

# Alaska Federation of Natives

Statewide Briefing



## Week of August 23-27, 2021

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## 2021 AFN Convention To Be Held December 13-15

The Alaska Federation of Natives has selected December 13-15, 2021 for its Annual Convention, which the AFN Board postponed last Tuesday over health and safety concerns which include the sharp resurgence in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations statewide. AFN will continue to plan for an in-person Convention at the Dena'ina Center in Anchorage, with a virtual option. However, the final decision on the in-person aspect of the Convention will be made by the AFN Board in mid-October based on new data and guidance from national, state, and tribal health leaders.

“Because our top priority remains the health and safety of our delegates and other participants, the plan for an in-person convention is contingent on progress made in Anchorage and statewide on getting the COVID-19 pandemic back under control,” said AFN President Julie Kitka. “Critical work is needed by all of us to flatten the curve, expand vaccinations, and practice protective behaviors such as masking.”

“We join Governor Dunleavy in calling on Alaskans to get vaccinated and recognizing the urgent situation our hospitals are facing with the recent spike in cases and hospitalizations,” Kitka said.

“Gathering in the same place and sharing with each other is a very important part of our convention, so we are really hoping Anchorage and Alaska can turn the corner on this pandemic by December,” President and CEO of Bethel Native Corporation and AFN Co-Chair Ana Hoffman said.

Sealaska Chairman and AFN Co-Chair Joe Nelson said, “Postponing until December provides us an opportunity to gather in person on the 50th anniversary of ANCSA, but it all hinges on everyone’s willingness and ability to get vaccinated.”

Sheri Buretta, Chairman of Chugach Alaska Corporation and AFN Convention Committee Chair, said, “We want our Convention plans for December to be an encouragement to Alaskans to double our efforts, get vaccinated, and mask up. We can get through this pandemic together.”

The popular cultural performances known as Quyana Alaska will be held the evenings of Monday, December 13 and Tuesday, December 14, also at the Dena’ina Center. The Native Arts Showcase and Exhibit Hall are planned for the first floor of the Dena’ina Center and will run concurrently with the main session.

For those unable to attend in person, the entire Convention and both Quyana Alaskas will be broadcast live via television, radio, and Internet. In addition, a robust virtual platform and mobile app will be available.

The Annual Convention serves as the principal forum and voice for the Alaska Native community in addressing critical issues of public policy and government. The

Convention convenes thousands of official delegates and participants from membership organizations across the state. AFN Delegates discuss strategic opportunities and challenges, listen to memorable keynote and theme speeches, and hear reports from political leaders and presentations from expert panels. The resolutions passed by the voting delegates set the priorities for the year and guide AFN's efforts. The Convention is the largest representative annual gathering of Native peoples in the United States.

This year's Convention theme is "ANCSA at 50: Empowering Our Future." The passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act fifty years ago was a groundbreaking, remarkable achievement for Alaska. A model around the world of Indigenous self-determination, ANCSA has led to tremendous economic benefits and opportunities for Native people and for all Alaskans.

AFN will proudly celebrate that accomplishment while acknowledging there is plenty more work to be done. This year's theme emphasizes the importance of addressing the collective work ahead of the Native community to empower our people and face the challenges of the future together. Since its passage, ANCSA has been amended in significant and technical ways. AFN recognizes that there is unfinished business and unmet promises, particularly in the area of subsistence rights and food security, public safety and law enforcement, and economic development.

AFN members should look for a new 2021 Convention delegate packet by September 10. Travel discounts will be included in the packet. Official registration is now open for AFN members. [Click here](#) to download the 2021 Convention Delegate Registration Form. Delegates are asked to complete the form and either email it to [delegate@nativefederation.org](mailto:delegate@nativefederation.org) or print it out and mail it to:

Alaska Federation of Natives  
3000 A St., Ste. 210  
Anchorage, AK 99503

## **ARPA Interim Reports Due August 31(Assistance Offered)**

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) interim reports for tribal recipients are due on **Tuesday, August 31, 2021**. Tribal entities that are still navigating the process can view the **Treasury Department's pre-recorded video**, which is about 30 minutes long, by clicking [HERE](#). The video provides a walk through of the Treasury Portal.

