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**The Environmental Justice Scorecard has been updated.** Phase Two of the Environmental Justice Scorecard was released on July 24, 2024.

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# Denali Commission


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**1 office(s), 1 location(s), 16 employees,**  
and **1 new hire(s)** in Fiscal Year 2023

[technical  
assistance](#) 

The Denali Commission partners with Tribal, federal, state, and local governments and collaborates with all Alaskans to develop basic public infrastructure and enhance the quality of life in Alaska's communities.

The Denali Commission's mission targets expanding critical infrastructure to improve public health and well-being in rural Alaskan communities that have historically had disproportionate and adverse public health and climate-related impacts.

Some examples of well-known Denali Commission offices, bureaus, or agencies are:

- Anchorage Office

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## Progress on Advancing Environmental Justice

This section demonstrates key progress on advancing environmental justice at the Denali Commission in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

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**Key Highlights** ([show less](#) ^ )

## Previous Funding Opportunity Announcement Resulted in nearly \$30 Million in Awards Across Alaska in FY 2023

The Denali Commission's open competitive opportunity for community improvements prioritizes areas considered economically distressed, disadvantaged, or at risk of environmental threats such as flooding, permafrost degradation, or erosion. The Funding Opportunity Announcement resulted in nearly \$30 million in awards across Alaska in FY 2023.

[Learn more](#) 

## Tununak to Toksook Bay Hardened Trail Project

The Denali Commission partners and funds projects to improve critical infrastructure, which in turn provides health benefits to communities in Alaska. The Tununak Boardwalk and Tununak to Toksook Bay Hardened Trail Project are prime examples of how these improvements

## **FY 2023 FOA Resulted in Nearly \$35 million in Recommended Awards across Alaska**

The Denali Commission's open competitive opportunity for community improvements prioritizes areas considered economically distressed, disadvantaged, or at risk of environmental threats such as flooding, permafrost degradation, or erosion due to climate change – resulting in nearly \$35 million in recommended awards across Alaska.

[Learn more](#) 

make transportation safer and more efficient, leading to significant health benefits for the residents. By enhancing the transportation infrastructure, these projects have reduced travel time between Toksook Bay and Tununak from 1.5 to 2 hours to just 45 minutes. This improvement has several direct health

## **Opportunistic Partnerships that Create Innovative Solutions to Housing Challenges in Alaska**

The Denali Commission's Housing Program embraces technological innovation to address housing challenges effectively. From incorporating materials science into a 3D Concrete Printed house, to tailoring housing-specific sawmill technology for efficient construction, to research of locally grown mycelium and grass as insulation substitutes, the Housing Program underscores the Commission's forward-thinking approach. Partnerships with entities like the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, universities, and local organizations further enhance the Program's capacity to drive change.

benefits, including: Emergency Medical Services: Quicker travel times mean faster response in medical emergencies. Residents can now reach healthcare facilities more swiftly, which is critical in urgent situations where every minute counts. This can result in better outcomes for conditions such as heart attacks,

## Partnerships that Fund Infrastructure Projects Based on Priority Lists

Partnering with the Alaska Energy Authority, the Denali Commission funds critical infrastructure projects listed on the Bulk Fuel Upgrade and Rural Power System Prioritization Lists to benefit as many communities as possible with limited state/federal resources.

strokes, and severe injuries. Access to Healthcare: Regular medical appointments and routine check-ups become more accessible. Previously, long travel times might have discouraged people from seeking regular medical care. With reduced travel time, more residents are likely to attend their appointments, leading to earlier detection

and treatment of health issues. Reduced Physical Strain: Safer and more efficient travel reduces the physical strain associated with long and potentially hazardous journeys. This is especially important for elderly residents, those with disabilities, or individuals with chronic health conditions who might

find lengthy travel arduous and detrimental to their health. Improved Mental Health: Easier and quicker access to other communities can reduce isolation, providing social and psychological benefits. People can visit family and friends more frequently, participate in community events, and have better overall social support



networks, which are crucial for mental health. Healthier Lifestyle Choices: With more efficient transportation, residents can engage more readily in healthy lifestyle activities such as participating in community sports and accessing recreational areas. This contributes to overall better physical health. Reduced Exposure to Environmental

Hazards:  
The new infrastructure reduces the time and distance traveled in potentially harsh weather conditions, decreasing the risk of accidents and exposure to extreme cold, which can lead to health problems like frostbite and hypothermia. By making transportation safer and more efficient, the Denali Commission's Tununak Boardwalk

and Tununak to Toksook Bay Hardened Trail Project provide substantial health benefits, enhancing the well-being of the community members in Alaska.

[Learn more](#) 

## Justice40 Initiative

This section demonstrates progress on the implementation of the Justice40 Initiative at the Denali Commission in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

### Overview

The Denali Commission's mission is to focus on rural Alaska, which includes many

### What is the Justice40 Initiative?

The Justice40 Initiative set the goal that 40 percent of the overall

disadvantaged communities marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution. By design of program focus, project eligibility and evaluation criteria, incorporation of Commissioner and public feedback, and other partner outreach, more than 40% of the Denali Commission's funding benefits disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution and continues to advance this goal as part of the Justice40 Initiative.

