



State of Alaska House of Representatives Special Committee: Tribal Affairs

Public Safety in the AVCP region

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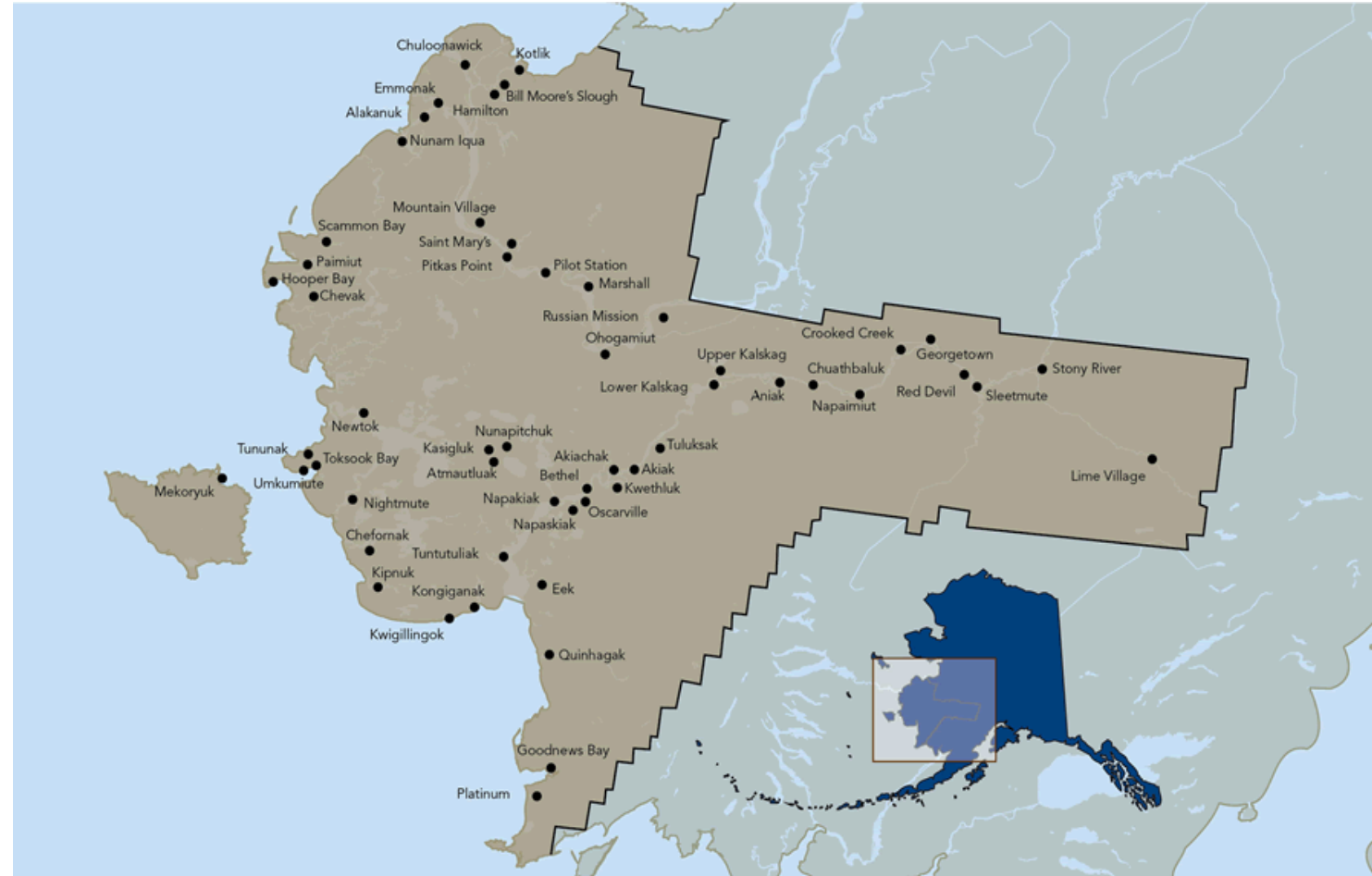
3/19/2019

