

# THE VILLAGE PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER PROGRAM

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A Conceptual Design To Improve Law Enforcement  
And Public Safety In The Rural Areas Of Alaska



By

The Department of Public Safety

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# VILLAGE PUBLIC SAFETY PROGRAM

## A CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

### I. THE PROBLEM

Public safety in rural Alaska is perhaps the most neglected aspect of village life, and one of the greatest concerns to the bush residents inhabiting the 200 villages or so within the state.

Consider that rural Alaska:

1. Suffers the highest per capita loss of life and property due to fire within the entire United States, and indeed the industrialized Western world;
2. Suffers the highest per capita loss of life due to boating mishaps and drownings in the United States;
3. Is one of the most inaccessible areas of the United States to obtain assistance when major medical emergencies occur, and is often remote from any type of medical facility;
4. Leads the State in incidence of alcohol abuse and alcoholism;
5. Is one of the most inaccessible areas of the United States to obtain assistance from law enforcement agencies;
6. Has high, but no clearly defined, rates of crime due to lack of adequate statistics at both the local and state levels. Some authorities consider the bush areas to have higher incidences of crime than urban areas in Alaska;
7. Leads the State, and perhaps the nation, in the incidence of search and rescue missions;
8. Has the least developed of local resources to address these problems of the entire State, and possibly the entire United States.

It is safe to assume that no group of Caucasian communities would tolerate similiar circumstances, and that they would demand equal protection under the law. The question of why these conditions exist, and more importantly, how they may be addressed is the subject of this paper.

II. EXISTING PUBLIC SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

A review of government agencies charged with responsibilities for public safety, ( or the lack of such responsibilities ) helps explain the high toll of accidental loss of life and property in Alaskan villages. It also suggests ways to alleviate the total public safety problem in the rural areas of Alaska.

A. Law Enforcement

The Division of State Troopers, within the Department of Public Safety is charged with law enforcement in the bush villages. Located at various remote outposts but with limited resources, they respond immediately to emergencies, as quickly as possible to felony cases, and routinely to minor offenses. However, bad weather and lack of transportation, often means unavoidable delays to even life-safety situations. Limitations of personnel and budget further restrict response to criminal acts. Nevertheless, the Troopers represent by far the largest force of public safety personnel in rural Alaska.

The extent of crime in rural areas is not known with any certainty due to inadequate records at both the village and state levels. Often the Troopers are called as a last resort by a village when a law enforcement problem can no longer be dealt with by the village, rather than as the initial response mechanism as in an urban Caucasian community. The Troopers task is often made more complex by the traditional law ways and methods of dispute resolution of the minority ethnic groups. These approaches are often perceived to be in conflict with the dominant Anglo adversary system.

Although many villages have hired local police officers through the CEFTA funded Manpower programs within the several Regional non-profit Corporations during the last year, most of their personnel are untrained in even basic law enforcement aspects. They suffer high rates of turnover due to low wages and peer pressure, traditional subsistence activities, and certain unrealistic C.E.T.A. program limitations that do not apply to small villages in Alaska.

B. Water Safety

Boating mishaps and water related deaths are the concern of two agencies - the State Troopers who enforce State legislation related to water safety, and the Coast Guard who enforce federal laws, and also conduct boating and water safety programs.

Due to limited resources and other reasons, the Troopers primarily investigate water-related deaths rather than become involved in prevention efforts. Reduction of these deaths requires immediate on-the-scene response, coupled with effective educational and prevention-oriented efforts. The Coast Guard, with only seven prevention and educational personnel in the State, is likewise restricted in their efforts.

