materials**

Northwest Arctic Borough - Borough-Wide Search and Rescue Support

State Funding Requested: \$350,000**House District: 40 / T**

One-Time Need

Brief Project Description:

This funding will help support our Borough-wide search and rescue efforts by covering the cost of new equipment, fuel, repairs and upgrades to facilities, and maintenance and repairs on existing equipment.

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$350,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2015 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$350,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

Funding Details:

None

Detailed Project Description and Justification:

Borough-Wide Search and Rescue \$350,000.0

The NANA Search and Rescue group is made up of volunteers from throughout the region. Their mission is to unify and integrate the search and rescue teams of the NANA Region in order to provide effective ground, air and water search and rescue capabilities for our region. We have eleven communities: Ambler, Buckland, Deering, Kiana, Kivalina, Kobuk, Kotzebue, Noatak, Noorvik, Selawik and Shungnak. One SAR president serves each community. The Search and Rescue Coordinator is paid by the Northwest Arctic Borough, and he oversees each community and coordinates each search that takes place.

Geographically, the Northwest Arctic Borough is the second-largest borough in Alaska, running along Kotzebue Sound and the Wullik, Noatak, Kobuk, Selawik, Buckland and Kugruk rivers. The area encompasses 35,898 square miles of land and 4,863 square miles of water. The area experiences a transitional climate, characterized by long, cold winters and cool summers. Temperatures range from -5 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit. Winds average 8 to 12 miles per hour, but 50 to 70 mph winds may accompany storms and produce extremely low and dangerous wind chill factors. Total precipitation averages 9 inches per year and average annual snowfall is 47 inches. Weather conditions can change suddenly and without warning. Our SAR volunteers serve a remote and rugged Alaska wilderness area that is roughly equivalent in size to the state of Indiana. There are no roads connecting any of these communities, and this necessitates inter-village travel by airplane, boat, or snowmachine, often in adverse weather conditions. Additionally, many of our residents live a subsistence lifestyle

that necessitates travel, sometimes for long distances, for hunting on both land and water. Each year, there are numerous incidents of persons who are lost, missing, or overdue. When searching for missing people, time is often a critical component as weather conditions limit the period of possible survival. Waiting for help to arrive from outside rescue organizations is seldom an option; our search and rescue teams must be ready to go immediately. Once we are made aware that someone is overdue and missing, we immediately put together a quick-response team of two to go out and search the area for the missing person(s). If unsuccessful, we then send more teams out in a larger coordinated search. At this point we also contact the National Guard, Alaska State Troopers, and the U.S. Coast Guard for assistance.

In 2013 there were approximately 40 searches, with one-third being successful.

In 2012 there were approximately 35 searches, with one-half being successful.

The majority of our searchers are volunteers using their own equipment. When a search goes on, just about everyone in the community wants to help. On average we have 300 to 400 volunteers region-wide. Active volunteers who perform searches in the field range from 100 to 150 in the region.

Each community is provided with the essential equipment needed for different types of searches. Each community is equipped with one boat for summer months and one or two snow machines for the winter months. If more equipment is needed, volunteers usually provide their own equipment for use. Oftentimes the volunteers cover some or all of their costs to assist in the search. However, with increases in the cost of fuel, equipment repairs and maintenance, and food, this is becoming more difficult for people to do. Additionally, each community needs some operable basic equipment on hand ready to use for search and rescue efforts. This funding will be used in all of our communities to assist with the valuable mission of the region's search and rescue efforts. Funding will help cover the costs of new equipment for first responders, upgrades and repairs to the search and rescue facility, fuel, and maintenance and repairs on existing equipment.

Project Timeline:

Funds will be expended over the year as needed.

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Northwest Arctic Borough

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

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Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? Yes No