



# It is within us.

Our Culture Protects and Heals Us



**2023 Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Conference**

September 26–28 | Anchorage, Alaska





—Alaska Native—  
JUSTICE CENTER



**WELCOME TO THE**

# **Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Conference**

Dear Conference Attendees,

Cama'i – On behalf of the Alaska Native Justice Center, I'm pleased to welcome you to the inaugural Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Conference. This year's theme, "It is within us, our culture protects and heals us," celebrates the wisdom of our ancestors passed down through the generations and recognizes the vital link between our Alaska Native cultures and our children's well-being. It's a reminder that the answers to protecting our children and finding healing in ourselves, our families, and our communities are rooted in our cultural teachings and values.

An amazing team worked tirelessly to make this conference a reality: dedicated ANJC staff, Agnew::Beck Consulting, our Conference Advisory Committee, keynote and workshop presenters, and each one of you attending this conference. The work you do each day is vitally important, thank you for serving the children and families of the communities you call home. It is through your work that our people will heal and thrive, for generations to come.

I am grateful for this opportunity to connect, learn, and be inspired. We hope this conference will be a source of inspiration and collaboration and leave you feeling refreshed and ready to tackle the vital work you do every day. Thank you for being here.

Quyanaasinaq,

**Alex Cleghorn**

Chief Operating Officer

# Schedule

## TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

8:30 AM Registration/coffee

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9:15 AM **General Session A: Fairbanks-Anchorage**  
Opening: Welcome from Native Village of Eklutna and Alex Cleghorn, ANJC

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10:15 AM 15 Minute Break

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10:30 AM **General Session B: Fairbanks-Anchorage**  
For the Love of Our Children: Re-centering Indigenous Relational Knowledge  
*Jessica Saniguq Ullrich*

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12:00 PM Lunch Break

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1:30 PM Concurrent Workshops:

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<b>Workshop C1: Kenai-Denali</b>	<b>Workshop C2: Juneau</b>	<b>Workshop C3: Valdez-Skagway</b>	<b>Workshop C4: Haines</b>
Continuity and Survivance: Overview of Alaska Native History and Culture <i>Maria Williams</i>	Lived Experience to Lasting Impact: The OCS Parent Advisory Committee <i>Lindsay Bothe Culverhouse</i>	ICWA Case Stages <i>Josh Ahsoak</i>	Elder Abuse Prevention: A Legal Toolbox <i>Charlie Kidd, Colleen Ouzts</i>

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3:00 PM 30 Minute Break

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3:30 PM Concurrent Workshops:

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<b>Workshop D1: Kenai-Denali</b>	<b>Workshop D2: Valdez-Skagway</b>	<b>Workshop D3: Juneau</b>	<b>Workshop D4: Haines</b>
Providing Supports When Resources May be Limited <i>Sheri Patraw, Jason Bavilla</i>	The Role of Tribes in the CAC Process <i>Traci McGarry</i>	Everything You Need to Know to Feel Prepared for Court <i>Chad Holt, Karen Hawkins, Corey Gillespie</i>	A Desk Reference for Alaska Tribal Workers in ICWA Cases <i>Holly Handler, Casey Groat</i>

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5:00 PM Close and Recess

# Schedule

## WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

8:30 AM Registration/coffee

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9:00 AM **General Session E: Fairbanks-Anchorage**  
Outcome of Brackeen – Now what? | *Erin Dougherty-Lynch*

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10:15 AM 15 Minute Break

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10:30 AM Concurrent Workshops:

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**Workshop F1: Haines**

Limits of Motivational Interviewing  
*Lenora Walker*

**Workshop F2: Kenai-Denali**

Navigating the Front Lines: ICWA  
Worker's Role in Investigations  
*Eva Kapotak, Collette Meraz, Maria  
Guerra, Shawnda Cutcher-Griechen*

**Workshop F3: Juneau**

Strengthening Families Alaska:  
Promoting 5 Protective Factors in  
Child Welfare Practice  
*Valerie Dudley, Olivia Shears*

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12:00 PM Lunch Break

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1:30 PM Concurrent Workshops:

