

Akiachak

People and Place

Location

Akiachak is located on the west bank of the Kuskokwim River, 18 miles northeast of the city of Bethel. The area encompasses 10 square miles of land and 2 square miles of water.

Demographic Profile

In 2000, Akiachak was a community of 585 residents in 133 households. The community was primarily comprised of Alaska Natives, mostly Yup'ik Eskimos (92.3%), with a small percentage of White (3.4%) and mixed race (4.3%) residents. A total of 96.4% of the population recognized themselves as all or part Alaska Native or American Indian. Approximately 1.2% of community residents were of Hispanic ethnicity. There are more men in the community (54.9%) than women, and the average age is 22.2 years, much younger than the U.S. national average of 35.3 years. Approximately 44.4% of the local population is under age 18. All residents live in households rather than group quarters. In terms of educational attainment, 64.8% of residents hold a high school diploma or higher.

History

The region is traditional Yup'ik Eskimo territory, and Akiachak was originally used by Yup'ik groups as a seasonal subsistence site. The community was first listed in the U.S. Census in 1890, when it had a recorded population of 43 residents. Akiachak has grown steadily since that time, in part because of its close proximity to Bethel, the regional economic hub.

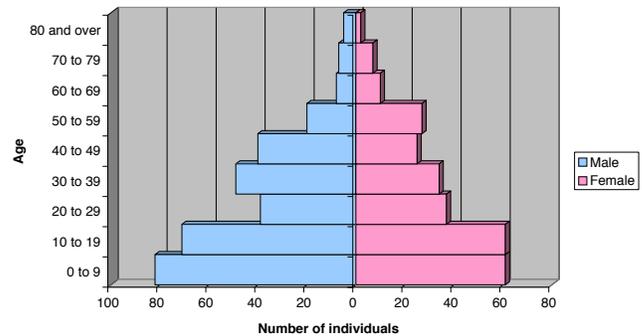
Infrastructure

Current Economy

The economy of Akiachak is highly dependent on fishery resources and is involved in both commercial and subsistence fishing. The median per capita income in 2000 was \$8,321 and the median household income was \$35,833. Unemployment in the community was 14.3%, and 43.8% of residents aged 16 years and older were not in the labor force (i.e. not working and not seeking work). Approximately 21.2% of residents lived below the poverty level.

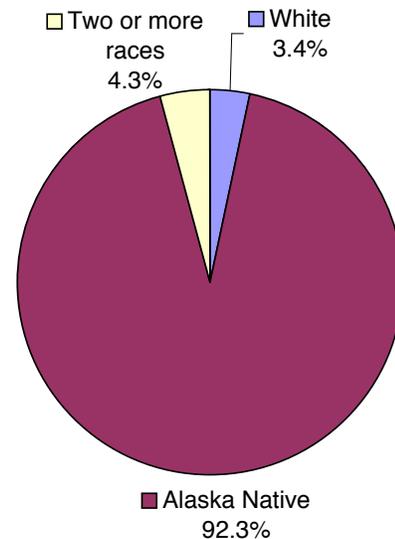
**2000 Population Structure
Akiachak**

Data source: US Census



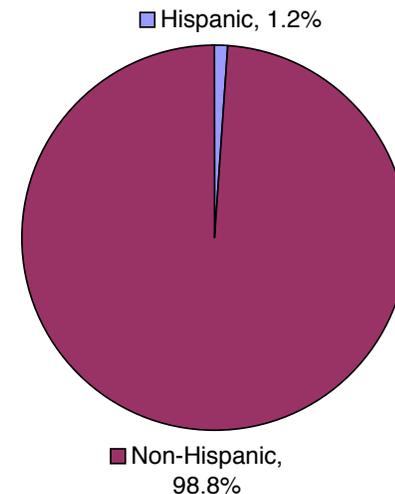
**2000 Racial Structure
Akiachak**

Data source: US Census



**2000 Hispanic Ethnicity
Akiachak**

Data source: US Census



Governance

Akiachak was incorporated as a second-class city in 1974, but the city government was dissolved in 1987 in favor of traditional village council governance—the first community in Alaska to do so. The official name of the village council is Akiachak Native Community. There is also a Native village corporation called Akiachak, Ltd. The community is “unorganized” (i.e. not located within a borough). The majority of local government operating revenues come from federal grants and contracts. The Coastal Villages Region Fund, a Community Development Quota (CDQ) group, is active in the community and promotes employment opportunities for residents as well as participation in the Bering Sea crab and groundfish fisheries.

There is an Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) office nearby in Bethel. The nearest National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) office and U.S. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) office are located in Anchorage.

