

# Alaska Federation of Natives

Statewide Briefing



## Week of November 15-19, 2021

### COVID-19 UPDATE

**Be Safe for the Holidays!**



*Chanelle Nibbelink for NPR*

As we head into Thanksgiving week and the holiday season, tribal, state, and federal health professionals and scientists are urging Alaskans to stay vigilant with COVID-19 mitigation practices, including vaccination, vaccine boosters, masking, and social distancing. While the number of new cases and hospitalizations is on the decline, Alaskans will be gathering together indoors to celebrate the holidays. Be mindful and keep your family safe from COVID-19 and the flu.

Here's one thing to be thankful for this year: It's not Thanksgiving 2020. A year ago vaccines had not yet been approved, daily deaths were rising sharply — surging to more than 2,000 a day by December nationally — and many Americans hunkered down and skipped holiday celebrations to reduce their risks.

This year, nationwide 80% of people 12 and up are now vaccinated with at least one shot, and [about half of Americans](#) are planning to gather in groups of 10 or more for the holidays, a recent survey shows.

While many of us are ready to reboot our holiday traditions, COVID cases are once again rapidly climbing nationally — with nearly 95,000 new cases a day. Experts warn we still need to keep COVID risk-reduction in mind. **Even if your family is fully vaccinated, remember your most vulnerable family members, particularly people over 80 or the immunocompromised, are still at higher risk of severe COVID.**

Nearly two years into this pandemic, we've learned a lot about how to reduce the risks of catching and spreading this virus, including the simple steps of masking and hand-washing. Let's not forget now.

Click [HERE](#) for some reminders for how to keep your family gatherings safe, compiled by [National Public Radio](#).

## STATE OF ALASKA HELPLINE

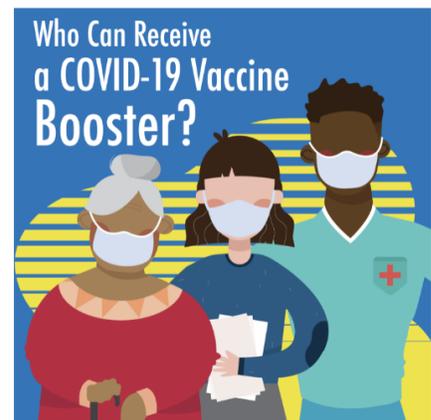
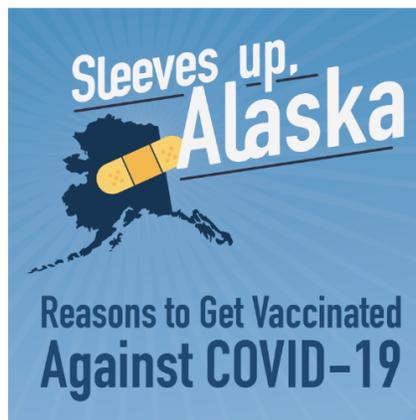
All Alaskans can also call the state's coronavirus helpline at 907-646-3322 for assistance finding and making an appointment. That phone line is monitored from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on weekdays, and 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekends.

## CDC FACTS

Click [HERE](#) for the U.S. Center for Disease Control's tribal specific fact sheet: What Tribal Communities Need to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines.

## Vaccination Is Our Best Tool to Stop the Spread of COVID-19

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



## Don't miss out on your COVID-19 vaccine booster!

[Booster doses](#) are available for Moderna, Pfizer, and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines with [mixed dosing allowed \(PDF\)](#).

Find out if you're eligible with this quick quiz:

[Booster eligibility survey](#).

If you received a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, the following groups are eligible for a booster shot 6 months or more after their initial series:

- Age 65+

- Residents and staff in [long-term care settings](#)
- Age 18+ and have [underlying medical conditions](#) including asthma, diabetes, obesity
- Age 18+ and work in [high-risk settings](#) including healthcare workers, teachers, grocery store workers

For the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, booster shots are recommended for those who are 18 and older and who were vaccinated two or more months ago.

Eligible individuals may choose which vaccine they receive as a booster dose. Some people may have a preference for the vaccine type they originally received while others may prefer to get a different booster.

Click [HERE](#) to go to the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Booster page.

**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).

### **Vaccinate to stop the spread of the flu!**

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](#).

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## **Interior Seeks Input on Indian Boarding School Initiative — Virtual Consultation November 23 —**

As a first step in addressing Indian boarding school policies and their effects as part of the Department's report due to the Secretary by April 1, 2022, Interior is conducting initial collection and review of Department documents and records, and compilation of its existing data. **A virtual consultation is scheduled for tomorrow, Tuesday, November 23, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Alaska Time.** Registration links are below. The consultation is closed to the press.

