



2024 Alaska Tribal Child Welfare and Tribal Justice Conference



**Strengthening Our Roots,
Honoring Our Children:**

**Implementing Culturally Responsive Practices
for Tribal Justice and Tribal Child Welfare**

September 9-11, 2024





Welcome

to the

Alaska Tribal Child Welfare and Tribal Justice Conference

Dear Conference Attendees,

Cama'i – On behalf of the Alaska Native Justice Center, I would like to welcome you to the 2024 Alaska Tribal Child Welfare & Tribal Justice Conference. This year's theme, "Strengthening Our Roots, Honoring Our Children: Implementing Culturally Responsive Practices for Tribal Justice and Tribal Child Welfare," reaffirms our commitment to our traditional values and recognizes the connection between our cultures and the well-being of our children and communities.

We are grateful for the team that has worked tirelessly to bring this conference to fruition: our ANJC staff, Toast of the Town, our Conference Advisory Committee, keynote and workshop speakers, and each one of you attending this important gathering. The work you do every day is invaluable, and we thank you for your commitment to serving the children and families in your communities. It is through your efforts that our people will continue to heal, grow, and thrive for generations to come.

I am grateful for this opportunity to connect, learn, and draw inspiration from one another. We hope this conference will serve as a wellspring of ideas, foster collaboration, and leave you feeling energized and equipped to continue the vital work you do each day. Thank you for being here and for your dedication to strengthening our Tribal justice and child welfare systems.

Quyanaasinaq,

Alex Cleghorn
Chief Operating Officer
Alaska Native Justice Center



Day 1

Monday, September 9, 2024

8:30 AM Registration and Check In Open

9:30 AM Welcome Remarks and Opening Presentations

*Alex Cleghorn, Alaska Native Justice Center
Aaron Leggett, Native Village of Eklutna
Gloria O'Neill, Cook Inlet Tribal Council*

10:15 AM Break

10:30 AM A Conversation with Chief Judge Abby Abinanti

Abby Abinanti, Yurok Tribal Court

12:00 PM Lunch on your Own

1:30 PM Concurrent Workshops

***Kenai-Denali
Room***

**Panel of the ICWA
State Tribal
Partnership Best
Practices Grant**

*Alaska Federation of
Natives and Tribal
Partners*

***Juneau
Room***

**ICWA Case Stages in
State Court and
Permanency Options**

*Samantha Cherot,
Alaska Native Justice
Center*

***Haines
Room***

**Tribal Court
Authority, Laws, and
Structures**

*Lily Cohen, Alaska
Native Justice Center*

***Valdez-Skagway
Room***

**Understanding the
Federal Tribal Access
Program and State
of Alaska
Information
Exchange
Agreement for Tribal
Protection Orders**

*Alex Cleghorn, Alaska
Native Justice Center*

3:00 PM Break

3:15 PM Closing Presentation: Performance by The Eklutna Dance Group



Day 2

Tuesday, September 10, 2024

8:30 AM Registration and Check In Open

9:00 AM Welcome Back!

9:05 AM Introduction to Healthy Outcomes from Positive Childhood Experiences (HOPE)

Eliza Posner, Alaska Children's Trust

10:15 AM Break

10:30 AM Concurrent Workshops

Kenai-Denali Room

The Role of Tribes in the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) Process

Traci McGarry, Kawerak, Inc.

Juneau Room

Transforming Child Welfare: Impact of OCS and Tribal Partnerships

Robin Charlie and Tasha Yatchmeneff, Office of Children's Services

Haines Room

Enforcement of Tribal Court Orders

Lily Cohen, Alaska Native Justice Center

Valdez-Skagway Room

The Role of Qualified Expert Witnesses

Joshua Ahsoak, Alaska Native Justice Center

12:00 PM Lunch on your Own

1:30 PM Peer Support in Practice: Panel Discussion on Strategies for Supporting Parents in Recovery

Toni Bermudez, Samantha Morgan, Ronald Shugak, and Amy Urbach, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Recovery and Reentry Services Peer Support Program

3:00 PM Break

3:15 PM For the Love of Our Children: Re-Centering Indigenous Relational Knowledge

Jessica Ullrich, Washington State University



Day 3

Wednesday, September 11, 2024

8:30 AM Registration and Check In Open

9:00 AM Welcome Back!