Association of Village Council Presidents

AVCP Region

AVCP is the regional nonprofit tribal consortium of the Yukon-Kuskokwim (YK) Delta

- Comprised of the 56 Federally recognized tribes of the YK Delta
- Serves 48 communities
- Service Delivery area of approximately 6.5 million acres in Western Alaska, bordering the Bering Sea
- AVCP region includes 23% of tribes in Alaska, and
- 10% of tribes in the nation



88% of the communities in the AVCP region do not have a Village Public Safety Officer

Types of law enforcement available for Rural Alaska

- Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO)
- Village Police Officer (VPO)
- Tribal Police Officers (TPO)
- Alaska State Troopers (AST)

**THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY OF
THE TRIBES OF THE AVCP REGION
IS PUBLIC SAFETY**



Village Public Safety Officers

The Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) program originated in the AVCP region.

AVCP held the first VPSO contract with the State of Alaska.

The AVCP region has the memory and experience of the intent of this program.

Village Public Safety Officers



Employed By:

- Employed by regional Native non-profit corporations, tribe, or borough
- Requires Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between non-profit corporation, State of Alaska Department of Public Safety (DPS), and local governing body (tribe or municipal government)

Funded By:

- Funded by DPS through contract
- Program began in 1979 to provide public safety services to rural communities
- Public safety facilities and housing provided by village governing body

Training:

- Receives 15 week training at Alaska Law Enforcement Training Academy (ALET)
 - State Troopers receive same training
- Must pass background check and physical test
- Minimum age 21

Village Public Safety Officers

VPSO Training focuses on five public safety areas:

- Law Enforcement
- Search and Rescue
- Emergency Medical Services
- Fire Suppression
- Water Safety

The AVCP region has 6 VPSOs!

This is 1 officer for every 8 communities, on average



Village Police Officers



Employed By:

- Employed by Municipal Government

Funded By:

- City government through local funds

Training:

- Must be certified by Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC)
- VPO academy sponsored by Alaska State Troopers – two-week academy when available
- VPO does not receive compensation for training
- Minimum age 19

Tribal Police Officers

Employed By:

- Tribal Government

Funded By:

- Tribe through grant funding or fundraising from bingo, bake sales, or other sources

Training:

- VPO academy (if accepted) sponsored by Alaska State Troopers – two-week academy when available
- TPO does not receive compensation for training
- Not eligible to receive APSC certification
- Not required to pass State background check
- Minimum age 19



Alaska State Troopers

Employed By:

- Employed by the State of Alaska

Funded By:

- Funded by the State of Alaska Division of Public Safety

Training:

- Receives 15 week training at Alaska Law Enforcement Training Academy (ALET)
- Based in hub or urban communities
- Must be 21 by the start of academy



