

Healthy Environment, Healthy Community (HEHC) Grant

A Zender Community Assistance Program (ZCAP) funding opportunity for small, rural Alaska communities — prepared for the Chignik Regional Climate Resiliency Symposium

Administered by	Zender Environmental Health & Research Group — Community Assistance Program (ZCAP)
Funding source	Denali Commission Unmet Waste Needs Award (2026–2027)
Award range	\$3,000 – \$120,000 (anticipated average \$50,000 – \$60,000)
Period of performance	June 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027
Match required	None
Application type	Competitive; accepted on a rolling monthly basis

What it funds

The HEHC program supports **one-time environmental-health projects** in small, rural Alaska communities, filling gaps where communities cannot otherwise find support to protect their air, water, lands, and resources. Projects must address an existing or near-future risk to human or environmental health. Eligible project types include solid waste management (collection, disposal, reduction, recycling, reuse); reducing exposure to contaminants in waste, soil, water, or air; protecting subsistence resources from contamination; lowering the cost of essential utilities (energy, water, wastewater, solid waste); reducing exposure to toxics or poor indoor air quality; food-security initiatives; and language retention tied to environmental-health outcomes.

Who can apply

Eligible applicants are a tribe, local government, local government community association, community non-profit, tribal consortium, or group of tribes; groups without non-profit status may qualify through fiscal sponsorship. The project must be carried out in the community requesting the funds (and/or its traditional subsistence areas) — **regional applications on behalf of a community are not accepted**, though communities may partner with a regional entity for help. Each project must be one-time-only with a definite beginning and end, completed within the period of performance, and must reduce harm or exposure, build capacity to address a foreseeable harm, or lower the cost of essential utilities.

How and when to apply

- **Rolling deadlines:** applications are accepted from the 1st through the last day of each month; the cutoff is 11:59 pm on the last day of the month.
- **Notification:** pre-award decisions are expected within 6–8 weeks of each monthly deadline.
- **Resubmission:** applications not selected are automatically reconsidered in later months until funds run out, and may be edited and resubmitted.
- **How funds are delivered:** direct payment to the applicant, direct purchasing by Zender, or a combination.
- **Proposal help:** ZCAP cannot write proposals, advise which project to propose, or comment on drafts, but can answer clarifying questions about the opportunity.

How projects are selected

Only proposals that meet every eligibility requirement are scored. A review panel scores each eligible proposal using a ranking matrix and ranks them by score. Priority goes to projects that address an imminent, substantial risk to human health or safety, have a clear start and end and a clear measure of success, use existing resources, build needed capacity, and produce benefits expected to last at least five years. A qualifying risk requires both **exposure** and real **danger or harm**. Requests over \$45,000 should document who and how many people are affected and the evidence of risk; requests over \$80,000 are funded only for extraordinary merit addressing a clear, documented, serious health risk.