

Kongiganak

People and Place

Location

Kongiganak is located on the west shore of Kuskokwim Bay on the Bering Sea. It is 70 miles southwest of Bethel and 451 miles west of Anchorage. The area of Kongiganak encompasses 1.7 square miles of land and 0.1 square miles of water.

Demographic Profile

Kongiganak is a primarily Yup'ik Eskimo village with 359 residents in 79 households. In 2000 all residents lived in households rather than group quarters. The racial composition of the community was as follows: American Indian or Alaska Native (95.8%), White (2.8%), and two or more races (1.4%). A total of 97.2% of the population recognized themselves as all or part Alaska Native or American Indian. In addition, 1.7% of residents were of Hispanic ethnicity. The gender ratio was significantly skewed, at 54.6% male and 45.4% female. The median age was 21.8 years, considerably younger than the U.S. national median of 35.3 years. Approximately 62.9% of residents 25 years of age and older held a high school diploma or higher level of educational attainment. A majority of residents (89.6%) speak a language other than English at home, particularly Yup'ik. These demographic characteristics are representative of a stable Native community marked by little out- or in-migration.

History

Western Alaska has been the traditional home of Yup'ik Eskimos since prehistory. Former residents of the village of Kwigillingok, seeking higher ground and a respite from flooding, permanently settled in Kongiganak during the 1960s. Today, Kongiganak is still marked by a sense of traditional culture, as evidenced by the fact that nearly 90% of residents speak their Native Yup'ik tongue at home.

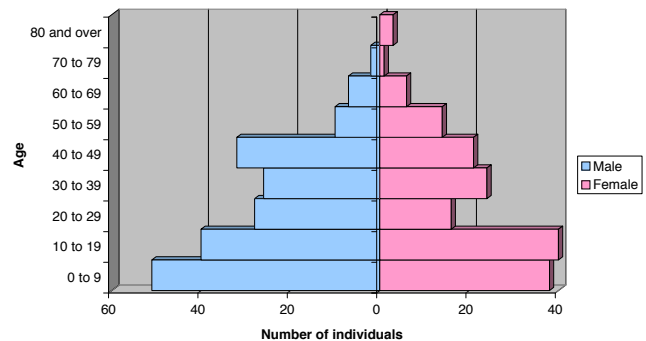
Infrastructure

Current Economy

Most residents in Kongiganak practice a subsistence lifestyle of hunting and fishing. The other main source of employment is the commercial fishing sector, so full-time employment is subject to seasonal variation. The local school is also a major source of

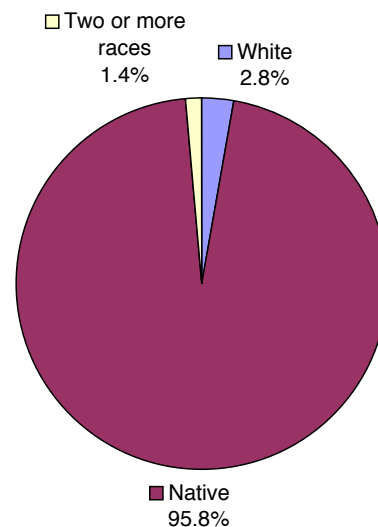
2000 Population Structure Kongiganak

Data source: US Census



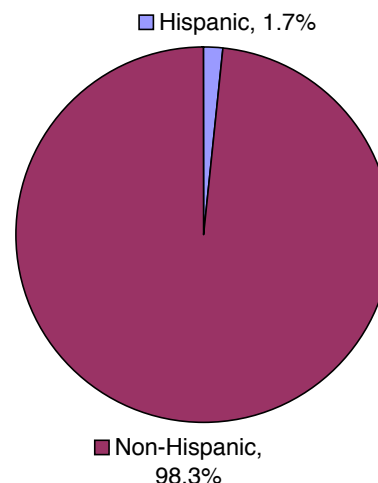
2000 Racial Structure Kongiganak

Data source: US Census



2000 Hispanic Ethnicity Kongiganak

Data source: US Census



employment in the community.