9:05 AM The Alaska Inter-Tribal Working Group and Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization of 2022

Alex Cleghorn, Alaska Native Justice Center

10:15 AM Break

10:30 AM Concurrent Workshops

Kenai-Denali Room

Cultural Support Services

Diane Selanoff and Tasha Yatchmeneff, Office of Children's Services

Juneau Room

Therapeutic Benefits of Beading and Other Traditional Crafts

Dawn Harris, Native Village of Eklutna

Haines Room

Enforcement of Tribal Court Orders

Lily Cohen, Alaska Native Justice Center

Valdez-Skagway Room

Understanding the Federal Tribal Access Program and State of Alaska Information Exchange Agreement for Tribal Protection Orders

Paige Meadows, Alaska Native Justice Center

12:00 PM Lunch on your Own

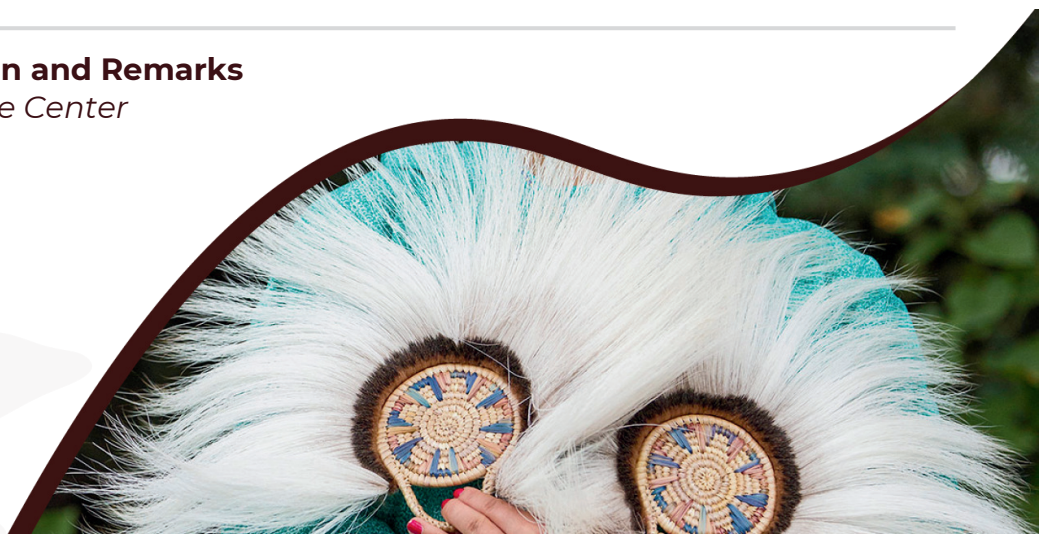
1:30 PM Domestic Violence, Tribal Child Welfare, and the ICWA: Challenges and Opportunities

Tamra (Tami) Truett Jerue, Alaska Native Women's Resource Center

3:00 PM Break

3:15 PM Closing Presentation and Remarks

Alaska Native Justice Center



Session Descriptions

Day 1 | Monday, September 9, 2024

10:30 AM | A Conversation with Chief Judge Abby Abinanti, Yurok Tribal Court

Abby Abinanti, Yurok Tribal Court

Join us for a keynote session with the Honorable Chief Judge Abby Abinanti, a trailblazing figure in Tribal justice. As the first Native American woman admitted to the State Bar of California and a citizen of the Yurok Tribe, Judge Abby has dedicated her career to advancing Tribal Courts. After serving on the San Francisco Superior Court, she returned to her roots to transform the Yurok Tribal Court into a model of culturally responsive justice.

Judge Abby 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.

Day 2 | Tuesday, September 10, 2024

9:05 AM | Introduction to Healthy Outcomes from Positive Childhood Experiences (HOPE)

Eliza Posner, Alaska Children's Trust

Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) can mitigate the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and help children and youth grow into more resilient, healthier adults. Introduction to Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences (HOPE) helps child-serving and family-serving providers identify ways they can build these crucial positive experiences and ensure all families have the support they need to grow their strengths.

In this session, participants will explore the research on ACEs and PCEs and think through how they can incorporate the HOPE framework into their work.

1:30 PM | Peer Support in Practice: Panel Discussion on Strategies for Supporting Parents in Recovery

*Toni Bermudez, Samantha Morgan, Ronald Shugak, and Amy Urbach,
Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Recovery and Reentry Services Peer Support Program*

Join us for an insightful discussion with peer support specialists from the Cook Inlet Tribal Council Peer Support Recovery program. These dedicated individuals, all with personal recovery journeys, will share how they provide vital guidance and support to those currently in treatment. Learn strategies and practical tips that can empower you to better assist parents who are navigating substance abuse treatment programs.

Session Descriptions

Day 2 | Continued...

