

Chefornak

People and Place

Location

Chefornak is located on the south bank of the Kinia River, near its mouth at Etolin Strait. It is 98 air miles southwest of Bethel and 490 miles southwest of Anchorage. The area encompasses 5.7 square miles of land and 0.8 square miles of water.

Demographic Profile

In 2000 there were 394 residents of Chefornak in 75 households. All residents lived in households rather than group quarters. The racial composition of the community was as follows: Alaska Native or American Indian (93.4%), White (2.0%), and two or more races (4.6%). A total of 98% of the population recognized themselves as all or part Alaska Native or American Indian. The gender makeup was not hugely disparate, at 51.5% male and 48.5% female. The median age in the community, 20.8 years, was quite a bit younger than the U.S. national average of 35.3 years. Approximately 60.2% of residents 25 years of age and older had a high school degree or higher level of education.

History

The area of Chefornak has historically been occupied by Yup'ik Eskimos. The original village was located on Etolin Strait, in the Bering Sea, until residents moved in the 1950s to its current site, one mile inland, in order to avoid flooding. The Native village corporation of Chefornak, Chefarnmute Inc., was granted a land entitlement under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971.

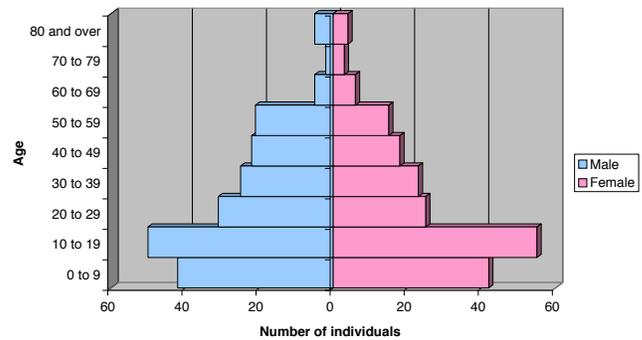
Infrastructure

Current Economy

Commercial fishing is a mainstay of the local economy. In addition, subsistence fishing and hunting are important to nearly all residents of Chefornak. The median per capita income in 2000 was \$8,474 and the median household income was \$35,553. Unemployment in Chefornak was 7.9%, and 33.7% of residents aged 16 years and older were not in the labor force (i.e. not working and not in the labor force). Approximately 25.1% of individuals in the community lived below the poverty level.

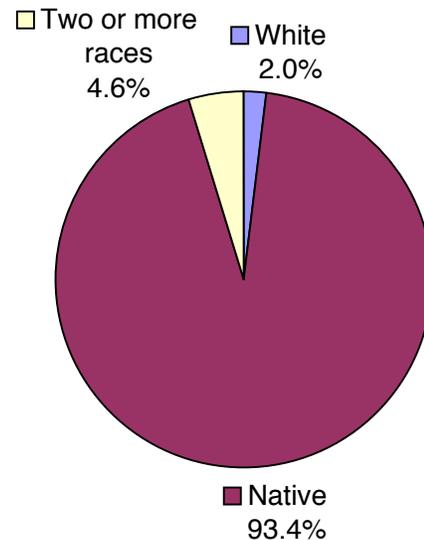
**2000 Population Structure
Chefornak**

Data source: US Census



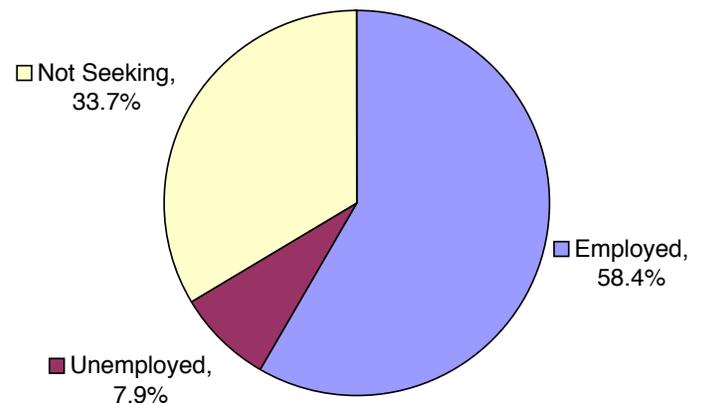
**2000 Racial Structure
Chefornak**

Data source: US Census



**2000 Employment Structure
Chefornak**

Data source: US Census



Governance

Chefornak was incorporated as a second-class city in 1974 and has a strong-mayor form of government. In Chefornak a 2% sales tax is collected. In addition to the city government there is also a village council, an important body of local Native governance. In addition, the village corporation, Chefarmute Inc., is a federally recognized Native organization. The village is a member of the Calista Corporation, a regional Native corporation.

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.

The closest office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to the community is located in Bethel. A National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) field office is located in Bethel and a main office is located in Anchorage. The nearest Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) office is located in Anchorage.

Facilities

Access to Chefornak is primarily by air. There is a 2,500 foot gravel airstrip owned by the state, as well as a seaplane base. Roundtrip airfare from Chefornak to Anchorage, via Bethel, is approximately \$380. Small boats can also navigate the Kinia River to its mouth on Etolin Strait.

There is no piped water or sewer system; most residents rely on wells and septic tanks. There is a city-operated landfill. Electricity is provided by Naterkaq Light Plant, a city-operated facility that produces power with a diesel generator. There is a health clinic, owned by the city and operated with cooperation from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation. There is one school in the community, which offers instruction to students grades K-12. The school has a total of 8 teachers and 147 students.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000, there were eight vessel owners residing in the community who operated in federally managed fisheries. There were 21 registered crew members in

the community. In 2000, 27 local residents held a total of 56 commercial fishing permits, and 24 permits were fished. This section contains a detailed description of Chefornak's commercial fishing permits.

Halibut: Eighteen residents held a total of 27 permits for the halibut fishery, and 10 permits were fished. These permits included the following: 13 halibut hand troll permits for statewide waters (3 fished), and 14 halibut longline permits for vessels under 60 feet in statewide waters (10 fished).

Herring: Twenty residents held a total of 22 permits for the herring fishery, and 9 permits were fished. These permits included the following: 7 herring roe gillnet permits for Nelson Island (2 fished), one herring roe gillnet permit for Bristol Bay (none fished), and 14 herring roe gillnet permits for Cape Avinof (7 fished).

Salmon: Seven local residents held a total of seven permits for the salmon fishery, and five permits were fished. These permits included the following: five salmon drift gillnet permits for Bristol Bay (five fished), and two salmon set gillnet permits for Kuskokwim Bay (none fished).

In 2000 there was one commercial fishing processing plant in Chefornak. Detailed information on landings is unavailable, in accordance with confidentiality requirements.

Sport Fishing

Given its remote location, sport fishing is not significant in Chefornak. Detailed data on sport fishing activities and permits for Chefornak are unavailable.

Subsistence Fishing

The ADF&G does not have detailed information on subsistence resource use in Chefornak. The community holds a Subsistence Halibut Registration Certificate (SHARC), which means its residents are eligible to harvest subsistence halibut. These allocations are based on recognized customary and traditional uses of halibut. Regulations to implement subsistence halibut fishing were published in the Federal Register in April 2003 and became effective May 2003. In 1999, 94 households held permits to harvest subsistence salmon.