In 2000, the U.S. Census reported that only 1.9% of Kongiganak's workforce was unemployed, and 46.4% of residents aged 16 years and older were not in the labor force (i.e. not working and not seeking work). Employment opportunities, however, are highly seasonal, so this rate is likely much higher during certain times of the year. About 13.8% of residents lived below the poverty level in 2000. The median per capita income was \$9,881 and the median household income was \$33,250.

Governance

Kongiganak is an unincorporated village under the administration of a village council, which is a federally recognized Native governing body. There is also a village corporation, the Qemirtalek Coast Corporation. Kongiganak lies within the Bethel census recording district.

Kongiganak belongs to the Coastal Villages Region Fund, a Community Development Quota (CDQ) group, which promotes employment opportunities for residents as well as participation in the Bering Sea crab and groundfish fisheries.

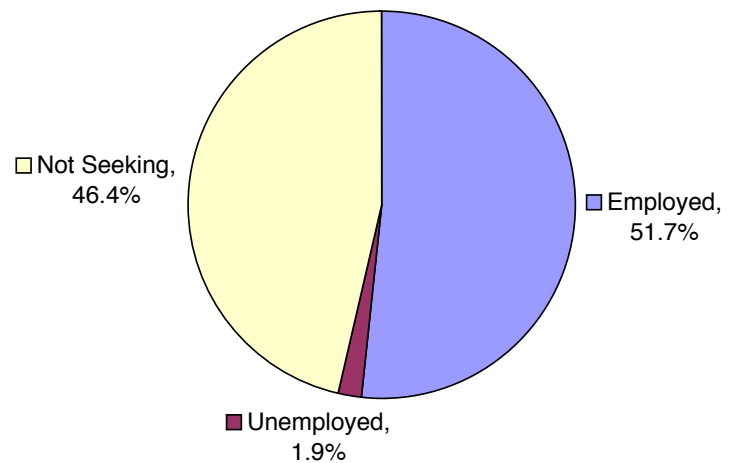
The closest office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to the community is located in Bethel. A National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) field office is located in Bethel and a main office is located in Anchorage. The nearest Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) office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

Facilities

Access to Kongiganak is by bush plane; the state owns a 1,885 foot gravel airstrip in the community. Roundtrip airfare from Kongiganak to Anchorage, via Bethel, is approximately \$509. There are no dock facilities in Kongiganak, but barges deliver cargo each summer, which is off-loaded by boat and skiff. Winter trails provide access to the neighboring villages of Kwigillingok and Tuntutuliak.

Homes in Kongiganak do not have plumbing. Treated surface water is the major source of household water. The village council operates a landfill and the Puvurna Power Company provides electricity, which is produced by a diesel generator. The local health clinic is owned by the village council and operated in conjunction with the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation. Police services are provided by

**2000 Employment Structure
Kongiganak**
Data source: US Census



a village public safety officer. There is one school in the community, offering instruction to students from grades K-12. The school has seven teachers and 110 students.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 there were eight vessel owners with operations in state-managed fisheries and one vessel owner with operations in federal fisheries who resided in the community. There were 38 registered crew members. Twenty-eight residents held a total of 34 commercial fishing permits in Kongiganak. This section contains a detailed description of the permits issued to Kongiganak residents.

Halibut: Five residents held a total of five commercial permits in the halibut fishery. These included the following: one halibut hand troll permit for statewide waters (one fished), three halibut longline permits for vessels under 60 feet in statewide waters (none fished), and one halibut mechanical jig permit for statewide waters (none fished).

Herring: Seven local residents held a total of seven commercial permits for the herring fishery. These included the following: five herring roe gillnet permits for Cape Avinof (one fished) and two herring roe gillnet permits for Goodnews Bay (two fished).

Salmon: Twenty-two local residents held a total of 22 commercial permits for the salmon fishery. These

included the following: 4 salmon drift gillnet permits for Bristol Bay (5 fished), and 18 salmon set gillnet permits for Kuskokwim Bay (12 fished).

In 2000 there were no commercial fish processors in Kongiganak and therefore no registered landings.

Sport Fishing

Sport fishing activities in Kongiganak are limited, given its remote location and heavy reliance upon subsistence fishing. In 2000, there was only one sport license sold in the community. There were no registered sport fishing guides.

Subsistence Fishing

The ADF&G does not have detailed information about subsistence activities in Kongiganak for 2000.