

# Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative (ARUC)

## General Summary and benefits to project managers

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The ARUC is an Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) program to manage, operate and maintain water/sewer systems in rural Alaska. There are a number of advantages to rural communities, including economies of scale and a higher level of support, managerial and technical assistance. There is also a big advantage to the project engineer, however: *Communities in ARUC meet RUBA essential indicators, unless the community has IRS tax issues.*

There are two stages of membership in ARUC:

1<sup>st</sup> stage: Assisted Billing Program. This is a program that bills customers in participating communities. The money collected, minus a monthly service fee, is then sent back to the community to operate their water/sewer system.

Important Features:

- Assisted Billing generates invoices, keeps records of customer payments, and shares customer account information with community, including recommending shutoff of non-paying customers
- Customers will mail payment to bank lock box in Anchorage. Assisted Billing once per month takes service charge from these payments, mails the rest of the money to the community to operate water/sewer system
- Assisted Billing charges a monthly service charge to cover labor, postage, envelopes, etc. based on size of each community and number of customers billed on a monthly basis. This way, each community will pay only their share of the expenses associated with the billing service.
- Requires only 30-day commitment from ANTHC and the community.
- Billing Assistance could lead to ARUC membership if community desires and if the water/sewer system can be self-supporting. Community does not have to join full ARUC, however. Communities must be members of Billing Assistance for at least six months and demonstrate ability to become financially self-supporting to join ARUC.
- *Assisted Billing does not solve all RUBA essential indicators. Full ARUC membership does. Billing Assistance does solve RUBA Indicators 8, 9, 12, & 25, however.*

2<sup>nd</sup> stage: ARUC membership. This is a program that bills customers and manages and operates the water/sewer system.

Important features:

- ARUC sets rates with approval by local Council. Each community's rates are set to be self-supporting, so rates will vary per community.
- ARUC directs activities of locally-hired water plant operator (and backup) in each community. ARUC reimburses local community for operator's budgeted hours.
- ARUC purchases all fuel, parts, electricity, etc for water/sewer system.
- ARUC enforces shut-off of non-paying customers
- We continue to apply for grant money to purchase fuel, supplies and needed parts and repairs for ARUC communities in their first year of membership.

- ARUC communities are charged a monthly service charge to cover labor, postage, envelopes, etc. based on size of each community and number of customers billed on a monthly basis. This way, each community will pay only their share of the expenses associated with the billing service.
- *ARUC communities meet all RUBA indicators, unless the community has IRS tax issues.* RUBA is funded by EPA \$ for water/sewer capacity, and ARUC as the manager/operator of the water/sewer systems meets all RUBA indicators.
- ARUC membership is a long-term commitment with contracts automatically renewing in most cases.
- ARUC is not currently accepting communities that only have washeterias. ARUC does not currently operate washeterias.

#### Monthly Billing Fees for Programs – effective FY22

Assisted Billing Fees								
0-50 Connections	51-100 Connections	101 - 150 Connections	151-200 Connections	201-250 Connections	251-300 Connections	301-350 Connections	351-400 Conn.	401-450 Connections
\$ 625.00	\$ 687.50	\$ 750.00	\$ 812.50	\$ 875.00	\$ 937.50	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,062.50	\$ 1,125.00

Current members of ARUC, by Utility Manager. For operational questions regarding water sampling, etc, please contact the Utility Manager directly.

Community	Frank Neitz	Chris Cox	Jon Savage	Rick Lind
Address:	YKHC P.O. Box 528 Bethel, AK 99559	Maniilaq PO Box 256 Kotzebue, AK 99752	BBAHC P.O. Box 1649 Dillingham, AK 99576	ANTHC 3900 Ambassador Anchorage, AK 99508
Phone#	907-543-6184	907-442-7352	907-842-4771	907-729-5614
Email Address:	<a href="mailto:fneitz@anthc.org">fneitz@anthc.org</a>	<a href="mailto:cocox@anthc.org">cocox@anthc.org</a>	<a href="mailto:jsavage@nushtel.com">jsavage@nushtel.com</a>	<a href="mailto:rjlind@anthc.org">rjlind@anthc.org</a>
Ambler		X		
Chevak	X			
Chignik Lake			X	
Chignik Lagoon			X	
Deering		X		
Golovin				X
Goodnews Bay			X	
Holy Cross	X			
Kiana		X		
Kobuk		X		
Kotlik				X
Lower Kalskag	X			
Newhalen			X	
New Stuyahok			X	
Noorvik		X		
Pitka's Point	X			
Quinhagak	X			
Russian Mission	X			
Savoonga				X
Scammon Bay	X			
Shungnak		X		
South Naknek			X	
Sleetmute	X			
St. Michael				X
Toksook Bay	X			

Tyonek				X
Upper Kalskag	X			

Current communities in Assisted Billing only:

Water/sewer

Akiachak

Grayling

St. Marys

Electricity

Chignik Lagoon Electric

Red Devil Electric

Crooked River Electric

Chuathbaluk Electric

Stony River Electric

Sleetmute Electric