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**Workshop G1: Kenai-Denali**

Transforming Child  
Welfare: Impact of OCS  
and Tribal Partnerships  
*Tasha Yatchmeneff,  
Robin Charlie*

**Workshop G2: Valdez-Skagway**

What Are Active Efforts?  
*Ali Wykis, Lenora Walker*

**Workshop G3: Juneau**

Asserting Tribal  
Sovereignty: Intervention,  
Transfers, and Child  
Permanency  
*Maggie Massey*

**Workshop G4: Haines**

Guardianships of  
Grandchildren and  
Advanced Care Directives  
*Charlie Kidd,  
Colleen Ouzts*

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3:00 PM 30 Minute Break

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3:30 PM **General Session H: Fairbanks-Anchorage**  
Alaska Blanket Exercise: Indigenous Storywork of Healing Trauma  
*Jaclynne Qalukisaq Richards, Amber Frasure*

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5:00 PM Close and Recess

# Schedule

## THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

8:30 AM Registration/coffee

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9:00 AM **General Session I: Fairbanks-Anchorage**  
State and Tribal Court Collaboration: A conversation with Chief Judge Abby Abinanti,  
Yurok Tribal Court

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10:15 AM 15 Minute Break

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10:30 AM Concurrent Workshops:

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**Workshop J1: Juneau**

Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact  
*Mary Johnson, Lou Johnson,  
Maria Guerra*

**Workshop J2: Haines**

Cultural Support Services  
*Diane Selanoff, Tasha Yatchmeneff*

**Workshop J3: Kenai-Denali**

Partnering for Resource Family  
Recruitment and Retention  
*Aileen Mcinnis, Kirstie Lone,  
Christine Edwards, Yurii Miller*

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12:00 PM Lunch Break

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1:30 PM **General Session K: Fairbanks-Anchorage**  
Why We Hurt: Healing for the Next 500 Generations | *Amber Webb*

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2:30 PM 15 Minute Break

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2:45 PM **General Session L: Fairbanks-Anchorage**  
Nurturing Futures: Healing-Centered Practices in Indigenous Child Welfare | *Christina Love*