C. Fire Service

The fire problem in Alaska is particularly acute, even tragic, when it is realized that fire related deaths in rural Alaska are greater than anywhere else in the Western World. Rural lifestyles involving the use of flammable liquids, lack of building and electrical codes and other factors are prime causes of high fire losses. It is also true that there is no State agency charged with the development of local fire suppression efforts. Unlike the State Troopers which is a statewide agency to perform law enforcement services, the Fire Service in Alaska has no comparable state agency with broad responsibilities for fire suppression. The only State agencies with fire-related objectives are the State Fire Service Training Program in the Department of Education and the Division of Fire Prevention in the Department of Public Safety. The former has a training responsibility. Only the Division of Fire Prevention is a legislative program; the other is merely a portion of the continuing education function within the Department of Education.

There is little evidence that the legislature is concerned with or knowledgeable about the fire loss problem in rural Alaska. Certain remedies proposed during the last session - purchasing self - contained breathing apparatus and fire trucks - reflects a singular inappropriateness to small rural villages.

D. Emergency Medical Service

Major medical emergencies, like water accidents, usually require an immediate response to be effective. Many villages have the Community Health Aide Program, (CHAP) funded through the Indian Health Service of the U.S. Public Health Service. Itinerate State Public Health nurses also provide health and medical services assistance. The CHA program, however, is primarily oriented to daily health concerns, rather than emergency medical response. Their program also experiences personnel turnover and is subject to times when the CHA is absent from the village. Bad weather may mean a delay of several days before a severely injured person may be evacuated. Other than the CHA, and possibly other residents with prior training in first-aid, many villages can offer very little response to a medical emergency.

E. Search and Rescue (SAR)

Search and Rescue is more nearly a function of weather problems, vast distances and inhospitable terrain than any other aspect of Public Safety. Many SAR missions require an immediate response.



The Department of Public Safety is legislatively charged with the responsibility for SAR in Alaska. In discharge of that mandate they have named SAR coordinators in each detachment and have developed both Statewide and detachment level SAR plans. However, nowhere within their organization are there the specialized resources needed for the broad array of SAR missions experienced. They must therefore rely extensively upon military and civilian rescue capabilities.

F. Village Ordinances

Local government in rural Alaska is often non-existent, at least in the formal sense. Many villages are "unorganized" although equally true, many are Second Class cities, thus making them eligible to receive state shared revenue, assistance programs, and develop ordinances to extend local control over village problems not covered by state laws. Local government machinery, however, is often informal. Local ordinances to enable the village to act upon and resolve issues of local interest are incomplete at best, often out of date, on occasion unconstitutional, or do not exist at all. The Department of Community and Regional Affairs is the State agency most closely aligned with local government. Other agencies, such as the non-profit corporations, the AFN, and at least one Borough have all been involved in the ordinance program. Their efforts, however, have generally existed independently of each other. As a result, one may uncover evidence of three or four previous efforts to upgrade ordinances in a given

village, but the village may still not have an complete set of ordinances. Needed is an on-going, well coordinated statewide effort amongst all interested agencies.

### III. ANALYSIS OF THE RURAL PUBLIC SAFETY PROBLEM

In developing a viable, effective public safety program for bush Alaska, one must appreciate the character and nature of village public safety problems.

Law enforcement problems are generally uncomplicated. Most involve alcohol abuse and domestic disturbances. Village fires tend to involve relatively small structures, although they may be quite intense given the flammable nature of the construction, and they must be suppressed immediately or the structure, and perhaps lives, will be lost. Search and Rescue missions involving villagers can most effectively be analyzed by local residents and relatives who have intimate knowledge of both the individual and the area involved. Boating mishaps and drownings are aggravated by silt laden waters, colder water temperatures, lack of water safety skills, and alcohol abuse.

Although villages face a broad array of public safety problems, the number of problems that occur in one village in a year are not great, since most villages have only a few hundred residents. Most problems involve law enforcement, but typically only one or two fires occur. Perhaps only one drowning or maybe none occur in a given year. Most search and rescues are successful.

It is readily apparent that with the low number of calls for assistance and the relatively uncomplicated nature of the calls, that the nature of law enforcement, fire fighting, and emergency medical services, such as are needed in urban areas are not needed in a village program. Therefore, a paid fire chief and paid police chief is not applicable in the bush. Equally inappropriate are big city fire trucks, patrol cars and ambulances.

