

Bethel, Alaska

Joys of Bethel

Living in Bethel offers a cross-cultural experience in a part of the world known to few outside Alaska. JVs learn about Yup'ik culture and history and live closely with the land. Between the spacious tundra, vibrant sunrises and sunsets, and views of the Aurora Borealis, JVs are surrounded by nature's power and beauty. Bethel hosts the Kuskokwim 300, Alaska's premier mid-distance sled-dog race each year. JVs often volunteer along the racecourse. Bethel is a dynamic, tight-knit community full of events, groups, and activities. JVs have a wide support and social network, including many former JVs who still live and work in Bethel. Living in Bethel, you will create a strong, steadfast community that will last you a lifetime.

About Bethel

The Yukon-Kuskokwim (YK) delta is the ancestral home of the Yup'ik and Cup'ik people, who established the Mamterillermiut village on the Kuskokwim east bank. In the 1800s, missionaries facilitated the village's relocation to the west bank, where Bethel now stands. Bethel, pop. 6,500, serves as the commercial hub for the 56 villages in the YK Delta. Like Bethel, these villages are only accessible by plane, boat, or snow machine. Most residents are Yup'ik or Cup'ik and use traditional subsistence hunting and gathering practices. However, climate change is threatening the health of the tundra and disrupting the subsistence way of life. As the largest populated settlement in Western Alaska, Bethel is a crucial point of access to services. JVs assist agencies serving folks from primarily rural Alaska Native communities, alleviating some of the barriers posed by systemic marginalization, remote locality, and ecological crises.