



ILISAĠVIK COLLEGE



ILISAĠVIK COLLEGE: Priorities for the 118th Congress 2023

Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) provide rigorous postsecondary education and research opportunities for American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIANs) and other rural community residents. TCUs offer higher education that is uniquely Tribal, founded on Native languages, culture and philosophy with strong student support systems and community engagement. Unfortunately, federal education completion metrics fail to consider the unique nature of TCUs and our students. Federal completion rates focus on first-time, full-time students. But success at TCUs is defined holistically and most students attend part-time or are transfer students. Our shared vision: Strong Sovereign Nations Through Excellence in TRIBAL Higher Education.

ILISAĠVIK COLLEGE FACTS

- Enrollment Trends (Spring 2020/Fall 2022): +8.2%
- Affordable Tuition: \$205 per credit hour; ~\$4,780 per year
- Student to Faculty Ratio: 3:1
- Part-time/Full-time: 73% Part-time; 27% Full-time
- Persistence/Retention Rate: 63%/62%
- Highest level of degree/program available: Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A.)
- TRIO Programs: No
- Alaska's Only Tribal College; Northernmost College in the U.S.; Arctic Science Research Opportunities for Students; 64% of Students are Alaska Native/American Indian



Ilisaġvik College offers a variety of critical support services to students, including comprehensive academic and student service-oriented advising; free transportation to and from classes; internet stipends to help combat high bandwidth costs; COVID-19 relief payments (Spring 2023) will be the last semester); a laptop loaner program; a student Wellness Program and behavioral health supports; and cultural outreach and education. Ilisaġvik knows that holistic student support is the pathway to success for our primarily first-generation college students.

ILISAĠVIK COLLEGE: 1994 Land-Grant Programs

1994 Land-grant Institutions: The Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act created the "1994 Land-grants" more than 25 years ago. Since then, funding for the 1994 Land-grant programs and resources have remained inadequate to address the growing agricultural needs and opportunities in Indian Country.

Ilisaġvik College has active Equity and Extension programs supported by 1994 Land-Grant funding programs. Ilisaġvik's Equity Program ensures that our traditionally underserved student population receives access and instruction in STEM, as well as access to research opportunities. It currently supports:

- Science instruction at the college, including outreach and research opportunities for students;
- Outreach efforts by Ilisaġvik's Student Services Department, reaching students in rural villages across the state of Alaska.

Ilisaġvik College's Extension Program engages in outreach to our community members and students via workshops in healthy living, Iñupiaq culture, and the intersection of the two. Grant funds support:

- A dedicated Extension coordinator position;
- Materials and supplies for workshops and travel funds to offer workshops and camps in remote villages.
- Ilisaġvik Extension serves 1,000+ residents each year and benefits all ages: youth, adults, and Elders.



REQUEST: \$40 million TCU IT Service Fund USDA – Rural Utility Service

The ongoing pandemic has exacerbated the digital divide and underscored the lack of broadband access across Indian Country. To address these deficiencies that could leave Indian Country – and AIAN students – behind the rest of the U.S. for generations, Congress must act to establish a *permanent TCU IT Service Fund within the USDA-Rural Utilities Service Program*. An annual \$40 million set-aside for TCUs, which are 1994 land-grant institutions served by USDA, would help cover rapidly increasing network, connectivity, and equipment costs, maintenance, infrastructure expansion, and IT staffing.



ILĪSAĠVIK COLLEGE: Broadband and IT Progress & Challenges:

- The costs of bandwidth on the North Slope of Alaska are the most expensive as compared to any other Tribal college. This creates a burden for both Iḷisaġvik as an institution and our students who pay for individual access at home.
- Connectivity in the North Slope region is inequitable: some villages have access to high-speed bandwidth, and some do not.
- Costs associated with cybersecurity, equipment, and connectivity have ballooned in the past 3-4 years: Iḷisaġvik's IT budget has increased by approximately 50%.
- Iḷisaġvik's aging infrastructure at its current campus continually presents issues as related to bandwidth and connectivity; our facilities are not centralized and managing fiber and Wi-Fi connections is expensive and burdensome.
- Iḷisaġvik continues to rely on a generous donation of bandwidth by Quintillion for day-to-day operations.



REQUEST: \$3.2 billion TCU Construction Fund DOI – Bureau of Indian Education

A July 2021 AIHEC survey of TCUs revealed many chronic unmet facilities and infrastructure needs, including lack of student and faculty housing, inadequate classroom space, insufficient libraries, and outdated laboratories.

- TCU deferred maintenance/rehabilitation: \$400 million (total)
- TCU completion of master plans: \$2.7 billion (total)
- TCU operation and maintenance: \$20 million (annual, recurring need)

AIHEC strongly urges Congress to fund dedicated TCU facilities programs through DOI-BIE to modernize current facilities and build safer 21st century campuses.

ILĪSAĠVIK COLLEGE: Construction, Maintenance, Rehabilitation

Iḷisaġvik College resides on the North Slope of Alaska and occupies a total of 13 buildings, most of which were constructed in the 1940s. Because our facilities are aging and becoming more expensive to maintain and rent, Iḷisaġvik has been working towards a new college campus. We recently received news that Iḷisaġvik will receive funds from Congressionally Directed Spending in the amount of \$5 million towards our new campus endeavors thanks to championing by Senator Lisa Murkowski. Iḷisaġvik can move fully ahead with its Design Phase now. Issues involving our current campus include

- The road to our main campus experiences severe erosion and, at times, the campus is inaccessible during extreme weather events.
- We utilize Quonset huts as classrooms for our skilled trades programs; they are our oldest facilities and being safety-compliant has been challenging.
- Current deferred maintenance total tops \$1.1 million.