Grants and initiatives approved in November 2019 by Rasmuson Foundation board

Statewide initiatives

Camp Initiative: $600,000 over two years for a pilot program to help more Alaska children and youth attend summer camp. Partner organizations will manage camp scholarships as well as support for providing a higher quality experience.

Individual Artist Awards: Almost $2.4 million to continue the Individual Artist Award program another three years, through 2022. Each year, 36 awards are given: one Distinguished Artist award of $40,000, 10 Fellowships of $18,000 each and 25 Project Awards of $7,500. Since the first awards were given in 2004, 516 artists in 53 communities have received over $4.7 million in grants. Artists also receive opportunities for professional development and their work is promoted by Rasmuson Foundation through social media, special web features, ads and short films. Artists are selected through a competitive process and celebrated at an event in May.

Magnetic North film series: $735,000 to the Alaska Humanities Forum for documentaries featuring six Alaskans whose lives and career experiences illustrate core issues in the history and narrative of our state. This will be the second part of the “Magnetic North: The Alaskan Character” series. The first six documentaries premiered between 2016 and 2019 and featured: Clem Tillion of Halibut Cove, Arliss Sturgulewski of Anchorage, the late Judge Roy Madsen of Kodiak, Jake Adams of Utqiaġvik, Nathan Jackson of Saxman and Ketchikan, and former Gov. Bill Sheffield of Anchorage. Filmmaker Marla Williams wrote and directed the series. The completed films aired on public television in September and October 2019. They are available to libraries and schools on thumb drives and can be streamed for free at www.akhf.org/magnetic-north.

Strengthening Organizations: $920,000 to continue a small grant program to support Alaska nonprofit organizational development for three years. The program is designed to improve operational systems and strengthen leadership and employee skills.

Statewide grant

Food Bank of Alaska: Up to $500,000 to help buy, renovate and equip a new food warehouse. The Food Bank has outgrown its current space. The remodeled building will double its capacity to receive, store and ship food. It will include volunteer workspace and a “shopping” area for partner food agencies. This support will be in the form of a challenge grant, encouraging the community with a 1-to-1 match of other contributions, up to a total of $500,000.
Grants by region

Interior

Love in the Name of Christ of the Tanana Valley: $100,000 to help outfit a newly acquired 10,000-square-foot building. Love INC will operate a range of services for people in need including a helpline and the Loving Families transitional program for families who have been homeless.

Tanana Chiefs Conference: $800,000 to help replace the aging Upper Tanana Health Center in Tok. The current center is spread among three repurposed buildings, none of which were designed for health care. The new center will house exam rooms, screening rooms, dental stations, radiology, lab, pharmacy and more in a single, 17,299-sf building.

University of Alaska Foundation – Museum of the North: $119,250 to upgrade the Place Where You Go to Listen permanent exhibit at the Museum of the North in Fairbanks. The Place has been operating since 2006 as an immersive experience of sound and light driven by geophysical phenomena recorded through UA’s Geophysical Institute. This grant will upgrade equipment, add LED lighting and add a final artistic and scientific element: the sound of wind. Managing the project is composer John Luther Adams, recipient of the 2014 Pulitzer Prize in Music, a 2015 Grammy Award, and the 2010 Rasmuson Foundation Distinguished Artist Award.

Southcentral

Alaska Christian College: $400,000 to help build an 18,000-sf athletic center in Soldotna. The facility will include a gym and a full-size basketball court that can be reconfigured into two smaller courts. The college has more than 100 students pursuing associate degrees in behavioral health, paraprofessional education, general education and Christian ministry. The goal is to develop healthy future leaders of Alaska villages and families; 80% of the students are Alaska Native. The athletic center will also serve Kenai Peninsula College and the wider community.

Anchorage Community Land Trust: $350,000 over four years for the Set Up Shop program, which supports neighborhood entrepreneurs. Participants receive training and education, hands-on business technical assistance, commercial real estate assistance and access to capital through microloans. Set Up Shop already has trained 70 entrepreneurs, many of them in areas that have lacked business development such as Mountain View and parts of Spenard. The grant will support a lending manager and technical assistance to entrepreneurs and loan recipients.
**CCS Early Learning**: $155,000 to furnish and complete a new early learning facility that will provide Head Start and Early Head Start programming to children and families in Palmer. The grant will go toward fixtures, furniture, equipment, paving and landscaping. Mat-Su Health Foundation will own the building and lease it to CCS at a significant discount. Each year, CCS serves over 450 children from birth to age 5 in five communities: Chugiak, Palmer, Meadow Lakes, Sutton and Wasilla.

