

The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of several bright yellow flowers with dark brown centers, set against a slightly blurred background of more flowers and green foliage. The overall tone is warm and natural.

WELCOME

Monday, September 9, 2024, 1:30-3:00 pm

Marriott Hotel, Anchorage, AK

ICWA State-Tribal Partnership Best Practices Grant: An AFN, Tribal,
and State Partnership

Overview

- Introductions
- ICWA Grant Background
- Vision of the Work Under the Grant
- Partnership Teaming Structure
- Initiative Goals
- Initiative Update - Where we are at
- Next Steps for this 5-year Grant



Presenter Introductions

Tribal Partners

- **Lola Tobuk**, Nome Eskimo Community, Family Services Program Director
- **Amanda McAdoo**, Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Inc., Dept. of Family & Community Development, Family Services Administrator
- **Terri Coletta**, Aleut Community of Saint Paul, Director of Community Safety and Peace

State of Alaska

- **Kim Guay**, Office of Children's Services, Director

Alaska Court System

- **Mara Rabinowitz**, Alaska Court System, Special Projects Coordinator

Alaska Federation of Natives

- **Jessica Saniguq Ullrich**, WSU, IREACH Program



Background: Federal Grant Funding

- Five-year Discretionary Competitive grant through DHHS Administration on Children, Youth, and Families – Children’s Bureau
- Focus is on system changes to improve family preservation and reunification rates through the implementation of ICWA best practices
- Children’s Bureau gave 5 awards nationwide to begin in Federal FY24 (October 2023)



Background: Initiative Purpose

- Reduce the disproportionate number of Alaska Native and American Indian children in foster care
- Generate evidence for how to effectively implement best practices in child welfare
- Co-design, implement and test (evaluate) the ICWA Practice model to ensure transparency, common understanding, collaboration, and trust



Background: Grant Required Partnerships

- State Child Welfare Agency (Alaska Office of Children Services)
- Tribes/Tribal Organization
- State Court Improvement Program



Participating Tribes and Tribal Organizations

Northern

Arctic Slope Native Association

Nome Eskimo Community

Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope

Native Village of Barrow

Native Village of Point Hope

Gulf Coast

Aleutian Pribilofs Islands Association

Aleut Community of Saint Paul

Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak

Southcentral

Chugachmiut

Cook Inlet Tribal Council

Knik Tribe

Southeast

Sitka Tribe of Alaska

Native Village of Eyak

Background: Other Key Partnerships

- Casey Family Programs
- Tribal Frontline Staff
- Facing Foster Care
- Relative providers, elders, and community members with **lived experience**



Initiative Vision

Is to Co-create an ICWA Practice Model that is:

- Community based
- Culturally relevant
- Takes into consideration rural and urban differences in Alaska.

The model will lead to improved outcomes for Alaska Native children, families and communities and:

- Address trauma
- Support connectedness
- Guide the development of a training and coaching curriculum



Teaming Structure and Groups

- AFN Grant Administrative Team
- AFN Child Welfare Team
- Regional Advisory Team
- Core Team
- Regional Advisory Team
- Regional Focus Groups



Teaming Structure: Guiding Principles and Foundation of Meeting Structure: Relational Agreements

- Meet each other where we are at
- Center the humanity and dignity of ourselves and others with kindness and compassion
- Show up with our best and believe that everyone is doing their best- the best possible in the present moment
- Speak our own truth while also recognizing that many things can be true at the same time (both/and)

Stephanie Gutierrez, Hope Nation LLC



Initiative Goals

- **Communication and relationship building** among Initiative partners
- **Data collection**
- **Stabilize implementation of ICWA** across the child welfare spectrum (prevention, custody, to reunification) thru the development of an ICWA Practice Model
- Improve cultural competency and **develop a training curriculum**
- **Records management** of initiative deliverables and curriculum



Initiative Goals: All Throughout the Work

- Communication and Relationship Building among initiative partners
- Evaluation, data collection, analysis and dissemination of findings
- Pre-post surveys, interviews, focus groups- caseworkers, supervisors, service recipients, community partners, court staff



Initiative Update: Phase I – In Progress

- Establishing teaming structure and regular meetings
- Develop questions to ask community members participating in the regional focus groups
- Identify regional focus group participants with lived experience
- Community sharing circles (focus groups)
- Analyzing data
- Sharing results with Tribes and our broader group



Initiative Update: Phase I - Regional Advisory Meetings

- Draft and review questions
- Develop focus group schedules
- IRB Approval
- Organized by cultural regions
 - Gulf Coast
 - Northern
 - Southcentral
 - Southeast



Initiative Update: Phase I - Regional Focus Groups

- Organized by Cultural Regions
- Regional Focus Groups – participants identified with lived experience
- Schedule Regional Focus Groups
- Collect and Analyze Data
- Share Results



Initiative Update: Phase I – Categories for Focus Group Questions - In Progress

- Prevention
- Family Connectedness
- Community Connectedness
- Cultural Connectedness
- Tribal services
- Strengthening families protective factors
- Direct Tribal child welfare practice
- ICWA
- Court