Interior seeks to consult with Tribal governments, Alaska Native Corporations, and Native Hawaiian Organizations on key issues for inclusion in the Department's Initiative report and help lay the foundation for future sitework to protect potential burial sites and other sensitive information. To facilitate discussion during the consultations, participants are requested to address the following topics:

- Appropriate protocols on handling sensitive information in existing records;
- Ways to address cultural concerns and handling of information generated from existing records or from potential sitework activities;

- Potential repatriation of human remains, including cultural concerns and compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act;
- Future policy and procedure implementation to protect burial sites, locations, confidential information, and culturally sensitive information;
- Management of sites of former boarding schools;
- Privacy issues or cultural concerns to be identified as part of the Initiative; and
- Other issues the Department should address in its review.
- All written comments can be submitted to [consultation@bia.gov](mailto:consultation@bia.gov) by the deadline on Thursday, December 23. Please feel free to contact me if you have additional questions.

## Tuesday, November 23

9:00AM to 1:00PM Alaska Time

Please register in advance at:

<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJltdOutpzsoGAeuPCEBeNPj2mFoIdfdEz0>



## Tribal Households Get Connectivity Assistance Through Emergency Broadband Benefit Program

The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB Program) is a temporary federal program that launched on May 12, 2021 to help eligible households pay for internet service during the pandemic. For students whose families are struggling to afford their monthly internet service, this program may be able to help. The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) administers the EBB Program under the direction of the FCC. Visit [GetEmergencyBroadband.org](https://www.fcc.gov/etf/emergency-broadband-benefit) for more information.

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Education Technology (OET) recently posted information about EBB at <https://tech.ed.gov/broadband/ebb>. This site provides a plethora of information about how schools can help families sign up for EBB.

The EBB program currently provides "a discount of up to \$50 per month towards broadband service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands. Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers if they contribute more than \$10 and less than \$50 toward the purchase price."

Per the [letter](#) sent to school officials in May, "Households with a child who is approved to receive free or reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or the School Breakfast Program (SBP), including children who attend schools participating in U.S. Department of Agriculture's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), are eligible for the EBB Program." Additional eligibility, per the [FCC website](#), includes households that meet one of the criteria below:

- Has an income that is at or below 135% of the [Federal Poverty Guidelines](#) or participates in certain assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, or [Lifeline](#);
- Approved to receive benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch program or the school breakfast program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision in the 2019-2020, 2020-2021, or 2021-2022 school year;
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year;

- Experienced a substantial loss of income due to job loss or furlough since February 29, 2020 and the household had a total income in 2020 at or below \$99,000 for single filers and \$198,000 for joint filers; or
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income or COVID-19 program.

Additional information is available from the following federal agencies:

- USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS): <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/emergency-broadband-benefit-program>;
- Universal Service Administrative Co. (USAC): <https://getemergencybroadband.org>; and the
- Federal Communications Commission (FCC): <https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit>



**AFN  
Navigator  
Program**

*Helping Alaska  
Natives stop COVID  
and secure resources.*

## Grant Writing Assistance Hotline.

Following the “Grant Writing Basics” training this week, AFN and the Alaska Municipal League (AML) are collaborating to offer tribal governments a free opportunity to talk through the pre-grant application process with an experienced grant writer. Tribal government representatives will be able to discuss their needs and priorities and learn about basic processes to apply for federal grants.

To learn more and meet with a grant writer, contact the Alaska Municipal League at [membersupport@akml.org](mailto:membersupport@akml.org) or 907-586-1325 to indicate your interest and schedule a time to meet over the phone.

For more resources on grant writing, please visit <https://alaskaarpa.org/resources/grant-writing-tools/> 

[#AlaskaFederationOfNatives](#) [#AlaskaMunicipalLeague](#) [#AFNNavigatorProgram](#)

### **If you would like to visit with the grant writer, here’s the process:**

Contact AML at [membersupport@akml.org](mailto:membersupport@akml.org) or 907-586-1325 to indicate your interest.

AML will get your name, affiliation, contact information, and a short version of your needs. AML will share that information with our contracted grant writing professional, who will contact you directly to schedule some time for a phone meeting.

You may select any or all of the topics below, to discuss with the grant writer.

- Needs or priorities of your community and why you need funding.
- Grant opportunities that might be a ‘good fit’ for your need(s).
- Budgets and other requirements commonly needed with grant applications.
- Timing needed to write grants, along with key steps for gathering and coordinating information.
- Requirements of registration in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).

- Purpose for registering in [Grants.gov](#).
- Access to the online public website that lists all of your agency's awarded grants.
- Review of the [Alaska State website](#) that lists all tribal debt for taxes or unemployment costs.

The meeting time is flexible, but in consideration of others who would like to meet with the grant writer, we would ask you to limit your call time to one hour. If requested, the grant writer consultant will schedule a good time to call you back to continue the conversation. This free service is provided through [AFN's Navigator Program](#).