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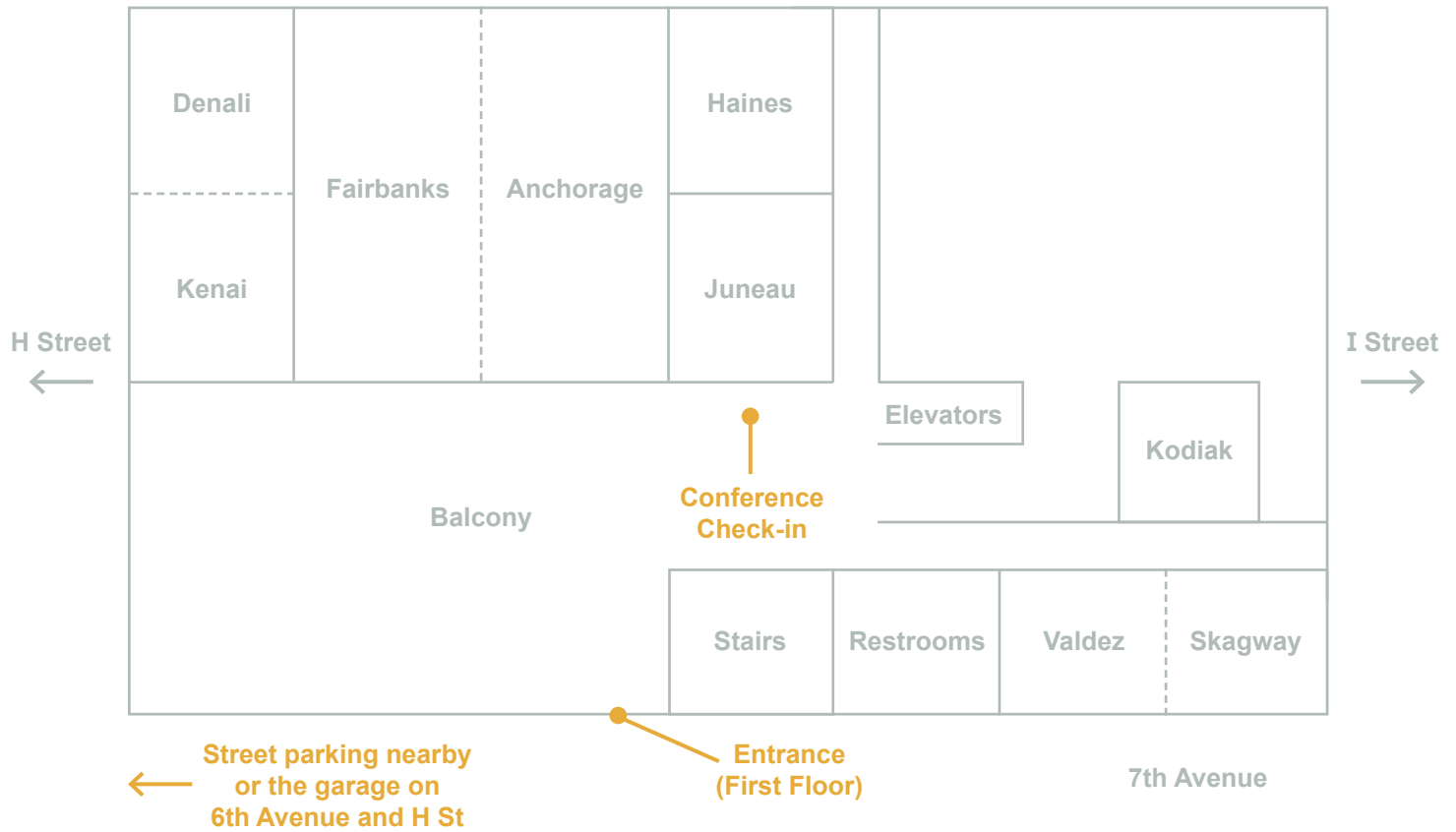
4:30 PM Adjourn



# Conference Center Map

## MARRIOTT ANCHORAGE DOWNTOWN, SECOND FLOOR

820 W 7th Ave, Anchorage, AK 99501 | 907-279-8000



Room:	Kenai-Denali	Fairbanks-Anchorage	Haines	Juneau	Valdez-Skagway
<b>Sessions + Workshops:</b>	<b>Workshops:</b> C1, D1, F2, G1, J3	<b>Sessions:</b> A, B, E, H, I, K, L	<b>Workshops:</b> C4, D4, F1, G4, J2	<b>Workshops:</b> C2, D3, F3, G3, J1	<b>Workshops:</b> C3, D2, G2

# Session Descriptions

## DAY 1: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

### **General Session A: *Fairbanks-Anchorage***

Opening: Welcome from Native Village of Eklutna and Alex Cleghorn, ANJC

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We open with remarks led by Alex Cleghorn, COO of the Alaska Native Justice Center, and respected leaders from the Native Village of Eklutna. Centered around the conference's theme, "It is within us, our culture protects and heals us," this inaugural session aims to orient and ground attendees in the vital link between our Alaska Native cultures and our children's well-being. Acknowledging the crucial work being done in our communities, this session sets the stage for days of inspiration, learning, and collaboration. Come ready to connect and to embrace the empowering narrative that our culture is our strength.

### **General Session B (10:30 AM): *Fairbanks-Anchorage***

For the Love of Our Children: Re-centering Indigenous Relational Knowledge | *Jessica Saniguq Ullrich*

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Jessica will share what has been learned through research efforts involving the development of an Indigenous Connectedness Framework and the application of it to intervention development, language revitalization work, and child welfare/education systems change. All communities have their own sacred knowledges to harness and implement in exponentially powerful ways.