### **Treasury Video Timestamps:**

- 4:44 - Reporting basics
- 14:30 - Interim Report – for everyone
- 27:04 - Recovery Plan – Cities and Counties with population over 250,000 residents

If additional assistance is needed, the **Alaska Municipal League** is supporting local and tribal governments. Please visit the [Alaska ARPRA website](#) or the [Alaska Municipal League website](#) for more information, including a lost revenue calculator, compliance support agreement and fee structure, and contact information.

As always, the **Alaska Federation of Natives** is available to help as well. Please contact Sara Peterson, if you have any questions about your ARPA Interim Reports at (907) 441-7967 or [sara.k.peterson@outlook.com](mailto:sara.k.peterson@outlook.com).

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## **Tribal Broadband Connectivity Funding Applications Due September 1**

The deadline to apply for funding for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Tribal Connectivity Broadband Program (TCB) is Wednesday, September 1, 2021.

With new tribally designated funding, NTIA is developing the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP), a \$1 billion program for eligible Native entities to be used for broadband deployment on tribal lands, as well as for telehealth, distance learning, broadband affordability, and digital inclusion. Entities eligible for TBCP grants include tribal governments, tribal organizations, tribal colleges and universities, and Alaska Native corporations.

There are two tracks for funding: Infrastructure Deployment Projects and Adoption and Use Projects. Every Alaska Native tribe and most Native corporations and organizations are eligible for the mandatory minimum \$500,000, non-competitive grant. Native tribes and entities are also eligible for \$25,000 or more to cover the costs of preparing your grant application.

AFN is available to help. Please contact Sara Peterson if you have any questions at (907) 441-7967 or [sara.k.peterson@outlook.com](mailto:sara.k.peterson@outlook.com).

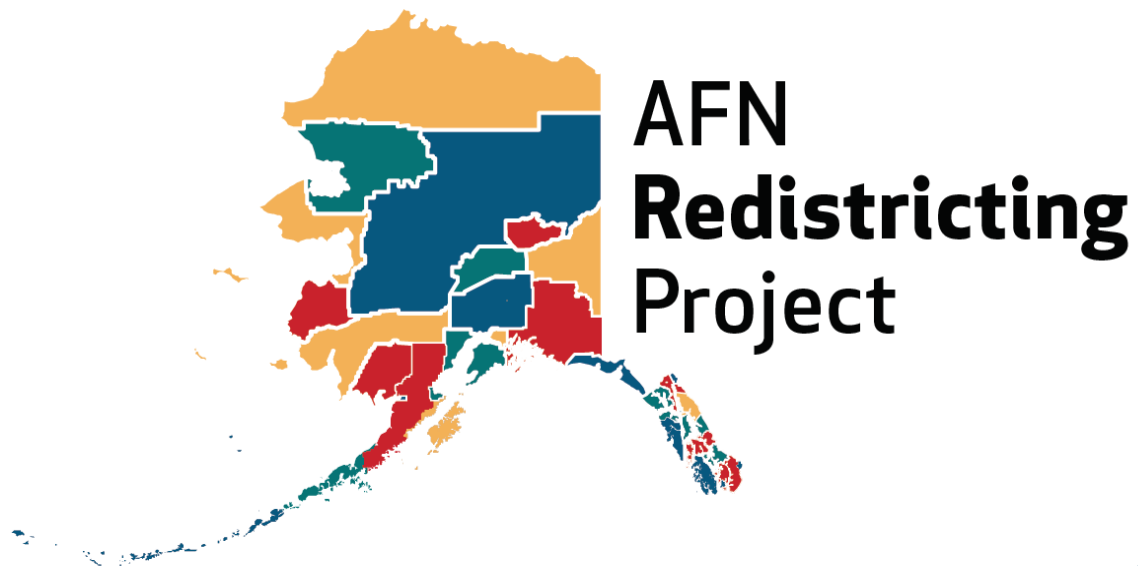
## **Alaska Redistricting Board Sets Schedule For Map Plans**

The five-member Alaska Redistricting Board, tasked with drawing new state legislative boundaries (or districts) based on population data for Alaska, announced on August 23 its plans to have a final map ready by November 10. The Board also indicated plans to have at least one draft completed by September 11.

