



PATH to PROSPERITY

The Mission of the Path to Prosperity Competition

Southeast Alaska's rural communities are suffering high unemployment rates, the loss of traditional jobs and a stagnant economy. Many residents leave their home communities in search of opportunities in urban areas. This outmigration threatens the very fiber of rural community health and well-being. Through enhanced local entrepreneurship, the Path to Prosperity (P2P) competition identifies innovative business ideas that can achieve transformational sustainable growth and positive social, economic, and conservation impact to one or several communities in the region.

In the US and abroad, an increased presence of small businesses is often the only realistic path for achieving income levels adequate for meeting the basic needs of a community. Often that opportunity is undermined by a lack of business development services and resources. Apart from support for individual entrepreneurs, communities with the greatest needs often lack integrated strategies to improve economic, social, environmental, and health outcomes. A community culture that lacks the support for small business development is common among many rural communities and results in little or no growth, which is the reality that Southeast Alaska's rural communities are facing today.

Small scale entrepreneurship is an important form of free enterprise that can create pathways to financial self-sufficiency and promote inclusive, resilient and sustainable local, rural economies. Southeast Alaska is abundant in both environmental and cultural resources which is evident in the subsistence lifestyle that so many of its people depend on in their daily lives. Rural community members have an intimate level of knowledge about local resources, allowing them to recognize creative and innovative opportunities within their community. The P2P competition aims to identify and match these great business ideas with the appropriate resources.

Rural Alaska has been, and will continue to be, challenged by economic trends and changes. However given the right support, entrepreneurs can create new ventures that will improve and transform rural economies. More than ever Southeast Alaska's rural communities and individuals need better tools and technical assistance that will allow them to create supportive socio-economic systems, and create employment opportunities for their people. Entrepreneurship has traditionally provided a pathway to a better life and a foundation for a healthy society.

Through a partnership between Haa Aaní, LLC and The Nature Conservancy, and support from community partners, the P2P competition gives rural entrepreneurs a unique opportunity. The region wide contest is an opportunity to compete for \$40,000 in business consulting services, but it's also a chance to gain constructive feedback on your business plan and help move it from an idea to a reality.

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