

SITKA COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT



COMMUNITY PROFILE

Sitka, traditionally known as Sheet'ká, is a rural, remote Southeast Alaskan coastal community and the ancestral home of the Lingít people. Located on Shee (also known as Baranof Island), it is in the heart of the Tongass, the largest temperate rain forest in the world. Accessible only by boat or plane, food and outside resources are scarce and expensive. The city has a population of about 8,400 residents and relies on a variety of economic sectors like seafood processing, healthcare, and tourism.



Photo credit: Mark Kelley



Photo credit: Berett Wilber

METHODOLOGY

The process for updating the community needs assessment has involved several methods, including:

- focused conversation with the Pathways Steering Committee (community prevention coalition)
- focused conversation with the Pathways Family Engagement Workgroup
- needs assessment with the Sitka Youth Leadership Committee (youth coalition)
- secondary data review with a coalition subcommittee
- review and feedback sessions with key stakeholders

THE PURPOSE

This Community Needs Assessment (CNA) was developed by the Pathways Coalition to compile current data regarding the health of the Sitka community and to determine potential strategies for moving the work forward in each of the coalition's focus areas:

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS



YOUTH LEADERSHIP



ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS



FAMILY ENVIRONMENTS



COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTS

Visit sitkapathtways.org or scan the QR code below for more information.



KEY FINDINGS

- Violence is a widespread issue across Alaska, with Alaska Native populations particularly at risk
- Alaska ranks in the top five states for high rates of child victimization
- Economic instability & lack of childcare are putting undue stress on families and the community
- Mental health decline is a concern across all age groups
- Substance use is having negative community-wide impacts
- Sexual violence & teen dating violence are prevalent among teens
- Negative youth interactions within and outside of schools are concerning (e.g., bullying)
- Youth involvement in extracurricular activities is low
- Chronic absenteeism is high across schools
- There is a lack of community awareness of rigid masculinity norms & their effects
- Coordinated systems to respond to disclosures and other crises are lacking
- There is a lack of available resources to effectively address issues impacting Sitkans

RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthen school & family partnerships

Strengthen cultural connectedness & social-emotional learning across the district

Continue messaging about harmful masculinity norms & their relevance in Sitka

Increase coordination among schools & youth-serving agencies (e.g. for under-involved youth, responding to disclosures & mental health crises, reaching parents)

Provide bystander intervention training for youth

Integrate parent resources into other settings (e.g. child development, positive parenting tips, parental resilience)

Take a collective approach to address inequities within entities & across the Sitka community

Engage men in prevention work

Provide additional family supports across the Sitka community

This CNA was conducted by the partners of the Pathways to a Safer Sitka Coalition, a group of local agencies and individuals working together to create a healthier, more equitable community. We aim to reduce negative health outcomes, such as domestic violence, substance use, and suicide by building equitable, accessible, and culturally responsive services and systems.