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### Justice40 Covered Programs ([show less](#) ^)

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The Denali Commission has:

- **1** Justice40 covered program(s), including **1** Justice40 covered program(s) that is/are funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act, or both

### Progress on the Justice40 Initiative

Through President Biden's [Investing in America](#) agenda and other sources, **Denali Commission** has:

approximately

**\$206.1 million**

benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

[Learn more](#) 

in funds available to obligate (i.e., to spend) in Fiscal Years (FY) 2022 - 2027 through its Justice40 covered programs.<sup>1</sup>

Through President Biden's [Justice40 Initiative](#), **Denali Commission** is working to deliver benefits to disadvantaged communities. Each program that is part of the Justice40 Initiative delivers benefits in at least one of [seven investment categories](#), and many programs are delivering benefits to communities across multiple categories of investment. The **1** covered program(s) at **Denali Commission** working to deliver benefits for communities include:

- **1** program(s) protecting communities from the impacts of climate change
- **1** program(s) advancing clean and affordable energy for communities
- **1** program(s) delivering and advancing clean transportation options for communities
- **1** program(s) advancing affordable and sustainable housing
- **1** program(s) delivering training and workforce development

## benefits

- **1** program(s) delivering critical clean water and wastewater infrastructure benefits

Overall, agencies are making concrete, tangible improvements to benefit disadvantaged communities across America through the Justice40 Initiative. These investments are resulting in cleaner air and water, more affordable clean energy, good-paying jobs, and other results that people are seeing and feeling today and into the future.

*<sup>1</sup>In the Phase Two Scorecard, the Justice40 Initiative section contains information about federal investments that Congress has funded through both discretionary and mandatory appropriations, as well as supplemental appropriations, such as those that Congress made in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Pub. L. 117-58) and the Inflation Reduction Act (Pub. L. 117-169). The Phase Two Scorecard includes information on each agency's budget authority (that is, the total amount of funds that Congress has appropriated to the agency to spend on Justice40 covered programs) and the period of availability (that is, the period of time over which Congress has authorized the agency to spend the funds).*

*In some cases, agencies may not yet have the authority to spend the full amount indicated, such as when Congress has appropriated funds that will only become available in future Fiscal Years. Agencies provided the data presented here in spring 2024, and therefore the data does not reflect the annual appropriations for Fiscal Year 2024 that Congress made in March 2024.*

*Thus, the information that the Phase Two Scorecard presents in this section includes what the agency has available to spend in its Justice40 covered programs (i.e., its budget authority). These figures represent the total funding amount for all Justice40 covered programs, not only the portion that benefits disadvantaged communities.*

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## Justice40 Covered Program Highlights ([show less ^](#))

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The Denali Commission is delivering benefits, or is projected to deliver benefits, for disadvantaged communities through grants or awards made through its Justice40 covered programs, such as:

## **Stebbins Wind Project and Grid Bridging System**

With funds from the Denali Commission, a 900 kilowatt (kW) wind turbine and connection to the existing electrical distribution system was constructed in Stebbins, Alaska. This islanded microgrid community has been exclusively using diesel until this improvement, which was finalized in October 2023. Stebbins is tied to St. Michael and will soon have a Grid Bridging System (GBS) as well to facilitate diesel off operation for both communities. The GBS moderates the fluctuations in wind power for the interconnected communities.



## Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) Grant Center for Environmentally Threatened Communities

With funds from the Denali Commission, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) Grant Center for Environmentally Threatened Communities provides technical assistance, resilience grant writing, and management support to 39 communities and leverages \$43 billion benefiting 44 communities across 133 projects since 2016. Every three cents invested by the Denali Commission into the Center has resulted in one dollar for infrastructure protection in Alaska communities.

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## Funding Announcements

([show less](#) ^ )

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The Denali Commission has:

- **1** funding announcement(s) covered under the Justice40 Initiative
- **\$45,850,000** available through Justice40 covered program(s) funding announcements<sup>2</sup>

## Opening Millions to Benefit Rural Alaska Communities

The Denali Commission's Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) for FY 2023 Work Plan and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Program Grants aids rural Alaska communities in developing or improving infrastructure. The Commission sought grant applications for an assortment of projects.

[Learn more](#) 

## **Funding Applied Directly to Priority-Listed Projects**

Denali Commission funding, paired with the Alaska Energy Authority Rural Power System Upgrade Program, increases efficiency, incorporates renewables, and lessens fuel usage in Alaska Villages.

## **Funding Applied Directly to Priority-Listed Projects**

Denali Commission funding, paired with the Alaska Energy Authority Bulk Fuel Upgrade Program, increases efficiency and lessens fuel usage in Alaska Villages.