The successful village public safety program must consider the following:

1. The response effort for fire suppression, and many other public safety aspects, must be immediate, and therefore from within the village in order to be effective.
2. The village public safety program must interface with existing public safety programs to be maximally cost effective and produce the best results.
3. The program must be sensitive to, and utilize to the extent possible the traditional means of dispute resolution and law ways.
4. Over the long term, state legislators, regional corporation officials, village council presidents and other decision makers in bush Alaska must be convinced of the value and approach of the program, in order to assure long term support and funding.
5. The approach must place emphasis upon local decision making and control to assure the program meets village objectives and concerns.
6. The State Troopers should develop the program and take responsibility for its implementation since they are the largest public safety force in the bush and have responsibilities for more elements within the public safety field than any other agency.

IV. PROGRAM PROPOSAL

In view of the relatively uncomplicated nature and limited number of calls for assistance in individual villages, it is recommended that one person from each village be broadly trained in all aspects of public safety, to include law enforcement, fire protection, emergency medical services, search and rescue, boating and water safety. In brief, this individual, designated as the Village Public Safety Officer, (VPSO), would be broadly responsible for improving all public safety aspects in his village. He would work very closely with the Troopers and would call them when serious and more complex crimes occur. He would also work closely with existing village medical capabilities, but would be individually responsible for developing a basic fire suppression capability.

A. Training

Four phases of training are envisioned. Initially a one week survey course would be conducted in various regions throughout the State, designed to present an overview of the public safety field and what is expected of the VPSO, as well as reveal those who by temperament or other reason would not perform well.

A four week session would be held shortly thereafter at the State Trooper Academy in Sitka consisting of two weeks of law enforcement, search and rescue, water safety and local ordinance development, and two weeks of emergency medical training.

The third phase is a week-long session consisting of fire fighting techniques and fire prevention, oriented to existing village conditions. The course will be conducted at one of the five regional fire training centers - Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Bethel, and Kotzebue - which have been funded through passage of a state bonding issue.

Completion of the three formal phases of the training program does not mean the VPSO needs no further guidance, and training. Indeed State Troopers undergo eleven weeks of follow-up field training to be accomplished by dividing the various subjects into a prescribed number of objectives, tailored to village conditions. Each time a Trooper visits a particular village, he would present information on a particular objective. Documentation of completion of each segment could be developed in a training jacket so that as other Troopers visit that village, information is readily available about what training has been completed and what subjects need to be covered. In this manner, field training is accomplished in an orderly manner even though different Troopers may be involved.

Present Trooper background and experience qualifies them to present follow-up training in areas of law enforcement, search and rescue, and related fields. Although individual experience and interests will vary, some Troopers will not consider themselves qualified to

provide follow-up training in fire suppression, basic information about ordinance development, shared revenue, some emergency medical aspects, and water safety. They, therefore, will need to undergo supplemental training in these fields. At least two possibilities exist to accomplish this extra Trooper training. In the short term, existing bush Troopers could attend training sessions in these subjects. In the long term, an advanced Academy training session could be developed for all Troopers destined for assignment to bush posts. These Troopers could be certified to a higher level of accomplishment both by the Department and by the Alaska Police Standards Council.

Numerous public safety agencies will assist in the total training effort, including the State Trooper Academy staff in Sitka, the State Fire Service Training program, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Department of Community and Regional Affairs, and detachment level Troopers from bush areas. Initially, CETA training funds will pay for travel and subsistence/per diem for the trainees. Instructional related costs would be borne by the several Public Safety agencies. Long term funding of training and other aspects is addressed in a later section.

Training received would result in;

1. Certification by the Alaska Police Standards Council as a Village Police Officer;
2. Certification by the State of Alaska as an Emergency Medical Technician;

3. Certification by the Department of Education as a Rural Fire Fighter I;
4. Award (of an as yet undetermined number) of college credits by Sheldon Jackson College or the University of Alaska.