Facilities

Akiachak is accessible by road via Bethel and by air via a 1,625 foot airstrip operated by the State Department of Transportation. Roundtrip airfare from the nearby city of Bethel to Anchorage is approximately \$206. Most residents get their own water from wells; there is no piped water or sewer service. The village council operates a landfill in the community. Electricity is provided by the village corporation and is generated by a diesel generator. There is a local health clinic operated jointly by the village council and the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation. Police services are provided by a volunteer public security officer (VPSO).

There is one school located in Akiachak, offering instruction to students in grades K-12. There are 12 teachers and 183 students. The school is under the jurisdiction of the Yup'it School District.

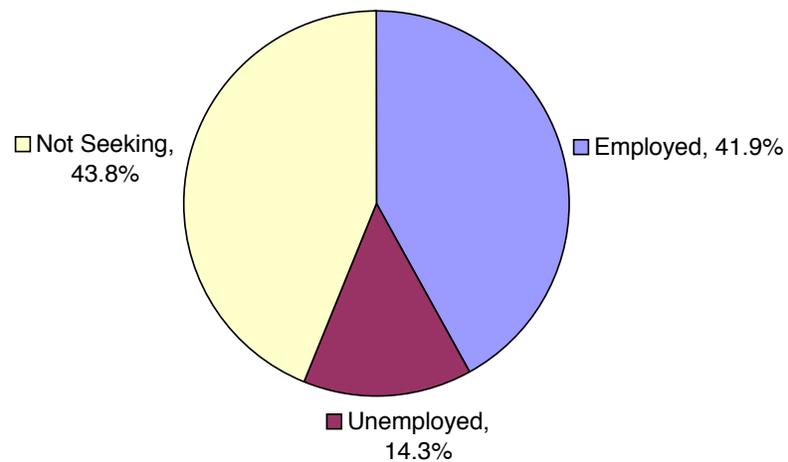
Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Involvement in commercial fishing, particularly within the herring and salmon fisheries, is an important part of the local economy in Akiachak. In 2000, 70 local residents held a total of 87 commercial fishing permits, and 75 permits were fished. There were 98 registered crew members. In addition, there were

2000 Employment Structure Akiachak

Data source: US Census



19 vessel owners with operations in state-managed fisheries who resided in the community. This section contains a detailed description of the permits issued to Akiachak residents in 2000.

Herring: Fourteen residents held a total of 14 permits in the herring fishery. A detailed breakdown of these permits is as follows: one herring roe gillnet permit for Cape Avinof (none fished), 12 herring roe gillnet permits for Goodnews Bay (10 fished), and one herring roe kelp harvesting permit for diving/hand-picking in the Bristol Bay fishery (none fished).

Other Finfish: Three local residents held a total of four permits for miscellaneous other finfish, but none was fished. These permits consisted of three freshwater fish set gillnet permits for statewide waters and one freshwater fish pot gear permits for vessels under 60 feet in statewide waters.

Salmon: Sixty-nine local residents held a total of 69 commercial permits in the salmon fishery, and 65 permits were fished. A detailed breakdown of these permits is as follows: one salmon drift gillnet permit for Bristol Bay (one fished), one salmon set gillnet permit for Bristol Bay (one fished), and 67 salmon set gillnet permits for Kuskokwim Bay (63 fished).

In 2000, there were no commercial processing plants and therefore no recorded landings for Akiachak.

Sport Fishing

Because of its relatively remote location, sport fishing in Akiachak is limited. As of 2002, there were

no registered sport fishing guide services in Akiachak. In 2000, a total of 30 sport fishing licenses were sold in Akiachak, all of them to Alaska residents.

Subsistence Fishing

Subsistence activities are an important part of the local economy of Akiachak. The ADF&G's Division of Subsistence reports that, in 1998, 98.8% of Akiachak households used subsistence fish. Approximately 97.5% of households used subsistence salmon (all five Pacific species) and 98.8% used non-salmon fish (including blackfish, halibut, pike, whitefish, and others). A significant portion of households (58%) used marine mammals (especially seal, walrus, and whale) for subsistence, and a small portion (3.7%) used marine invertebrates (especially clams).

The annual per capita harvest of subsistence foods for Akiachak in 1998 totaled 1,328 lbs, and was comprised of the following resources: salmon, especially Chinook (48.8%), non-salmon fish, especially whitefish and blackfish (18.7%), land mammals, including caribou and moose (20.4%), marine mammals, especially seals (2.3%), birds and eggs (5.2%), and vegetation (4.6%).

Akiachak residents have not been historically involved in halibut fishing and the community does not hold a Subsistence Halibut Registration Certificate (SHARC). Salmon subsistence harvesting, however, is very important in the community; approximately 119 households (90% of all households) held subsistence salmon harvesting permits in 1999.