The state Constitution requires the board to map legislative boundaries every 10 years, after receiving census data. AFN board member and Kawerak President Melanie Bahnke and AFN Executive Vice President and General Counsel Nicole Borromeo serve on the [Alaska Redistricting Board](#).

The board will draw 40 House districts and 20 Senate districts. Until a map is finalized, legislative candidates won't know for sure which district they will be competing in. Each district is expected to have 18,335 residents, plus or minus 5%. Given population changes since the 2010 Census, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough is expected to gain a seat.

The board on Monday began dividing Alaska into geographic regions, which will be divided into districts. The board expects to provide multiple drafts for public review and comment before voting on a final version in November.



## AFN Launches Redistricting Project

AFN has launched the #AFNRedistrictingProject, an educational campaign that will ensure all Alaskans have the opportunity to engage in the redistricting process. The launch coincided with the U.S. Census Bureau's August 12 release of the redistricting data from the #2020Census.

AFN is releasing information throughout the redistricting process to help Alaskans stay informed and involved in their communities. To assist in these efforts, AFN has hired Redistricting Outreach Specialists throughout Alaska to help distribute information in their communities and surrounding areas. Information will be distributed physically in communities, as well as on social media platforms including [AFN's Facebook page](#), where the extremely popular educational PopUps will take place.

@NativeFederation

#FairMap

#RedistrictingAlaska

#OnePersonOneVote

#AFNRedistrictingProject

## Interior Department To Host Tribal Broadband Summit

The U.S. Department of the Interior will host a three-day **National Tribal Broadband Summit**, to take place virtually on Sept 17, Sept 24, and Oct 1. You can find more information and register here: <https://www.doi.gov/tribalbroadband>

This conference is **FREE** and the highlighted topics are:

- Implementing the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant
- Planning for long term success and developing a local tribal workforce
- Technical Solutions for middle mile
- Broadband Use and Adoption



## Alaska Congressman Young and Arizona Congressman O'Halleran Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Extend Deadline for Tribes to Utilize CARES Act Funding

*The following is a press release from Congressman Young's office issued Friday, August 27:*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Representatives Don Young (R-AK-AL) and Tom O'Halleran (D-AZ-01) introduced bipartisan legislation that would extend the coverage of Coronavirus Relief Fund payments allocated under the 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to tribal governments from December 30, 2021 to December 30, 2022.

The CARES Act was signed into law on March 27, 2020, allocating \$8 billion for tribal governments under the Coronavirus Relief Fund. Tribes across America did not receive any funds until May 5, 2020, well after the bill's statutory deadline.

"The CARES Act was an essential piece of legislation that came at a critical time. But for all assistance it provided for Alaska Native and Native American communities, bureaucratic red tape has delayed the disbursement of these critically needed funds," said Young. "It has been nearly a year and a half since the CARES Act became law. Time is running out both to dispense relief funding, and for tribal organizations to utilize it. I am proud to introduce legislation with my friend, Congressman Tom O'Halleran, to extend the deadline by which relief money must be spent. Our First Peoples were hit hard by the pandemic, and without adequate time to utilize these funds, their recovery becomes more difficult. We cannot allow this to become a reality; I call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this important legislation."