The diagram on the following page portrays the training of the Village Public Safety Officer as a flow chart, showing each of the training components in sequence and number of hours devoted to each major topic.

B. Program Elements

The following paragraphs describe the village programs to be developed and encouraged by the VPSO, upon completion of his training. Support by the Village Council is crucial to the success of his efforts.

1. Provide Law Enforcement Services

The VPSO should in effect, act as an extension of the State Trooper at the village level. When serious crimes occur, the VPSO should take the immediate actions required such as protecting the scene, preserving evidence, and determining witnesses, and other actions as directed by the Trooper who would be called immediately. The activities of the Village Officer will provide a greater level of service to the village and be of obvious support to the Troopers.

VILLAGE PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER  
- TRAINING -



Field Locations	State Trooper Academy	Regional Fire Training Center	Individual Villages
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26 hrs.	Law Enforcement	75 hrs.	Emergency Medical	3 hrs.	Public Fire Protection	(Curriculum Under Development)
12 hrs.	Emergency Medical	25 hrs.	Swimming - Water Safety	2 hrs.	Fire Behavior	
6 hrs.	Fire	17 hrs.	Procedural Law	6 hrs.	Portable Extinguishers	
1 hr.	Ordinances	18 hrs.	Substantive Law	6 hrs.	Forcible Entry and Ropes	
1 hr.	Search and Rescue	7 hrs.	Records, Reports	5 hrs.	Fire Hose Practices	
2 hrs.	Water Safety	4 hrs.	Crisis Intervention	8 hrs.	Fire Streams & Portable Pumps	
48 hrs.		4 hrs.	Search & Rescue	4 hrs.	Ladders	
		3 hrs.	Ordinances	6 hrs.	Ventilation Practices	
		16 hrs.	Other	4 hrs.	Rescue & Breathing Apparatus	
		21 days		4 hrs.	Salvage & Overhaul	
				48 hrs.		



The greatest number of problems will involve relatively minor offenses. Drunkenness, petty theft, local ordinance violations and related problems should in most instances be resolved by the VPSO and the council. He will also have to be proficient in report writing, keep basic statistics, and perhaps most importantly, become prevention oriented. Attempts to help resolve smoldering differences before a crime is committed, assisting persons who become intoxicated so they do not harm themselves and others, and related efforts will all help to prevent problems from occurring. He should also be able to work with village administrators and clerks so that the village obtains shared revenue on the basis of law enforcement in the village.

2. Organize a Village Fire Department

The VPSO can stimulate interest among the Council and other residents to form a basic fire protection capability utilizing portable extinguishers, smoke detectors, portable pumps and lengths of hose, voluntary home inspections, school-oriented prevention programs, and similar efforts.

The extinguisher should be the dry chemical, multi purpose, cartridge pressure units, rated for cold weather. These units can be refilled in the village, or even at the scene of a fire if needed. A supply of powder and cartridges should be stockpiled in the village.

As long range goals, smoke detectors best suited for village home conditions and a fire extinguisher should be installed in every home.

While the VPSO may be a member of the fire department, ideally he should not be the fire chief. The more villagers that can be involved in the public safety program, the better their village conditions will become. He should be able to work with the Village Clerk to assure the village applies for revenue sharing for fire protection, how to help organize a local fire department and how to report fires to the State Division of Fire Prevention.

3. Organize a Local Search and Rescue Group

The VPSO can stimulate interest in forming a volunteer cadre of villagers to assist the Troopers and other agencies in Search and Rescue. This cadre could consist of villagers who own snowmachines, or have boats who have agreed to form a rescue group. The group could undergo training in First Aid, and other subjects determined appropriate. They could sponsor prevention efforts such as assuring everyone who goes on an extended trip has survival gear, has made his itinerary known to someone within the village, etc.,. Although the VPSO should ideally not be head of the SAR group, both the SAR group head and the VPSO should be knowledgeable about how to get reimbursed by the state for fuel, and equipment, etc., that were expended during the SAR mission. Rescue group personnel can be of particular help in evaluating the actual need for a search and rescue mission when a local resident is overdue, as well as other aspects of assistance to rescue authorities.