## DAY 2: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

### **General Session E (9:00 AM): *Fairbanks-Anchorage***

Outcome of Brackeen – Now what? | *Erin Dougherty-Lynch*

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The Supreme Court's 7-2 ruling in *Haaland v. Brackeen* affirmed ICWA's constitutionality, a pivotal moment for tribal sovereignty and child welfare. Join Erin Dougherty-Lynch to explore the case's immediate and long-term implications for Native families and tribal governance. Learn how this landmark decision paves the way for enhanced ICWA compliance and what it means for the future of Native children and communities.

### **General Session H (3:30 PM): *Fairbanks-Anchorage***

Alaska Blanket Exercise: Indigenous Storywork of Healing Trauma | *Jaclynne Qalukisaq Richards, Amber Frasure*

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The Alaska Blanket Exercise (ABE) is Indigenous storywork, a healing methodology of story listening and storytelling. Story is a space created by the interaction to create meaning in relation to context. Storywork is a dynamic dialogic interaction in which co-creation of meaning is developed imbedded in local and cultural context. Indigenous storywork is key to knowledge transmission, identity development and healing from traumatic experiences. This presentation will cover the development, adaptation, and evaluation outcomes of the ABE as well as an in depth process of the Photovoice project, an evaluation method that is grounded in advocacy.

- Participants will be able to explain two key themes of the Alaska Blanket Exercise evaluation findings.
- Participants will understand Photovoice in the context of the Alaska Blanket Exercise program.



# Session Descriptions

## DAY 3: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

### **General Session I (9:00 AM): Fairbanks-Anchorage**

State and Tribal Court Collaboration: A conversation with Chief Judge Abby Abinanti, Yurok Tribal Court

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Before Judge Abby Abinanti founded the Yurok Tribal Court, she served on the San Francisco Superior Court for two decades. Come hear from Judge Abinanti how The Yurok Tribal Court has become a model for Tribal Courts throughout the United States. Judge Abinanti will share her views on restorative justice and the strengths and impacts of the Yurok Tribal Court being rooted in the culture values of fairness and responsibility.

### **General Session K (1:30 PM): Fairbanks-Anchorage**

Why We Hurt - Healing for the Next 500 Generations | *Amber Webb*

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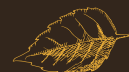
Why We Hurt - Healing for the Next 500 Generations brings us into our ancestral community structure through genocide then into ancestral healing. Through this process, we invite participants to feel supported by the genius of our ancestral teachings about community and connection as we reclaim that structure to heal the next 500 generations. In this presentation we walk participants through the Yupik Community Structure Exercise inspired by Calricaraq teachings with permission from Rose Domnick. We discuss systemic factors that have separated us and continue to limit access to connection and healing in our communities. We consider the list of physiological responses to trauma based on the 21 Behavioral Characteristics compiled by Jane Middleton Moz and reframed by Christina Love as survival tactics that kept us alive until we could find better ways. Finally, we think collectively about how survival roles show up in community and invite participants to share ancestral approaches to supporting people in healing.

### **General Session L (2:45 PM): Fairbanks-Anchorage**

Nurturing Futures: Healing-Centered Practices in Indigenous Child Welfare | *Christina Love*

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Christina's remarkable journey of survival and rise to internationally renowned speaker, educator, consultant, recovery/addiction coach, and human rights advocate embodies the spirit of transformation and authenticity, testifying to the strength of relationships, culture, and communal bonds. In this captivating session, Christina will lead us through a profound exploration of the transition from trauma-informed approaches to making healing the center of our practices and way of being. Realize how every interaction, conference, and connection holds the potential for healing. Discover how traditional values and innovative practices intertwine to create a foundation of support for children and families. This keynote aims to spark meaningful conversations, inspire collaboration, and equip attendees with actionable tools to drive positive change in tribal child welfare, ensuring a brighter future for many generations to come.



# Keynote Speakers



## **ABBY ABINANTI, CHIEF JUDGE OF THE YUOK TRIBE**

The honorable Abby Abinanti is an enrolled Yurok Tribal member, holds a Doctor of Jurisprudence from the University of New Mexico School of Law, and was the first California tribal woman to be admitted to the State Bar of California. She was a State Judicial Officer (Commissioner) for the San Francisco Superior Court for over 17 years assigned to the Unified Family Court (Family/Dependency/Delinquency). She retired from the Superior Court in September 2011 and on July 31, 2014 was reappointed as a part-time Commissioner for San Francisco assigned to Dependency, and Duty Judge for that Court where she served until 2015. She has been a Yurok Tribal Court Judge since 1997 and was appointed Chief Tribal Court Judge in 2007, a position she held in conjunction with her Superior Court assignment until 2015.