AML has additionally developed a pool of grant writers to assist with grant writing needs. Please visit <https://alaskaarpa.org/resources/grant-writing-tools/>.

## Upcoming Events and Trainings

AFN and the Alaska Municipal League offer weekly trainings related to CARES Act and ARPA on topics such as eligible uses, reporting, and tracking; grant writing, identifying federal funding opportunities, managing federal grants and the subrecipient process.

The AFN/AML weekly trainings are held on Thursdays from 11-12 Alaska Standard Time until December 21, 2021 with following exceptions: Weekly trainings scheduled for the week of Thanksgiving will be held on Tuesday, November 23, 2021, and weekly trainings scheduled for the week of Christmas will be held on Tuesday December 21, 2021.

### This Week's Training Opportunity

Subrecipient Processes – Managing 3rd Party Contracts

November 23, 2021 | 11:00am-12:00pm AST

Training hosted by AFN and AML

Click [HERE](#) to register for this week's workshop.

Please click [HERE](#) for the AFN Navigator Program calendar of upcoming events and trainings.

Recordings and Training Materials, if provided, for past trainings and events are available by clicking on the training or event found on the [AFN Navigator Website's Workshops and Training Calendar](#).

## Treasury Amends Reporting Requirements for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

On November 15, 2021, the U.S. Treasury Department revised the reporting requirements for tribal governments that received less than \$30 million in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (CSLFRF) established under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Reports for tribal governments that received less than \$30 million in CSLFRF are no longer required to be filed on a quarterly basis, and instead are now due annually.

Click [HERE](#) for the Treasury CSLFRF Compliance and Reporting Guidelines.

## About AFN's Navigator Program

AFN is committed to ensuring the Alaska Native community is supported and informed of federal COVID-19 relief programs aimed at Native American recovery and accessing those programs. To better support the Alaska Native community in these endeavors, AFN has launched a COVID-19 Navigator Program. The Program, which is a public-private partnership with the State of Alaska, will run through December 31, 2021. Explore the Navigator Program webpage, located on the AFN website, by clicking [HERE](#).

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## Still Time To Register for 2021 AFN Convention December 13 & 14 (Virtual)

We are excited to be putting the finishing touches on the 2021 Convention agenda. There are plenty of chances for you to get involved. As was done for the all-virtual 2020 AFN Convention, a robust virtual meeting platform on the AFN app will be combined with live statewide TV and radio broadcast coverage, and live streaming on multiple video channels. A full agenda will be released in early December.



Please register by filling out the form in the packet or click [HERE](#) for the fillable form online. If you've already registered, you do not need to re-register. Watch for the Convention Guide with instructions on how to log into the AFN app, the full agenda, and important links to workshops and exhibitors.

Visit the Delegate Page on AFN's website by clicking [HERE](#).

We sincerely hope you'll join us this December 13 & 14 for a virtual 2021 AFN Convention!

## Convention Welcome Messages Is Back By Popular Demand

### Send AFN your videos!

For last year's Convention we invited AFN delegates and members to share short video messages of welcome, and it was a huge hit. The invitation is open for the virtual 2021 AFN Convention. Video welcome messages from AFN delegates and members will be compiled, posted on AFN's convention app, social media, and video channels, and aired during the agenda in the 2021 Convention broadcast!

### Welcome Message Criteria

**Length:** Up to 30 seconds total.

**Content:** 1) In the video please say your name and/or your organization's name and what village or city you are sending from; 2) Welcome, well-wishes, "Have a great convention!," and other positive and friendly greetings are encouraged; and 3) Please avoid political, critical or negative messages.

**Tech:** Cell phone videos are accepted and encouraged. If you do some editing or other post-production video work, please send as a high-resolution video .mp4 file.

**Deadline: Videos must be uploaded by 5 p.m. Friday, December 3, 2021.**

### Where to send your video:

Click [HERE](#) for the link to the folder where you can upload your videos.

Please include your name and contact info in the video file name.

Questions? Email us at [afninfo@nativefederation.org](mailto:afninfo@nativefederation.org).



## AFN Meeting Schedule

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



Established in 1966 to achieve a fair and just settlement of aboriginal land claims, AFN is the oldest and largest statewide Native organization in Alaska. Its membership includes 169 federally recognized tribes, 166 village corporations, 9 regional corporations, and 12 regional nonprofit and tribal consortiums that contract and compact to run federal and state programs. AFN is governed by a [38-member board](#), which is elected by its membership at the annual convention held each October. AFN'S mission is to enhance and promote the cultural, economic and political voice of the entire Alaska Native community.

*Learn more at [www.nativefederation.org](http://www.nativefederation.org).*

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