As may be seen, the Fire Department and the rescue group, although described separately here, may consist of the same personnel.

4. Assist the Community Medical Provider

Many villages have a resident Community Health Aide, or other medical provider. The role of the VPSO is to offer such assistance as is deemed appropriate, but not attempt to take the place of this individual. In some cases the VPSO may be the only person trained in response to medical emergencies, and by default becomes the initial medical responder. The VPSO and CHA can jointly arrange for First Aid Training to be taught to villagers, and help procure needed medical supplies for emergency situations. They can take each others place when one or the other is absent from the village.

5. Assist the Coast Guard in Boating Safety and Water Survival

The VPSO can assist the Coast Guard in boating and water safety efforts, by arranging for the showing of films, displaying posters, assuring life jackets are in boats when persons are on the water, arrange for swimming classes if feasible and refer flagrant and repeated violators of safe boating practices to the Coast Guard. They can generally assist in other Coast Guard efforts toward safer marine practices.

6. Work with Village Council to Develop Improve Ordinances  
and Use Shared Revenue

The numerous aspects of the VPSO's work will be made easier if through local ordinance a Department of Public Safety can be created, and other ordinances developed to provide the legal basis for areas of local concern.

Information about ordinance promulgation and shared revenue is therefore considered important from the standpoint of increasing local control and self determination. Relatedly, the several non-profit regional corporations have been conducting training of village clerks, and other municipal officers, in these two topics among others, so the VPSO's will not need to know all the mechanics and details of ordinance development and shared revenue. Similar information and assistance is available from the Department of Community and Regional Affairs. Emphasis will be upon ordinances as a means to enhance operational effectiveness of his public safety program when he returns to his village after completing the training. In both areas he will be encouraged to work with the city clerks and administrators.

C. State Level Programs

For the Village Public Safety Officer concept to be successful requires assistance from several state agencies and possibly federal agencies as well for program development, research and

continued assistance. Although there are many state and federal agencies with programs of interest and value to the small rural communities, this section describes those with particular advantages and value to the Public Safety Officer Program.

1. Development and Maintenance of Village Ordinances

The improvement of village ordinances is an important aspect of increased local control and self determination. To date, there have been many generally independent efforts by various organizations to address this problem, but none has been entirely successful.

At the request of the Department of Public Safety the Criminal Justice Planning Agency is developing a concept paper about how the ordinance problem can best be addressed. An early aspect is the expected convening of a meeting by agencies with an interest or existing program in this field. It is anticipated that the Departments of Public Safety, Law, Community and Regional Affairs, the AFN, Yapitak Bista Manpower Programs, Mauneluk Corporation, Kawerak Corporation, Doyon LTD., Criminal Justice Planning Agency, Criminal Justice Center and others will meet. Discussion will probably center about which agency has done what, the existing programs and capabilities, how each can dovetail their efforts with the other, and the overall parameters of a long term ordinance development and maintenance program.

2. Developing Mechanisms of Local Dispute Resolution

To enable local villages to resolve as many minor disputes as possible serves several purposes. Many village councils already informally assess penalties to miscreants that typically include restitution to the aggrieved party, and useful work for the villages. This approach has the advantage of local decision making that best suits the offense, a penalty that is obviously related to the offense, and clearly an alternative to formal processing through the criminal justice system. Local offense resolution should be formalized through the provisions of AS 29.48.035 that permits city councils to assess non-criminal penalties for infractions of local ordinances.

In a related manner, the provisions of federal law such as the Indian Reorganization Act, the Indian Self-Determination Act (PL 93-638) and the Indian Child Welfare Act should be examined in terms of local control and dispute resolution mechanisms.