*<sup>2</sup>Further, this section also includes funding that was made available through an agency's Justice40 covered programs in FY 2023. The funding was made available through various mechanisms, like grants, loans, agreements, contracts, notices of funding opportunity, and other funding announcements. These funding announcements were from Justice40 covered*

*programs that were funded through discretionary and mandatory appropriations, as well as supplemental appropriations, such as those enacted under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Pub. L. 117-58) and the Inflation Reduction Act (Pub. L. 117-169).*

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## Covered Program Design or Modification ([show less ^](#))

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The Denali Commission made program or design modifications to maximize benefits and/or remove barriers or constraints for disadvantaged communities, such as:

### **Making Commission Funding Easier to Access for Communities**

Awareness of Commission programs and ability to apply for funding are now more transparent with the annual funding opportunity announcement process. In addition, applications are given priority points for communities considered economically distressed, disadvantaged, or at risk of environmental threats such as flooding, permafrost degradation, or erosion.

## Justice40 In Action ([show less](#) ^ )

The Denali Commission is delivering benefits, or is projected to deliver benefits, for disadvantaged communities through the Justice40 Initiative, including:

### **Stebbins to St. Michael Wind Project and Grid Bridging System**

The Stebbins to St. Michael 900 kilowatt (kW) wind turbine and grid bridging system will soon facilitate renewable energy power enabling the communities to turn off their diesel power plants for days at a time. This decreases diesel fuel usage, increases reliability of energy pricing, and improves ambient air and noise quality in both communities.

## **Environmental and Civil Rights Protection**

Federal agencies are advancing environmental justice by carrying out their responsibilities under the law to identify and address disproportionate and adverse public health and environmental, climate-related, and cumulative impacts on communities with environmental justice concerns. Agencies are working to ensure that all communities experience the protection of our country's bedrock environmental laws. The following information reflects some of the environmental and civil rights work at the Denali Commission has done in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

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### **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Environmental Justice** ([show less ^](#))

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This section demonstrates progress on environmental protections, such as the National Environmental Policy Act, at the Denali Commission in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

The Denali Commission has National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementing procedures located at [40 CFR Part 900](#) .

## What is NEPA?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to consider and disclose the environmental health and community impacts of certain decisions or actions before taking them.

Learn more 

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## Title VI and Environmental Justice ([show less](#) ^)

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This section demonstrates progress on civil rights related to environmental

## What is Title VI of the Civil

justice, such as under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, at the Denali Commission in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

The Denali Commission's program offerings and eventual awards require recipients to comply with all applicable Federal laws and regulations, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

### Training

- **1** agency training(s) on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and environmental justice
- **15** employee(s) trained on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and environmental justice

### the Civil Rights Act of 1964?

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires that no person be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance on account of race, color, or national origin.



## Centering Environmental Justice in Decision-Making

This section demonstrates progress on community engagement (e.g., partnerships with non-federal organizations, technical assistance, and public processes) and partnership and consultation with Tribal Nations at the Denali Commission in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

The Denali Commission conducts external engagements and has partnerships with communities. The Denali Commission has had external engagements and partnerships with the following: the State of Alaska through the State Co-Chair and the Alaska Energy Authority, Alaska Village Electrical Cooperative, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) Center for Environmentally Threatened Communities, Indian Health Service, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Energy, Department of Agriculture, Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration, Alaska Municipal League, Alaska Federation of Natives, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Kawerak Inc., as well as many other smaller and local Tribes and municipal governments.

A few examples of individual technical assistance and public outreach conducted by

the Denali Commission include: the Alaska Grants Symposium, Commissioner Meetings, Funding Opportunity Announcement Public Q&A Session, and local outreach at conferences.

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## Technical Assistance ([show less ^](#))

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- **13** technical assistance outreach event(s) to improve access and information about federal programs related to environmental justice

For more information on the Denali Commission's technical assistance events, please visit <https://akfederalfunding.org/>.

### **Alaska Grants Symposium**

During the Alaska Grants Symposium, the Denali Commission met with the public to discuss funding availability and share application forms.

## Partnership and Consultation with Tribal Nations ([show less ^](#))

This section demonstrates progress on Tribal partnerships and consultations at the Denali Commission, including steps that that agencies take to respect Tribal sovereignty and ensure government-to-government consultation on federal policies in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

- **Over 6** Tribal listening sessions and other engagements related to environmental justice

For example, the Denali Commission made multiple project site visits to Tribal and Indigenous communities and one presentation of the Funding Opportunity Announcement to Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) constituents.

## Institutionalizing Environmental Justice

This section demonstrates progress to institutionalize environmental justice at the Denali Commission including to implement [Executive Order 14008](#) and [Executive Order 14096](#) , in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which is from October 2022 to September 2023.

## Overview

The Denali Commission has always focused on distressed communities. By law, two of the purposes of the Denali Commission are to “provide job training and other economic development services in rural communities, particularly distressed communities,” and to “promote rural development.” The Denali Commission implements much of its work in distressed communities that are overburdened by pollution, and many that are on the frontlines of climate change. These communities are also often remote, not connected by road to any other village, face some of the harshest climates in the country, are composed of almost entirely Alaska Native residents, frequently do not have access to quality healthcare, educational opportunities, economic opportunities, quality housing, lending opportunities, and have been marginalized by underinvestment.

- **1** staff who work on environmental justice, either in a full- or part-time capacity

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