## **ALEX CLEGHORN**

Alex Cleghorn is the Chief Operating Officer of the Alaska Native Justice Center, where he champions justice initiatives for Alaska Native communities. He has devoted his 20 years of legal practice to representing Native people, Tribes, and Tribal Organizations. In particular, he has served as General Counsel for Southcentral Foundation, Assistant Attorney General and a Special Assistant to the Alaska Attorney General. Of Sugpiaq descent, Alex is a tribal citizen of Tangirnaq Native Village, a shareholder of Natives of Kodiak, Koniag Incorporated and Cook Inlet Region Inc, and he is also a Director of Koniag Corporation. He also presides as President of the Woody Island Tribal Council, the governing body of the Tangirnaq Native Village. Based in Anchorage, Alex balances his professional life with his role as a husband and father.



## **ERIN DOUGHERTY-LYNCH**

Erin Dougherty-Lynch is the Managing Attorney of NARF's Anchorage office, specializing in federal Indian law. She leads NARF's efforts to protect the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), and recently served as counsel of record in the landmark *Haaland v. Brackeen* case. Erin also advocates for Alaska Native subsistence rights and tribal sovereignty. She joined NARF in 2009 and is a member of multiple federal and state bars.



## **AMBER FRASURE**

Amber Frasure is graduate research assistant at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC). Amber has worked with ANTHC for 3 years in the behavioral health department on programs related to addiction, stigma and historical oppression focused on promoting healing centered systems and breaking histories of harm. Notably, she works on programs including the Alaska Blanket Exercise and the Addiction Medicine ECHO training series. She is passionate about her clinical work with adults from diverse cultural backgrounds who experience co-occurring severe mental illness and substance use disorders. She moved to Dena'ina lands in 2017 where she earned her Masters of Science in Clinical Psychology and is a third-year doctoral student in the Clinical-Community Psychology program at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

# Keynote Speakers



## CHRISTINA LOVE

Christina Love, a proud Alutiiq/Sugpiaq woman (she/her), brings her authentic voice and transformative spirit as an internationally acclaimed speaker, educator, consultant, recovery coach, and human rights activist. Born in Fairbanks, with ancestral ties to Egegik and Chitina, Alaska, Christina embodies the strength of her heritage and each community that shaped and grew her. Committed to systems change and advocating for marginalized populations, her journey stems from experiences as an adult and child survivor, formerly incarcerated individual in recovery, and overcoming homelessness and disabilities. As an educator and storyteller, Christina focuses on trauma, substance use, and mental health's intersection, emphasizing individual and community healing. She leads a movement to end violence, oppression, and stigma through the liberation of education, community healing, and storytelling.



## JACLYNNE QALUKISAQ RICHARDS

Jaclynne Qalukisaq Richards is Iñupiaq from Kiana. Her professional background includes nine years of service at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. Jaclynne works as a Program Manager in the Behavioral Health Department, where she oversees strategic development for the Alaska Blanket Exercise (ABE) Program. Jaclynne holds her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Alaska Anchorage and her Master of Science in Counseling Psychology from Alaska Pacific University.



## JESSICA SANIGUQ ULLRICH, MSW, PHD

Jessica Saniguq Ullrich, MSW, PhD, is a Tribal citizen of Nome Eskimo Community, and a proud mother of 2 teenage daughters. Jessica worked in the Alaska child welfare system in various positions before obtaining her PhD from University of Washington. As an Assistant Professor at Washington State University in the Institute for Research and Education to Advance Community Health (IREACH) program, she focuses on the promotion of connectedness, wellbeing, relational healing, and social/environmental justice.