An earlier attempt to utilize local decision making for dispute resolution involved the concept of the Reconciliation Board. Begun several years ago by the Court System, the program involved local village residents who attempted to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution to both sides of a dispute. This alternative to formal justice system processing was set up in several villages, but was only marginally successful, and

dropped soon thereafter by the Court System. This program should be reviewed, both in terms of its acceptability and value at the village level. If found to be of potential value, it could be modified as required and reinstated. In addition, study is needed in the area of traditional dispute resolution within the different ethnic areas of the state to determine if they include constitutional rights and guarantees and if they could apply to villages in rural Alaska.

3. Village Control Mechanisms for Alcoholic Beverages

As noted earlier, providing the means to respond to public safety concerns is in reality dealing with the manifestations of a deeper underlying social problem - that of alcohol abuse and alcoholism. Specialty agencies within the broad field of public safety have known for years that many of their problems are related to, or the direct result of, alcohol abuse. There is no question that many villages want to control or eliminate alcoholic beverages in their communities but do not know how best to proceed or even how to proceed at all. The depth of the alcohol problem, and the benefits to be gained by its control have led several villages to institute drastic measures to prevent alcoholic beverages from coming into the villages. Some of these approaches are certainly effective but obviously unconstitutional.

Simultaneously with the development of the Village Public Safety Officer program, a research effort should be mounted to explore all the means and options that a village has, or

could have with changes in the law, in order to deal with the alcohol problem. The Attorney General's Office, the Criminal Justice Planning Agency and the State Troopers should be involved and possibly the office of Alcoholism and selected social service agencies. The objective is to identify the means a village could use to prevent/control the influx of liquor into the village, rather than any attempts to determine the sociological reasons people drink, etc. No more worthy commitment of resources could be made.

D. Potential Funding Sources

The long term objective is to develop continuing funding for the village public safety program. There are several approaches that appear possible. Although discussed individually below, a combination of funding sources might also be used for the program.

1. Comprehensive Education and Training Act (CETA)

In the short term, CETA manpower funds of the several Native Corporations will continue to fund salaries and travel costs. Training conducted by the State Troopers to date - one week session in Bethel and Nome during the Spring of 1979 - has been CETA funded. The first month long session which began in late August 1979 was financed by the Manpower program of Yupitak Bista, representing the Calista



region, as will the follow-up week for fire suppression and prevention training.

However, the CETA program envisions units of government assuming salary costs after persons have been temporarily hired by CETA. Present CETA regulations stipulate that employment is limited to 18 months at which point the employee is terminated, theoretically to then be paid by the local community. At that point, a new person may be hired for the same job and paid by CETA funds. While perhaps applicable in urban areas, the small villages in Alaska have little or no resources to pay the salary of any employees. Thus, there is the specter of a continual turnover of local personnel involving the need for endless training, and with no long-term advantages, either for the village or the state.

It is during the term of employment by CETA that alternative means for funding must be developed in order that the program can continue at improved levels of salary and consequent longer tenure of the officers and development of extensive local skills in the broad field of public safety. Only in this way can the problems of law enforcement and public safety in the rural areas be improved.

2. Legislative Appropriation

As with the State Trooper program, State appropriations may be made to fund the VPSO program, as an adjunct to and an extension of the State Troopers. If made to the Department of Public Safety, the Department could then contract with the several non-profit Native Regional Corporations for them to provide the services, or the Department could provide the services directly. Or, if the appropriation was made to the Regional Corporations, they could provide the services directly, while coordinating their efforts with the State Troopers, or possibly contract with the Department to have them provide the services. Legislative funding could be either for the entire program costs, or to be used in conjunction with one or more of the other potential funding sources.