Many barriers exist to rural law enforcement

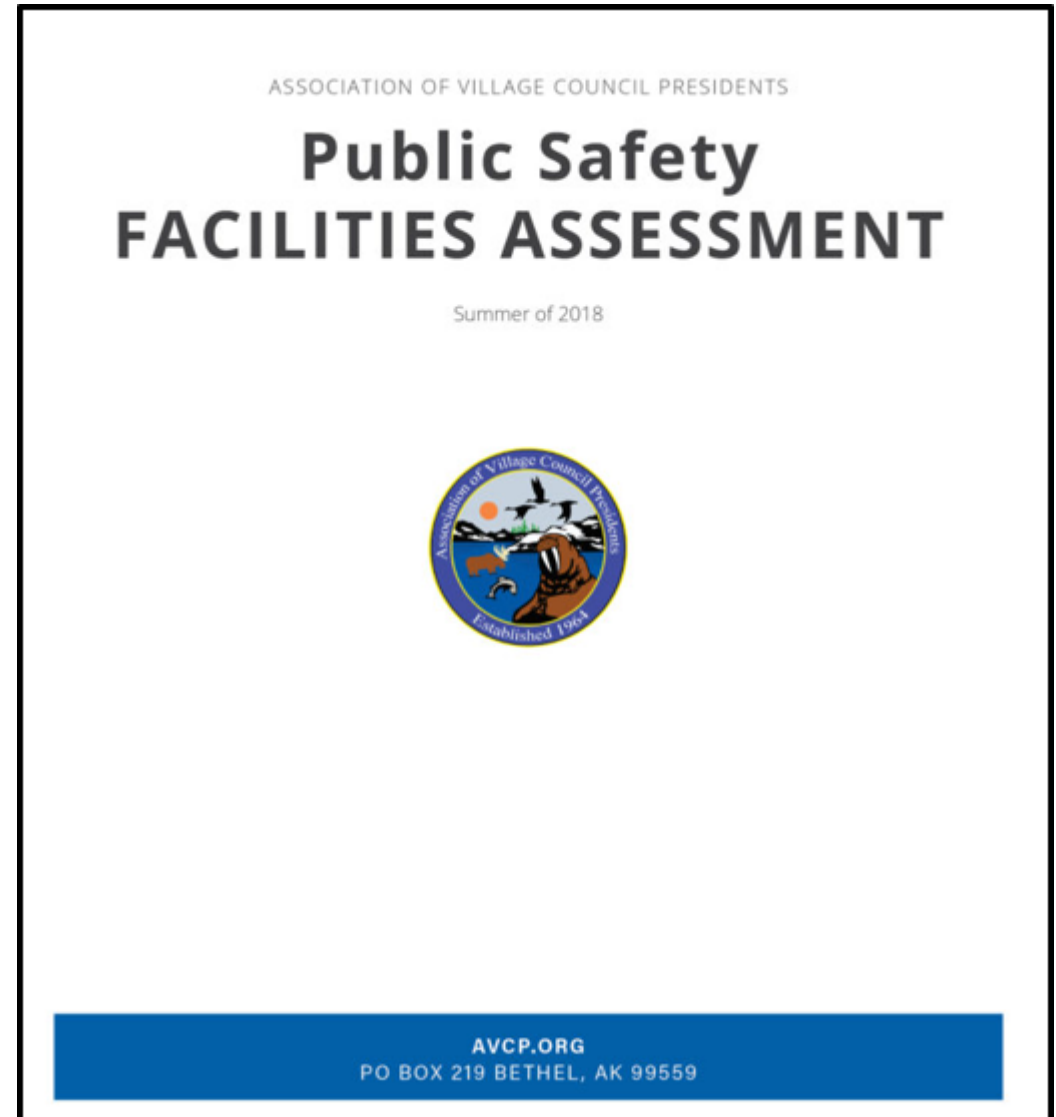
- Requirements to arm VPSOs resulted in a more stringent background check
- Background checks can take up to five months
- Recruitment barriers
 - Prior drug use
 - Barrier crimes (cannot have misdemeanor within five years) with no waivers for minor crimes
 - Family and community support
 - May have to arrest family or friends
- 15 week ALET academy for VPSOs requires time away from home
- Lack of required public safety infrastructure (jail cells, office buildings, housing)
- Challenging work is often compounded by isolation and secondary trauma

Public Safety is the Number One Priority in the AVCP Region

To capture the baseline for the need in our region we organized:

- Statewide VPSO Strategic Plan
 - May 2018
- AVCP Public Safety Facilities Assessment*
 - May – June 2018
- AVCP Public Safety Summit
 - August 1-2, 2018

*Pictured here and available at www.avcp.org



We know ...

- **The State of Alaska has a responsibility for public safety in our communities.**
- **The VPSO program is a critical part of the State of Alaska's responsibility to provide equitable safety to all Alaskans.**
- **Establishing and maintaining the partnership** between Tribes and the State of Alaska is essential for public safety.



The VPSO Program is Essential for Rural Alaska

- **Support the 2018 Statewide VPSO Strategic Plan.**
- **Review the entire structure of the VPSO Program** to give regions the **flexibility** we need to create solutions that work for our communities (e.g. compacting).
- **Move the VPSO Program directly under the Commissioner for Public Safety** on par with the Alaska State Troopers.
- **Plan 1-3 years for effective changes.**

Retain and Fund the VPSO Program



Quyana!