## AMBER WEBB

Amber Webb is a Yup'ik and Scandinavian tribal member who resides in Aleknagik, Alaska and grew up between Anchorage and Dillingham. She is an artist and has worked as the OUD Peer Support Coordinator at BBAHC since 2022. She was awarded the Choggiung LTD Shareholder of the year award, the BBNC shareholder of the year award and the Walter Soboleff Warrior of Light Award in 2019 for her advocacy to end violence against native women. In 2018, she was awarded a Rasmuson Foundation Individual Project Award for the Qaspeq Project in honor of MMIWG2S+ that she hopes to bring to more communities in Canada and the US. Her artwork visually explores the evolution, strength and sovereignty of indigenous people as we continue to survive genocide and racism. She is deeply invested in community healing from lateral and internalized oppression and protecting native land and people from exploitation by building on our strengths using Yupiaq teachings from elders across Southwest Alaska.

# Acknowledgements

## WITH GRATITUDE:

### All keynote and workshop presenters

#### Conference Advisory Committee members:

Eva Kapotak and Emma Sullivan from Bristol Bay Native Association  
Will Kronick from Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska  
Deborah Northburg from Cook Inlet Tribal Council  
Maria Guerra with Kenaitze Indian Tribe

#### Alaska Native Justice Center staff:

Alex Cleghorn, Casey Groat, Chad Holt, Josh Ahsoak, Maggie Massey,  
Haley Dampier, Laurel Foster, Catherine McGlashan, and Raven Stewman

#### Cook Inlet Tribal Council staff:

Fiona Brosnan, Nathaniel Benton, Thomas McIntyre

#### Agnew::Beck Consulting staff:

Tanya Iden, Josh Hemsath, Savannah Alfieri

#### Staff of the Marriott Anchorage Downtown

## WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

Scan the QR code or follow the link below to complete a quick 5 minute survey. Your answers will help us learn what we did well and how we can improve for our next conference!

[www.research.net/r/2023AKTCWFeedback](http://www.research.net/r/2023AKTCWFeedback)



# Participating Organizations

Alakanuk Tribe	Kodiak Area Native Association	Native Village of Tetlin
Alaska Center for Resource Families	Kokhanok Village Council	Native Village of Unalakleet
Alaska Department of Family and Community Services	Maniilaq Association	Native Village of White Mountain
Alaska Legal Services Corporation	Manokotak Village Council	Newhalen Tribal Council
Alaska Native Justice Center	Mentasta Traditional Council	Nome Eskimo Community
Aleut Community of Saint Paul Island Tribal Government	Native Village of Afognak	Nulato Tribal Council
Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association	Native Village of Barrow	Orutsararmiut Native Council
Algaaciq Tribe	Native Village of Chitina	Pitka's Point Traditional Council
Asa'carsarmiut Tribal Council	Native Village of Diomede	Portage Creek Village (Ohgsenakale)
Association of Village Council Presidents	Native Village of Eklutna	Seldovia Village Tribe
Beaver Village Council	Native Village of Eyak	Southcentral Foundation
Bristol Bay Native Association	Native Village of Gakona	Stebbins Community Association
Casey Family Programs	Native Village of Gambell	Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak
Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska	Native Village of Kotzebue	Tanana Chiefs Conference
Chevak Native Village	Native Village of Koyuk	Tanana Tribe
Chignik Lagoon Tribe	Native Village of Kwigillingok	The Kuskokwim Corporation
Cook Inlet Tribal Council	Native Village of Kwinhagak	Tok Native Association
Copper River Native Association	Native Village of Mary's Igloo	Traditional Council of Togiak
Egegik Village	Native Village of Noatak	UAA Child Welfare Academy
Grayling Tribe	Native Village of Port Heiden	University of Alaska Anchorage
Healy Lake	Native Village of Savoonga	US Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime
Kawerak, Inc.	Native Village of Shishmaref	Village of Kaltag
Kenaitze Indian Tribe	Native Village of St. Michael	Yakutat Tlingit Tribe
Kipnuk Traditional Council	Native Village of Tanacross	
	Native Village of Tazlina	
	Native Village of Teller	







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