3. Revision of Shared Revenue Formula

Presently, state shared revenues are apportioned on a per capita basis - \$12/person for law enforcement and \$7.50/person for fire protection. Although a regional cost differential is applied, this per capita entitlement formula does not take into account the adequacy of the resulting funds, existing tax base, local effort, or even whether or not the majority of funds are spent in those areas from which eligibility derives. A proposal could be developed for the legislature in which a minimum amount could be specified for public safety services - perhaps

\$25,000 per village, or some other figure that could support a full-time Village Public Safety Officer program. Or the per/capita basis could be increased in recognition of local effort, such as the existence of a village sales tax or other means of municipal income that reflect a good faith effort by the village to help themselves.

The legislature could also require that shared revenue funds awarded on the basis of existing police and fire services, be utilized to upgrade and otherwise support those programs in the villages, even if the entitlement formula is not changed. Currently only 20% of the entitlement must be so spent.

4. State Alcoholic Beverage Tax

The state alcoholic beverage tax is another potential source of funding the village officers. Certainly there is no greater cause and effect relationship than alcoholic beverages and the need for public safety services. Legislative action would be required to appropriate a certain percentage of alcohol-tax revenues derived from sales of alcoholic beverages in rural areas.

5. Contract Services

Another aspect involving shared revenue is the idea of villages contracting with the Department of Public Safety

to provide public safety services through the use of the village's shared revenue entitlement. Currently, shared revenue funds will not support a full-time Public Safety Officer. Supplemental funding from either the legislature or the Department would be needed if this approach is to be utilized. The goal of such an approach would be to develop the program in the village while involving the Council to an increasing degree, until the village can administer the entire program. However, the Department would continue its oversight and supervisory function, as described earlier.

6. Public Safety Revolving Loan Fund

A concept to fund the training of future local Public Safety Officers, if CETA Manpower training funds are reduced, is to develop a revolving loan fund, similar to other student training loan funds. The legislature could establish the fund within the Department of Public Safety. Residents of a community who meet certain minimum qualifications (age, residency, education, etc.) and desire to become a Public Safety Officer could apply for a loan after obtaining the sponsorship of the community which intends to hire him at the completion of his training. Those granted loans would attend the training and then return to work as a Public Safety Officer. His loan would be forgiven upon the completion of three years of

satisfactory service. Preliminary work has already been done by the Public Safety Academy staff on this concept. This concept, however, assumes the ability of the sponsoring communities to pay the officers salary and otherwise support a public safety program.

7. Contracts from Other State Agencies

Financial support may be available from other government agencies with irregular needs for short term tasks in rural areas by contracting with native non-profit corporations to perform the tasks through the Public Safety Officer. Currently state and federal agencies send several persons into the bush to perform the needed tasks. Often they are unfamiliar with the bush, do not budget adequate funds for the job nor allow sufficient time to do it, have no entre' with the villages, and may not relate well to village residents. Substantial time and money is often expended for less than successful results.

In the alternative, the government agency could contract for the task to be performed. Since the Public Safety Officers have intimate knowledge of their village and nearby ones, they could perform the work required with a minimum of effort. As a result, valid information would be gathered in a timely manner without the costs of travel, per diem, and salary.

The regional corporation would then forward the appropriate amounts of the contract to the villages involved for use in support of the public safety program.

If this concept proves feasible, it holds implications for state agencies with bush responsibilities. In the long term, a generalist in the villages would evolve who knows quite a lot about many state agency functions and could perform on-site tasks for functional specialty agencies of state and federal government. As an example, the diverse requirements of the Departments of Health and Social Services, Labor, Education, etc. could be fulfilled by the "village coordinator". If true our entire framework of thinking about state government operations in the bush should, in the long term, be re-examined. Instead of functional specialists separated by the traditional hierarchical pattern on organizational charts, a generalist could perform work for many differing agencies and at potentially great cost savings to the traditional ordering and approach of government agencies. Such approach however could only be undertaken as the villages themselves and the Public Safety Officer are ready to accept the approach and responsibilities involved.

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