3:30 PM | For the Love of Our Children: Re-Centering Indigenous Relational Knowledge

Jessica Ullrich, Washington State University

In this session, Jessica Ullrich 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 knowledge to harness and implement in exponentially powerful ways.

Day 3 | Wednesday, September 11, 2024

9:05 AM | The Alaska Inter-Tribal Working Group and Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization of 2022

Alex Cleghorn, Alaska Native Justice Center

This session will explore the changes brought about by the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2022 (VAWA 2022) regarding Tribal jurisdiction in Alaska. Participants will gain insights into the expansion of Tribal jurisdiction under VAWA 2022, the newly established Alaska Pilot Program, and the role and function of the Alaska Inter-Tribal Technical Assistance Working Group (ITWG).

1:30 PM | Domestic Violence, Tribal Child Welfare, and the ICWA: Challenges and Opportunities

Tamra (Tami) Truett Jerue, Alaska Native Women's Resource Center

This session will explore the intersection of domestic violence and the child welfare system. Participants will gain insights into the multifaceted impacts of domestic violence on children and families and examine how the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) can serve as both a protective tool and, at times, an unintended barrier.



Keynote Speakers



Honorable Chief Judge Abby Abinanti | *Yurok Tribal Court*

Born in San Francisco and raised in Humboldt County, Abby Abinanti, affectionately known as “Judge Abby” in Indian Country, is a citizen of the Yurok Tribe. She is also the first Native American woman admitted to the State Bar of California and the first California Tribal citizen to serve as a judicial officer of the state.

After serving as a San Francisco Superior Court Judge in the Unified Family Court, Judge Abby dedicated her expertise to building the Yurok Tribal Court into one of the most advanced tribal justice systems in the United States.

Departing from the traditional adversarial model, she created a restorative justice system that replaced individual rights with the Yurok Tribe’s values of collective responsibility to and for the community as a whole. Judge Abby’s vision transformed a system that perpetuated a cycle of poverty and punishment into an expression of who the Yurok people were before they were given the name Yurok. She helped to reclaim their identities as fishermen, basket weavers, storytellers, dancers, healers, medicine people – the ‘O’loolekweesh ‘o’l.

Her contributions to tribal justice perfectly embody the theme of our conference, “Strengthening Our Roots, Honoring Our Children: Implementing Culturally Responsive Practices for Tribal Justice and Tribal Child Welfare.” We are honored to have Judge Abby share her wisdom and expertise at this year’s conference.



Alex Cleghorn | *Alaska Native Justice Center*

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 and a shareholder of Natives of Kodiak, Koniag Incorporated and Cook Inlet Region Inc. He is also a Director of Koniag Corporation and 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.

Keynote Speakers



Aaron Leggett | *Native Village of Eklutna*

Aaron Leggett has served as the President of the Native Village of Eklutna since January 2018. He also serves as Senior Curator of Alaska History and Indigenous Cultures at the Anchorage Museum and advises the Smithsonian's Arctic Studies Center. He sits on several boards and committees, including the Alaska State Museum Collections committee and the Alaska Historical Society.

Drawing from his Dena'ina heritage and anthropology degree from UAA, Aaron has significantly contributed to indigenous curation in Alaska, authoring scholarly articles and co-authoring publications on Dena'ina language and culture.



Gloria O'Neill | *Cook Inlet Tribal Council*

Serving as President and Chief Executive Officer for Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) since 1998, Gloria O'Neill has led the organization's growth in becoming one of the most effective service providers in Alaska and the nation.

CITC provides more than 50 essential programs serving more than 12,500 Alaska Native and American Indian people each year. Through rigorous attention to community-based results, Ms. O'Neill has established CITC's national reputation as a leading innovator of replicable and effective service models for culturally informed education, workforce development, family preservation, and substance dependency.

Through its for-profit subsidiary, CITC Enterprises Inc. (CEI), CITC has established an innovative model of sustainability, breaking new ground in social enterprise and impact investing. Under Ms. O'Neill's leadership, CEI launched the first-of-its-kind puzzle-platform video game, "Never Alone (Kisima Injitchuᅇa)" with global acclaim.

Ms. O'Neill served on the University of Alaska Board of Regents from 2012 – 2020 and is a director for the ANJC board. She also serves at the federal level on the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children.

Ms. O'Neill earned her Master of Business Administration degree from Alaska Pacific University and received her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, with a minor in Business Administration, from the University of Alaska Anchorage.

Originally from Soldotna, Ms. O'Neill is of Yup'ik, Sámi and Irish descent.