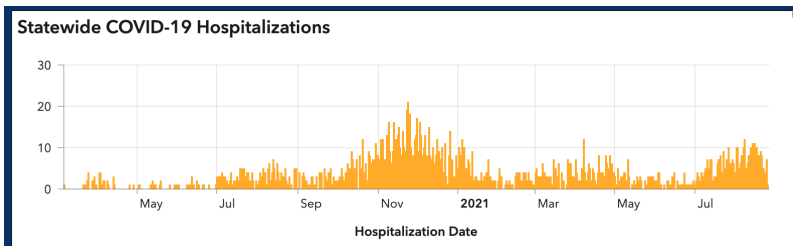
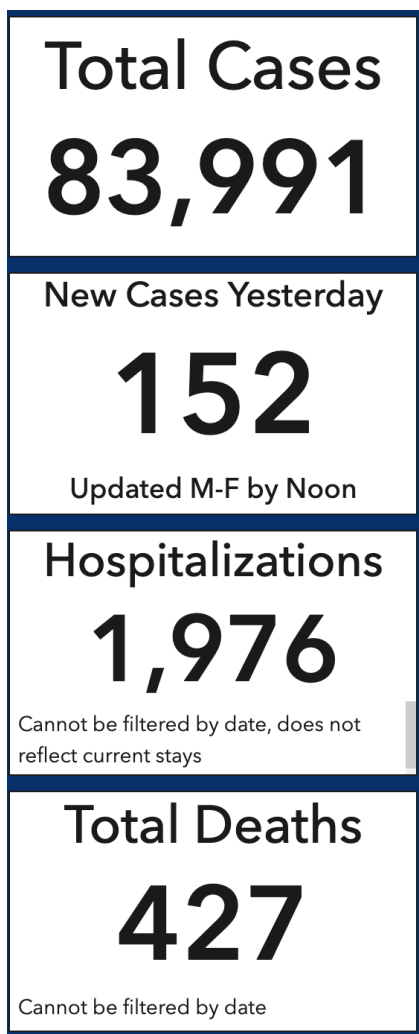
"The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) commends the bipartisan leadership of Congressman Young and Congressman O'Halleran in introducing this absolutely critical legislation," said AFN President Julie Kitka. "The pandemic has been especially hard on our people. This extension would allow Alaska Natives the time we need to allocate these crucial funds, and to continue forward on the long road to health and economic recovery."

"Bureaucratic red tape and disorganization by federal agencies left tribes across Arizona's First District with no aid for over a month while elders, friends, and neighbors succumbed to COVID-19," said O'Halleran. "The deadline by which tribal governments must spend Coronavirus Relief Fund payments must be extended so that each sovereign nation has adequate time to allocate the monies they are owed to most effectively address and recover from this pandemic that hit tribal communities so hard."



## COVID-19 UPDATE

Alaska DHSS Data Dashboard Summary as of Aug 30, 2021:



### AT THE END OF AUGUST, ALASKA'S STATEWIDE COVID-19 ALERT LEVEL REMAINS HIGH

New cases and hospitalizations are on the rise in Alaska.

TAKE ACTION – Choosing to get vaccinated is the single most important action you can take to protect yourself and your community and to reopen our economy. Check with your local health care provider to get the facts about vaccines, wearing masks and protecting your families. If you haven't been vaccinated yet, [find a vaccine](#).

CDC's new guidelines on safer activities for you and your family:

- [If you are fully vaccinated](#), you can participate in many of the activities that you did before the pandemic.
- To maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area [of substantial or high transmission](#).
- Wearing a mask is most important if you have a weakened immune system or if, because of your age or an underlying medical condition, you are at [increased risk for severe disease](#), or if someone in your household has a weakened immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease, or is unvaccinated. If this applies to you or your household, you might choose to wear a mask regardless of the level of transmission in your area.

- You should continue to wear a mask where required by laws, rules, regulations, or local guidance.
- Learn more about the CDC's recommendations for fully vaccinated people at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html).

There is a lot of misinformation out there, particularly on social media. Here is a great page for [mythbusting](#).

For more information about vaccines, visit [covidvax.alaska.gov](https://covidvax.alaska.gov).