



## AMEP CLIENT PROFILE

### *Manufacturing Alaska Native Art*

Wasilla, AK

#### Company Profile

Barbara Ilatkaq Joan Apangalook is a manufacturer of Alaska native art in Wasilla, Alaska. Barbara, a Siberian Yupik Eskimo and Tlingit Indian, uses sealskin, polar bear fur, beadwork, ivory, whalebone, and mixed media to create her one of a kind carvings and sewn artworks. Many of her family members are also accomplished artists.

#### Situation

Alaska Native Art is a manufactured product that expresses the culture of Alaska Natives. It is an industry where Alaska Natives have a competitive advantage, with global demand for their products. Carving, beadwork, scrimshaw and other art mediums practiced by Alaska Natives are traditional activities that are typically passed on through generations. Based on these foundations, it makes sense to expand art sales as a strategy for supporting a subsistence lifestyle, strengthening culture, bringing youth and Elders together, and bringing cash into remote rural communities with few jobs.

#### Solution

The Alaska Manufacturing Extension Partnership (AMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, and its partner, the Alaska Native Arts Foundation, developed a series of training programs and created an e-commerce website to build new markets for Alaska Native artists. Ms. Apangalook participated strongly in these programs, and she identified some product areas that are popular sellers, such as walrus whisker jewelry. Barbara is now one of the most popular artists on the website.

## Results

- Sold over 300 pieces of art, jewelry and traditional items valued at over \$11,000.
- Created a more competitive and profitable position.

## Testimonial

"I attribute my interest and love of Native crafts to my mother and father, grandmother and the close-knit community of Gambell. Today, the Siberian Yupik people are acknowledged for their distinguished artistic talent, for which I am proud and grateful to be a part of. The Alaska Native Arts Foundation and Alaska Manufacturing Extension Partnership are bringing art to new markets, strengthening our culture and creating income for artists."

~Barbara Apangalook

**Interested in learning more about how the Alaska Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Inc. can offer services to your growing business?**

We are conveniently located mid-town at 701 Sesame St., Ste. 200, Anchorage, Alaska. Contact us at 907.279.2637 or [information@ak-mep.org](mailto:information@ak-mep.org).