Keynote Speakers



Eliza Posner | *Alaska Children's Trust*

Eliza Posner is the Director of Strategy at the Alaska Children's Trust. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Northwestern University in 2021. At ACT, she helps lead strategic initiatives focused on the primary prevention of child abuse and neglect.



Toni Bermudez | *Cook Inlet Tribal Council*

Toni Bermudez is Koyukon and Deg Xinag Athabaskan from HolyCross, Anvik and Galena. She has resided in Anchorage since 1994, was in active addiction for 20 years, and currently has been in recovery for 9 years. She works as a professional in recovery services helping anyone who is facing addiction to walk beside them and with them to find a place to start the healing process. Her message is that anyone who is in the grips of addiction can find a way out into the light.



Samantha Morgan | *Cook Inlet Tribal Council*

Samantha is a mother in long-term sobriety. She has four children and has been involved with OCS numerous times. She is blessed to share her experience, strength, and hope with families.



Ronald Shugak | *Cook Inlet Tribal Council*

Ronald has been employed with CITC since December 2022 and has used his personal experience in addiction and recovery to further help participants who are struggling and/or looking into getting into treatment. To Ronald, being a peer means being able to reach someone in their most vulnerable state and having the ability to empathize with the participant.



Amy Urbach | *Cook Inlet Tribal Council*

Amy is a mother of three adult children and a pet mom. Her career consists of meeting people where they're at, encouraging recovery, supporting the journey, and teaching others. She is currently in the BSW program at UAA and an advocate and friend to those struggling with substance use and mental health issues. As a person in long term recovery, she strives to be the person she needed most when she started her own journey.



Keynote Speakers



Jessica Ullrich | *Washington State University*

Jessica Saniguq Ullrich is a mom, Tribal citizen of Nome Eskimo Community, descendant of the Native Village of Wales, and an Assistant Professor at Washington State University in the IREACH program. Dr. Ullrich previously worked in child welfare in Alaska, and her passion is to help promote the health and wellbeing of Indigenous children, families, communities, past/future generations, and the Earth.



Tamra (Tami) Truett Jerue | *Alaska Native Women's Resource Center*

As Executive Director of the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (AKNWRC), Tami Truett Jerue brought 40+ years of direct services experience to this journey, beginning with the formation of AKNWRC in 2016.

Ms. Jerue has testified before Congress and the United Nations, bringing attention to the disproportionate rates of violence experienced by Alaska Native women and the lack of resources faced by tribes. Under her management, the AKNWRC has become a voice for Alaska Native issues, particularly affecting women, children and families, telling truths to promote understanding, building partnerships, and most importantly, supporting Alaska Native tribes as they tackle the complex issues of interpersonal violence.

Ms. Jerue has a Bachelor's degree in Social Work and Master's work in Community Psychology. She worked for the Anvik Tribal Council in Tribal Administration, Indian Child Protection, Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault (DV/SA) and Counseling/Advocacy.

