

# Alaska Federation of Natives

Statewide Briefing



## Week of September 13-17, 2021

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### In This Briefing...

- **AFN JOINS AVCP AND THE STATE OF ALASKA IN REQUESTING FISHERIES DISASTER DECLARATION FROM COMMERCE SECRETARY**
- **AFN RELEASES UPDATED 2021 CONVENTION DELEGATE PACKET**
- **FEMA TAKES PANDEMIC-RELATED ACTION AFFECTING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE APPLICANTS**
- **FEMA OFFERS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR COVID-19 FUNERAL EXPENSES**
- **COVID-19 UPDATE — ALASKA HAS THE NATION'S 3RD-HIGHEST COVID RATE**
- **ALASKA CHAMBER LAUNCHES VACCINE INCENTIVE PROGRAM**
- **AFN BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE**

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## **AFN Joins AVCP and the State Of Alaska in Requesting Fisheries Disaster Declaration from Commerce Secretary**

In a September 17 letter to U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, AFN joined the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) and the State of Alaska in requesting an immediate declaration of a fisheries disaster on the Yukon River.

Salmon returns along the Yukon River have been in decline for more than a decade, creating numerous hardships for the people and communities that heavily depend on this fishery resource. This decline has hit a level never seen before, bringing the salmon fishery on the Yukon River near collapse this season.

The Yukon River salmon collapse means entire villages were unable to obtain the salmon they need to satisfy their basic food needs for the winter or to earn the cash needed from the small commercial fishery to purchase other subsistence necessities. The severity and magnitude of the loss of salmon have caused widespread panic across the many regions and communities along the Yukon River.

The situation is compounded by high energy prices, the high costs of alternative sources of protein, and the supply chain disruption, costs, and risks associated with the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

In addition to the request for a commercial and subsistence fisheries disaster declaration, AFN requested that Commerce increase funding for research on the lifecycle of salmon species in the ocean and the effect changes to the ocean environment is having on salmon as they return to their spawning grounds in Alaska. AFN additionally requested that Commerce partner with Alaska Native organizations to conduct such research and to fully incorporate traditional knowledge.

To read the full letter from AFN President Julie Kitka to Secretary Raimondo, click [here](#).

Attached to AFN's letter were three articles and a video from the Anchorage Daily News' series describing the salmon collapse and its effect on communities.

- Part One: <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/rural-alaska/2021/09/04/weve-never-seen-this-before-salmon-collapse-sends-alaskans-on-lower-yukon-scrambling-for-scarce-alternatives/>
  - Part Two: <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/rural-alaska/2021/09/05/the-economy-of-the-lower-yukon-is-gone/>
  - Part Three: <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/rural-alaska/2021/09/06/amid-an-unprecedented-collapse-in-alaska-yukon-river-salmon-no-one-can-say-for-certain-why-there-are-so-few-fish/>
  - Video: <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/rural-alaska/2021/09/04/video-in-their-own-words-lower-yukon-residents-describe-the-impact-of-a-salmon-disaster/>
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## **AFN Releases Updated 2021 Convention Delegate Packet**

Due to the postponement of the Convention to December 13-15, AFN has issued a revised delegate packet. Registration and resolution forms and links to important information are included. The new deadline for submitting resolutions is November 5, 2021.

Click [here](#) for the new 2021 AFN Convention Delegate Packet, which is also available on AFN's website, [www.nativefederation.org/convention](http://www.nativefederation.org/convention).

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## **FEMA Takes Pandemic-Related Action Affecting Public Assistance Applicants**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced on September 16 that as a result of the continued consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, FEMA has taken the following actions:

- The 100% Federal Cost Share for all COVID-19 related federal disaster declarations has been extended to 12/31/21
- For all COVID-19 declarations, FEMA has extended the deadline for completing emergency work indefinitely and will make notification no later than 30 days prior to the establishment of the deadline
- The Safe Opening and Operation Policy (SOOP) has been extended both retroactively and forward to include the entire incident period, which starts on 1/20/20 and is still ongoing.
  - Private non-profit organizations (PNPs) and government departments not conducting medical care may be eligible for SOOP activities. For a full listing of eligible PNPs in the SOOP Flyer, click [here](#). Eligible PNPs may include, but are not limited to, those that provide the following services:
    - Houses of worship
    - Museums
    - Libraries
    - Homeless shelters
    - Performing arts centers

The following policies are available by clicking on the name:

- [FEMA Policy FP 104-009-19 \(Governing Policy for activities on or after 9/15/20\)](#)
- [FEMA Policy 104-21-003, Version 2 \(Safe Opening and Operations Policy 1/20/20 and ongoing\)](#)

Eligible PNPs that are interested in applying for the FEMA PA program can still submit a Request for Public Assistance (RPA) through the grants portal at <https://grantee.fema.gov/> until 30 days after the end of the incident period, which is yet to be determined.

