

Alaska Federation of Natives

Statewide Briefing



Week of October 11-15, 2021

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2021 AFN Convention Will Be Virtual December 13 & 14

At its quarterly meeting on October 15, the AFN Board of Directors decided to hold an all-virtual annual convention on December 13 and 14, 2021. After consultation with state, federal and tribal health officials, and reviewing current data trends, AFN made its decision out of concern for the safety and health of the thousands of attendees who come from every part of Alaska, including AFN delegates, presenters, other participants, artists and exhibitors, and the public.

AFN delegates and members should watch their email next week (October 25-29) for the updated 2021 Convention Delegate Packet. The packet will include resolution, sponsorship, and registration information. A print version will be mailed as well. An updated registration form will be sent to delegates who have not yet registered. Click [HERE](#) for the downloadable form.

Last August the AFN Board postponed the Convention from October to December to give time for the city to get the COVID-19 numbers turned around. The current information shows continuing high rates of COVID-19 cases, transmission, hospitalization and deaths, particularly in Anchorage, the Convention host city, which is on an upward trajectory according to the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.

“Safety is paramount to our decision,” said Sheri Buretta, chair of AFN's Convention Committee. “Our convention is a large indoor gathering where CDC guidelines of social distancing are not practical. The situation in Anchorage has not improved nearly enough to risk the health of Convention participants, particularly our Elders and other vulnerable attendees, when hospitals across the state are under extreme pressure right now.”

As was done for the all-virtual 2020 AFN Convention, a robust virtual meeting platform will be combined with live statewide TV and radio broadcast coverage, and live streaming on multiple video channels. A full agenda will be released to the public in early December.

AFN will also develop an online Native arts marketplace featuring many of the same Native artists that have had booths in the exhibit hall during in-person AFN Conventions.

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 ways and with technical fixes. 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.

About the AFN Convention

AFN's 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, and the largest convention in Alaska.



Get Involved

Ensuring *all Alaskans* have the opportunity to be educated and engaged in the redistricting process.

Alaska Redistricting Board's Public Hearings Continue Across the State — Your Input Is Encouraged

As a reminder, the Alaska Redistricting Board has adopted six draft plans, all of which propose new boundaries for the state's 40 legislative districts, based on 2020 census data. Alaskans are now invited to weigh in.

Organizations and individuals who participate in the meetings will have an opportunity to speak directly with Board members and staff to learn about how their House and Senate districts may change.

To learn more about the ARB, as well as its public meeting schedule, please visit www.akredistrict.org.

Public hearings will be held in the following communities this week:

Bethel, Tuesday, October 19

- The Board will be hosting a meeting on Tuesday, October 19 from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center, [420 Chief Eddie Hoffman Highway in Bethel](#).

Statewide Call-In, Wednesday, October 20

- The Board will be hosting a statewide dial-in public hearing on Wednesday, October 20 from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Dial toll-free statewide: 844-586-9085, from Juneau: 586-9085, from Anchorage: 563-9085

Dillingham, Thursday, October 21

- The Board will be hosting a meeting on Thursday, October 21 from 12:00pm - 2:00 p.m. at the City Chambers, [141 Main Street, Dillingham](#).

Unalaska, Friday, October 22

- The Board will be hosting a meeting on Friday, October 22 from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at the Grand Aleutian Hotel, [498 Salmon Way, Dutch Harbor](#).

White House Announces Tribal Consultations on America the Beautiful Initiative

The White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) is holding two tribal consultations to garner input on the America the Beautiful initiative, particularly the focus area of supporting tribally led conservation and restoration priorities.

The Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce, and the Chair of the CEQ issued the [Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful Report](#) on May 6, 2021. The report provides a framework for how the U.S. can achieve national conservation goals, including conserving at least 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030. The report notes difficulty for Native communities to access federal funding and assistance to support conservation efforts and calls for improved engagement with American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians on the care and management of public lands and waters, particularly regarding sacred and ceremonial sites, and trust and treaty rights.

Click [HERE](#) to read the 'Dear Tribal Leader Letter' for more information and specific questions CEQ is putting forward to garner input from Native communities. Below are the times and instructions for the two consultation sessions.

Tribal Consultation Option 1:

October 26, 2021

10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m (EAT)

Click [HERE](#) to register in advance

Tribal Consultation Option 2:

October 28, 2021

3:00 - 5:30 p.m. (EST)

Click [HERE](#) to register in advance

In addition to, or instead of joining these sessions, you may provide your written input to conservation@ceq.eop.gov by November 23rd, 2021. If you have any questions regarding this effort, please feel free to contact Stephenne Harding, Senior Director of Lands, at Stephenne.S.Harding@ceq.eop.gov, or at (202) 881-9419.

COVID-19 UPDATE



Pfizer Vaccine Booster Shots Now Available For High-Risk People

Flu Shots Also Available

COVID-19 Vaccine booster shots are available for the following Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine recipients who completed their initial series at least 6 months ago and are:

- 65 years and older
- Age 18+ who live in [long-term care settings](#)
- Age 18+ who have [underlying medical conditions](#)
- Age 18+ who work in [high-risk settings](#)
- Age 18+ who live in [high-risk settings](#)

Click [HERE](#) for the Center for Disease Control (CDC) COVID-19 vaccination booster information page, and [HERE](#) for the helpful CDC booster infographic.

Keep yourself and those around you safe!

Flu season is upon us and ANTHC, state, and federal health officials are urging Alaskans to vaccinate against the flu. Many tribal health organizations are running flu clinics across Alaska. Please check with your local facility for times and dates near you. It is important for all people to get vaccinated for the flu to protect ourselves, as well as our family, coworkers and community. In addition, influenza poses a greater risk to certain people like pregnant women, children and Elders – they are all at high risk for flu-related complications. For more information about flu vaccines from ANTHC, click [HERE](#). For CDC info, click [HERE](#).

A common myth about the flu vaccine is that it can cause you to get the flu. Fact: You cannot get the flu from a flu vaccine. The vaccine does not contain live flu viruses or in many cases, the flu virus at all. Vaccine safety is closely monitored annually by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). To learn more about influenza and vaccination myths and facts, click [HERE](#).

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](#).



Getting vaccinated remains the best defense against serious illness and death, health authorities say. The July report found unvaccinated Alaskans were 7 1/2 times as likely to be hospitalized as vaccinated people.

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](#).

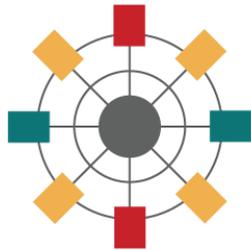
YOU CAN TAKE ACTION – Choosing to get vaccinated is the single most important action you can take to protect yourself and your community and to reopen our economy. Check with your local health care provider to get the facts about vaccines, wearing masks and protecting your families. If you haven't been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

For more information about vaccines, visit covidvax.alaska.gov.

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.



AFN
Navigator
Program

*Helping Alaska
Natives stop COVID
and secure resources.*

AFN Navigator Program Trainings, Events & Workshops

Click [HERE](#) for a list of upcoming AFN Navigator events, workshops, and trainings.

AFN Meeting Schedule

AFN Forum: Challenges at Our Northernmost Border: Leadership in Uncertain Times —
Tuesday, October 19

AFN Navigator Program Workshop: [ARPA Funding: Eligible Uses, Tracking and Reporting](#) —
October 21

AFN Annual Convention — Virtual, December 13 & 14, 2021