**City of Wasilla**: $100,000 to help construct a community pavilion in the new location of the Veterans Wall of Honor. The Wall of Honor — actually a group of granite-paneled walls engraved with names of veterans and active duty personnel — is located on Wasilla-Fishhook Road.

**Cook Inlet Housing Authority**: $250,000 to help renovate the Church of Love, the housing organization’s community and cultural hub in Spenard. CIHA was chosen in 2015 to be one of six organizations selected nationwide by ArtPlace America for a three-year initiative to incorporate art and culture into community development. CIHA is continuing the work at Church of Love with a major renovation to add a sprinkler system, elevator, accessibility, energy efficiencies and upgraded electrical and mechanical systems. Capacity will increase from 120 to 250-plus.

**Cook Inlet Lending Center Inc.**: Nearly $1 million to provide capital for small business development in underserved parts of Anchorage. Of that, $480,000 will be an outright grant for a loan loss reserve and for loans to higher risk entrepreneurs. Another $500,000 will be in the form of a low-cost loan for small business lending. These funds will support the lending center’s partnership with Anchorage Community Land Trust and the Set Up Shop program. Entrepreneurs will get access to capital, and neighborhood commercial corridors will be stabilized.

**Copper River Watershed Project**: $50,000 to expand recycling in Cordova. The grant will be used to buy a baler and conveyor belt system. This will significantly reduce waste entering the landfill by expanding the materials recycled and shipped out of Cordova. The Watershed Project, City of Cordova and Native Village of Eyak are working together on this community recycling program.

**Matanuska-Susitna Borough**: $450,000 toward construction of a new library in Willow and upgraded community center. The new library will be approximately 6,635 square feet and will include a business center and meeting space. The community center will be updated with new siding, a fire suppression unit, new lighting, ADA-code corrections and new restrooms.

**Salvation Army of Alaska**: $330,000 for upgrades to King’s Lake Camp near Wasilla including replacement of the 20-plus-year-old septic system. The work also includes repairs to the beach area, repair or replacement of roofing and flooring, and
replacement of bathhouse fixtures. The camp is on a 300-acre site. The camp serves about 80 children and teens a week during the summer. Themes include music, adventure and scouting.

**Sun’aq Tribe of Kodiak**: $375,000 to help the tribe rebuild and expand its primary tribal enterprise, its WildSource seafood processing facility. Foundation funds will support cold storage building construction and purchase/installation of an ice machine that will serve the small boat fleet of fishermen.

**United Way of Anchorage**: $330,000 for the final year of United Way’s 90% by 2020 effort to improve Anchorage high school graduation rates. The funds will continue three successful programs: Back on Track for older students, Community+ Schools for younger students, and Best Beginnings for young children. The effort also includes strategic planning to sustain the work for the long term. When the initiative started in 2005, Anchorage’s graduation rate was 59%. The most recent figure for the Anchorage School District: 81%. The number is close to 90% when fifth-year graduates, recipients of GEDs, and alternative school graduations are included.

**Wasilla Area Seniors Inc**: $350,000 to help construct a three-story, 40-unit senior housing project in Wasilla. Four units would be designed for individuals who are homeless or who were recently discharged from a prison, mental health or substance abuse treatment facility.

**Southeast**

**Baranof Island Housing Authority**: $80,000 to help purchase a heat pump system in Monastery Street Elder Housing, a 24-unit senior housing complex that serves a very low-income population in Sitka.

**Great Alaska Council – Boy Scouts of America**: $75,000 to replace a condemned log storage structure with a new multi-use building at the Eagle River Scout Camp in Juneau. Construction will begin in April 2020 and the new 1,440-sf multi-use building will be completed by June. It will house two classrooms, storage space with a car-size roller door and two office spaces.

**Petersburg Medical Center**: $100,000 to renovate the hospital pharmacy. This will triple the current space to create a 450-square-foot facility designed for storage, mixing and dispensation of drugs especially those that are hazardous after prolonged exposure such as cancer treatments.
Southwest

**Bristol Bay Borough**: $225,000 to develop a playground in Naknek. This would replace an aging playground at the school in Naknek, the only public playground for the three communities of the Bristol Bay Borough. The new playground is being incorporated into a school renovation project and will make a fitting end point to the Sockeye Fitness Trail, which winds past the community pool, a lake and a campground.