## **FEMA Offers Financial Assistance for COVID-19 Funeral Expenses**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is offering financial assistance for individuals who have incurred funeral expenses on or after January 20, 2020 from COVID-19. The website with full information is: <https://www.fema.gov/disaster/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance>

To Apply: Call 844-684-6333 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday. The application is by phone (no online option), and will take 20 minutes to apply. After you have applied by phone, FEMA will send you a letter with the documents needed for submission, and how to submit them.

Eligible Expenses: Eligible expenses may include, but are not limited to: funeral services, cremation, interment, casket or urn, burial plot or cremation niche, marker or headstone, arrangement of the funeral ceremony, use of funeral home, and more. Reimbursement of expenses already paid is not eligible. View the [FAQs](#) for more information.

Amount: Individuals may receive a maximum of \$9000 per deceased individual.

As of September 13, \$426,535 have been awarded to 75 Alaskan applicants, but a minor percentage of Alaskans who have been affected by the loss of a loved one due to the COVID-19 pandemic have applied. Please share widely with your networks and in your newsletters to help ensure our families, relatives and friends are receiving the most amount of support possible, during these challenging times.

If you have questions, you may call FEMA at the COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Helpline: 844-684-6333.

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## COVID-19 UPDATE

### Alaska Has the Nation's 3rd-Highest COVID Rate, with Hospitals Still Under Siege



Portable toilets are placed outside the emergency department entrance at Providence Alaska Medical Center on Wednesday, Sept. 15, 2021. The emergency department is overwhelmed and is asking people to wait in their cars, sometimes for hours, before being seen. (Loren Holmes / *Anchorage Daily News*)

For up-to-date information, visit the [State of Alaska's COVID-19 page](#). You can download the Alaska Department of Health and Human Services "Reasons to Get Vaccinated Flyer" by clicking [here](#).



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Misinformation about vaccinations and how well they work and the downplaying of the seriousness of COVID-19 continues to be a big factor in why so many Alaskans remain unvaccinated. There is a lot of misinformation out there, particularly on social media. Click [here](#) for CDC's helpful page for [mythbusting](#). For facts, guidance, and data at the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services' main COVID page, click [here](#).

YOU CAN 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](#).

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

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).



## Alaska Chamber Launches Vaccine Incentive Program

Healthy people are the foundation of a healthy economy, and our economy is suffering. The Alaska Chamber firmly believes that one of the most important tools in realizing economic recovery is vaccinating for COVID-19. It is the single easiest and safe thing that individual Alaskans can do to help get our economy back on track. Why? Because [recent studies](#) show that vaccinating for COVID-19 is highly effective at preventing serious illness, hospitalizations, and death.

This is why the Alaska Chamber is launching the Give AK a Shot Sweepstakes set to give out nearly a million dollars to vaccinated Alaskans. Now through Oct. 30, Alaskans vaccinated for COVID-19 are eligible to enter the Alaska Chamber's "Give AK a Shot" drawing for a chance to win \$49,000. A total of 18 prize drawings split between two categories (Alaskans aged 18 and older and Alaskans aged 12-17) will be awarded.

Winners will be selected randomly and announced each week. Winners in the 18 and older category will receive a \$49,000 cash prize. Winners in the 12-17 category will receive a \$49,000 scholarship presented as an Alaska 529 education savings plan plus \$10,000 cash for their parent or guardian if their parent or guardian is also vaccinated.



We're asking Alaskans to get vaccinated for COVID-19 to protect our economy and give Alaska a shot at recovery. The COVID-19 vaccine protects lives and jobs, which is why we're presenting rewards to Alaskans who get vaccinated. All Alaskans can protect themselves, their families and Alaska businesses to get our economy back on track, all while being entered to win \$49,000.

To enter, participants are asked to provide their basic information at [GiveAKaShot.com](https://www.GiveAKaShot.com), this includes name, date, COVID-19 vaccination date, COVID-19 vaccination location, and if the entrant is an Alaska resident. 18 drawing pools will be created during the eight-week sweepstakes period. Two drawing pools will be created per week for those newly vaccinated for COVID-19, and two drawing pools total for those vaccinated for COVID-19 prior to Sept. 2, 2021. To be clear, Alaskans vaccinated before the effective date are eligible only for the one drawing specific to previously vaccinated people; two winners will be selected from this pool. All entrants will be placed into the drawing pools according to their date of vaccination and age at the time of entry.

The first drawing entries are due by Sept. 11. It is incumbent upon the individual to enter timely so as not to miss the weekly drawing for which they are eligible; entries are accepted and valid only for the week in which they received their COVID-19 vaccine.

Eligibility requirements include:

Entrant must be an Alaska resident age 12 or older.

Must be in receipt of the first dose of any COVID-19 vaccine at any time before or during the promotion period.

Must have received a vaccination in Alaska.

Give our businesses a shot at recovery.

Entries accepted and official rules are available at [www.GiveAKaShot.com](https://www.GiveAKaShot.com).

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## **AFN Meeting Schedule**

AFN Executive Committee — Tuesday, September 21

Climate Change Task Force — Thursday, September 23

AFN Quarterly Board Meeting — Friday, October 15