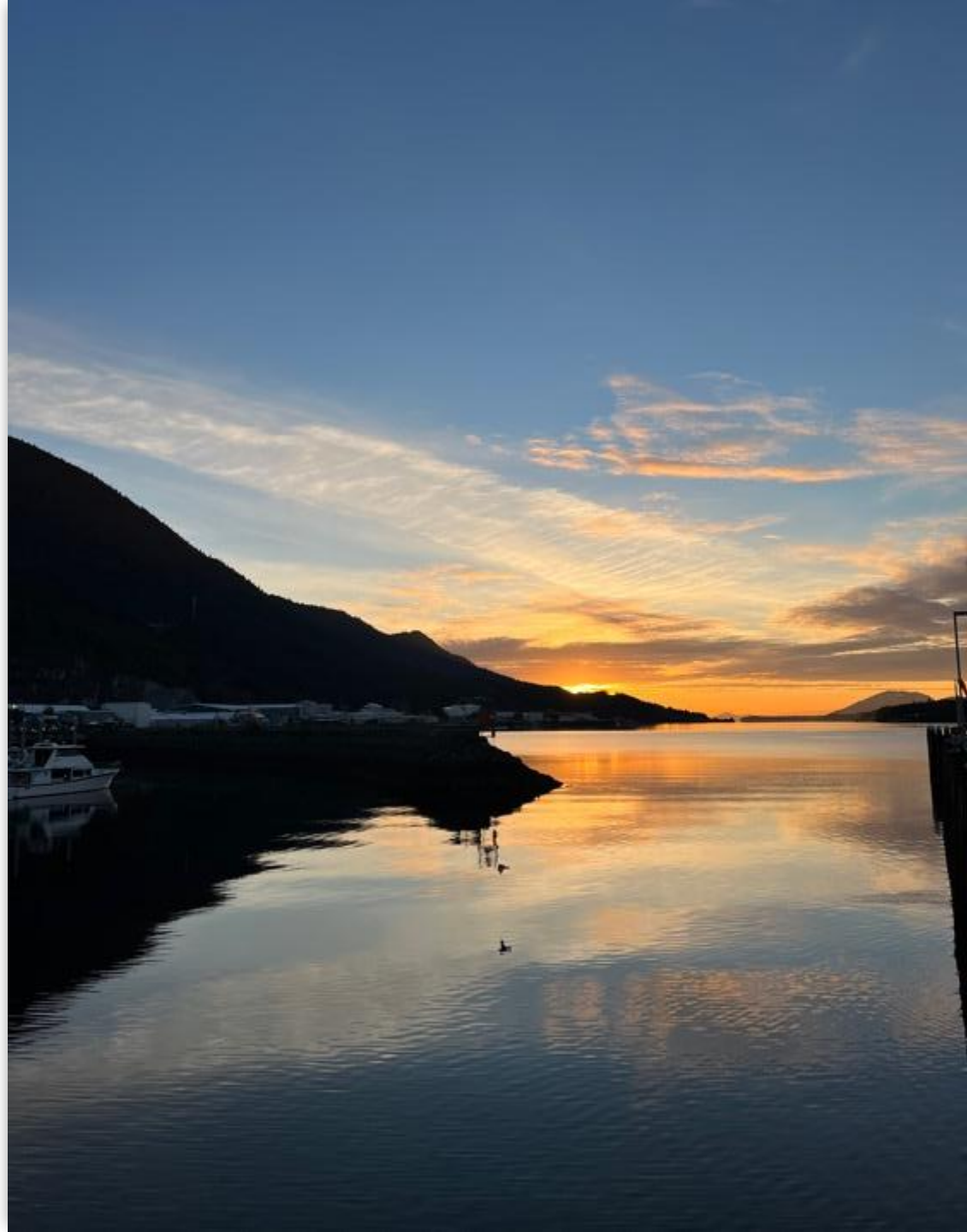
Initiative Update: Sample Court Questions

- How can judges be more compassionate and understanding of families?
- How can judges create a safe space and culturally responsive and respectful space for families to come to?
- How did the legal parties involved impact your experience?
- Did the tribe intervene?
- Did the Tribe have an attorney?
- Did the Tribe participate?
- If parents did not participate, what could have been done to encourage involvement?



Initiative Next Steps: Phase II

- Development of (regional and statewide) ICWA practice model(s)
- Curriculum building



Building a Community Based Relational ICWA Practice Model

- Connectedness Framework (family, community, environmental, intergenerational, spiritual/cultural and internal connectedness)
- ICWA- (prevention, preference placements, active efforts, legal criteria, cultural connectedness)
- Relational Worldview (mind, body, spirit, context)
- Rural v Urban context
- Traditional values (vary by community)
- Strengthening Families Protective Factors (concrete support, social connections, parental resilience, social emotional competence of children, parenting knowledge)

Initiative Next Steps: Phase III – Final Stages

- Training and Coaching- Perhaps involve community partners
- Implementation of the Practice Model in multiple spaces
- Why is this different from other practice models?
 - Full child welfare spectrum (wellbeing to permanency)
 - Inclusion of lived experience
 - Regional Tribal partnerships
 - Community driven





Questions

Initiative Point of Contact Alaska Federation of Natives

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