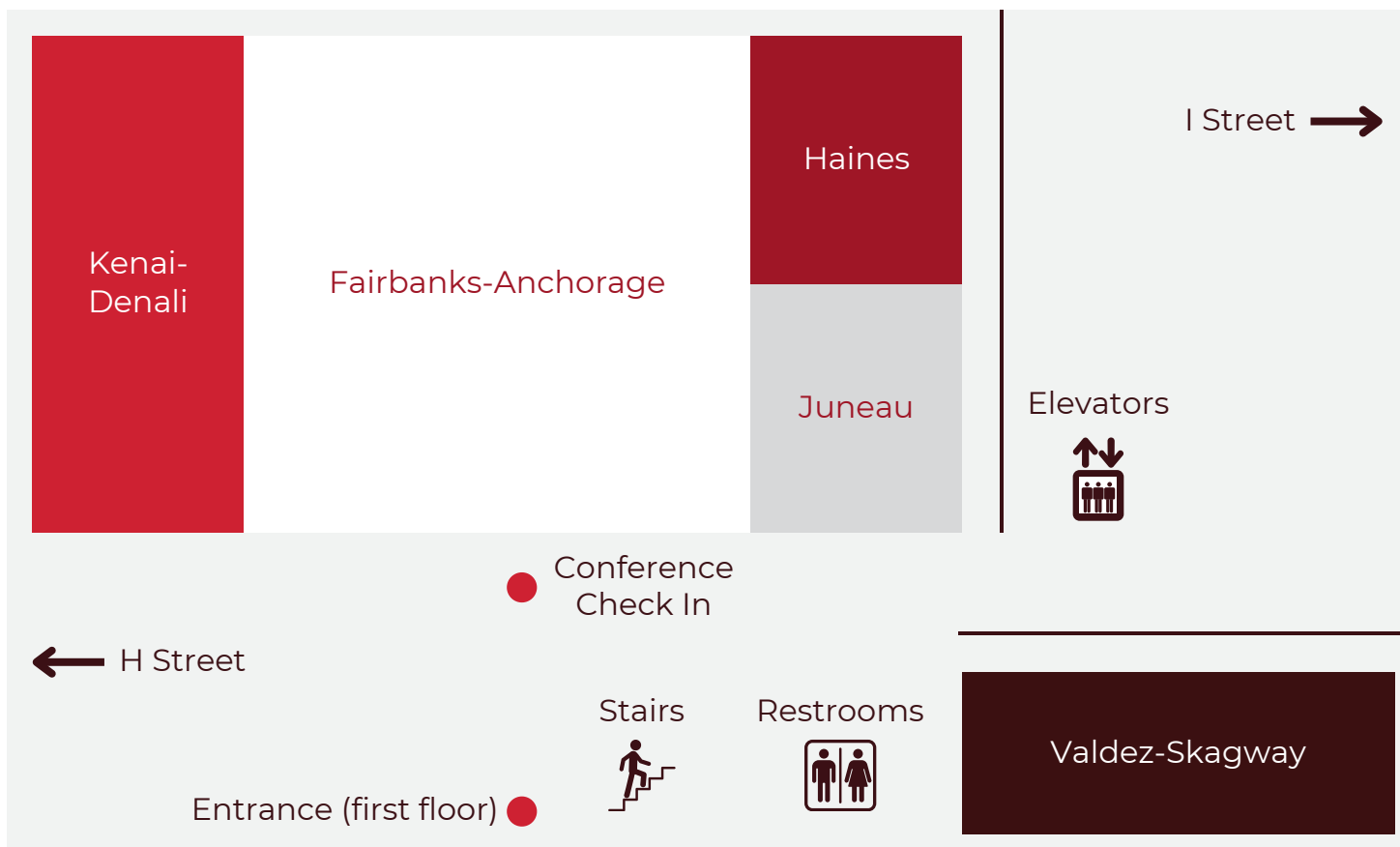


Conference Center Map

Marriott Anchorage Downtown

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

Second Floor



Kenai-Denali

- Panel of the ICWA State Tribal Partnership Best Practices Grant
- The Role of Tribes in the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) Process
- Cultural Support Services

Juneau

- ICWA Case Stages in State Court and Permanency Options
- Transforming Child Welfare: Impact of OCS and Tribal Partnerships
- Therapeutic Benefits of Beading and Other Traditional Crafts

Haines

- Tribal Court Authority, Laws, and Structures
- Enforcement of Tribal Court Orders

Valdez-Skagway

- Understanding the Federal Tribal Access Program and State of Alaska Information Exchange Agreement for Tribal Protection Orders
- The Role of Qualified Expert Witnesses

Acknowledgements

With gratitude to:

All keynote and workshop presenters

Conference advisory committee members

- Rachel Espejo, Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
- Maria Guerra, Kenaitze Indian Tribe
- Dawn Harris, Native Village of Eklutna
- Kimberly Kirchner, Kenaitze Indian Tribe
- Deborah Northburg, Cook Inlet Tribal Council

Alaska Native Justice Center staff

- Josh Ahsoak
- Kortnee Carmack
- Samantha Cherot
- Alex Cleghorn
- Lily Cohen
- Haley Dampier
- Chad Holt
- Sherilyn Leone
- Delaney McLaughlin
- Paige Meadows
- Kelsey Potdevin

Cook Inlet Tribal Council staff

- Fiona Brosnan
- Gloria O'Neill
- Wynton Sparks

Toast of the Town consulting staff

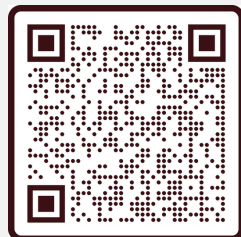
- Sarah Buehler
- Wendy Carpenter
- Martha Keele

Marriott Anchorage Downtown staff

We want your feedback!

SESSION SURVEY

Scan the QR code to complete a short survey following each session:



EVENT SURVEY

Scan the QR code to complete a short survey following the conference:



Your responses will help us learn what we did well and how we can improve for our next conference!

Notes



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ALASKA NATIVE

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JUSTICE CENTER

2024 Alaska Tribal Child Welfare
and Tribal Justice Conference