

Summary of Recommendations by the Alaska Native Language Preservation & Advisory Council: AYARUQ: 2024 Action Plan for Alaska Native Languages



UAF Advanced Yugtun student, Iyakik, from Iliamna, 2023

For its 2024 Action Plan for Alaska Native Languages, the Alaska Native Language Preservation & Advisory Council has grouped its recommendation into four major focus areas with specific policy and public recommendations within each of those areas. We are working to build a language movement that is strategic and directional. The focus areas are listed below, with recommendations to the **Governor**, the **Legislature**, the **Federal Government**, and the Alaskan **Public**.

FOCUS AREA #1: AFFIRM THE RIGHT TO INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Education in Alaska has and continues to fail Alaska Native peoples. Pathways to equitable success must include opportunities to use Alaska Native languages as a medium

of instruction at all levels of education. The State of Alaska must develop pathways to education through Alaska Native languages while decolonizing educational practices in all levels of public education.

Policy Recommendations

1. *Promote, establish, and increase Alaska Native Language medium schools and dual-language schools in all school districts where possible, and build towards that possibility in regions where it is not currently feasible.
2. *Promote, establish, and increase Alaska Native Language immersion programs in all regions within public schools and through community-based learning programs.
3. *Develop methods of certifying and licensing Alaska Native Language Teachers without considering them “alternative” certifications or licensures; especially help experienced teacher aides to become certified teachers and have equitable pay.
4. Have one Alaska Native language teacher for every 150 students enrolled in any public school in Alaska.
5. Establish an Alaska Native Language Schools Consortium.
6. Establish an Alaska State School Board high school graduation requirement of at least one semester of an Alaska Native language.
7. Develop and include Alaska Native languages in State Standards of Education.
8. *Increase Alaska Native language instruction at all levels: full State funding for Alaska Native language instruction in all Alaskan elementary schools and full State funding for more Alaska Native language instruction at the University of Alaska and establish “zero credit, zero dollar” methods for Alaskans to learn Alaska Native languages without cost.
9. Fund an annual state-wide conference for Alaska Native language teachers.
10. Clarify and strengthen Alaska Statute 14.30.420

GOV: Commit to including Alaska Native languages as a core part of education in Alaska and state that Alaska Native languages are vital to the future of Alaska.

LEG: Direct the Alaska State Board of Education to: 1) develop Alaska Native language teacher certification and licensure procedures, 2) establish an Alaska Native Language Schools Consortium, and 3) include Alaska Native Languages in State Standards of Education; urge the 4) University of Alaska to increase Alaska Native language instruction while developing “zero credit, zero dollar” options for Alaskans; and 5) fund an annual state-wide conference for Alaska Native language teachers.

FGOV: Fund the establishment of an Alaska Native University starting with a College of Alaska Native Languages. This collaborative effort aims to serve as a vital institution offering comprehensive language and cultural instruction, specialized training, essential education, and teacher licensure and certification tailored to meet the unique needs of Alaska Native languages, peoples, and communities.

PUB: Advocate for an increase in Alaska Native languages instruction at the University of Alaska, collaborate on increasing the number of Alaska Native language immersion programs, and advocate for “zero credit, zero dollar” options within the University of Alaska framework.

FOCUS AREA #2: ADDRESS OPPRESSION AND INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

Alaskan education includes dark histories of language suppression and child abuse that included the removal of Indigenous children from their homes, the denial of having identities they were born into, and forced assimilation that included violent means of attempted linguistic and cultural erasure. The State of Alaska must bring the historical and lasting impacts of boarding schools and genocidal educational practices to the surface and determine methods of healing, reconnection, and acknowledgment of new and equitable directions in governance and education while providing increased access to trauma-informed mental health recovery practices for individuals, communities, and institutions.

Policy Recommendations

1. Survey the health of Alaska Native Languages and develop methods to track the state of Alaska Native languages to raise awareness of language health and to help inform policy and planning.
2. Initiate a series of statewide listening sessions to document the historical traumas in relation to Alaska Native Languages.
3. Offer an apology for historical Alaska Native language suppression.
4. Commit to overcoming historical traumas of forced assimilation as an entire state.

GOV: Make a statement about overcoming historical traumas as an entire state and declare Alaska Native languages as vital to the past, present, and future of Alaska.

LEG: Commit to an annual survey of the health of Alaska Native languages with an intention of informing political and educational decisions. Make an apology to Alaska Native peoples for historical suppression of Alaska Native languages and commit to inclusion. Fund a series of statewide listening sessions to document the experiences of historical trauma in order to inform future governmental action.

FGOV: Request that Secretary of Interior conduct a Comprehensive Study and identify the entities engaged in systematic cultural genocide against Native American populations and conduct a total expenditure analysis. Because of the historical injustices and systemic cultural genocide against Native American populations there is a pressing need to bring to light the entities responsible for orchestrating and implementing these acts and understanding the financial resources they allocated towards perpetrating cultural genocide is crucial for fostering transparency, accountability, and addressing the lasting impacts on Native American communities. This study will contribute to the healing, reconnection, and acknowledgment of historical injustices while paving the way for new and equitable directions in governance and education. We further call upon the academic

institutions and Indigenous organizations to actively participate in and support the efforts to uncover the truth about historical injustices against Native American populations.

PUB: Document the experiences of elders who directly experienced language and cultural oppression in education. Create local and regional gatherings to address historical traumas, which include documenting those traumas and incorporating culturally appropriate ceremonies for overcoming traumas.

FOCUS AREA #3: COMMIT TO LANGUAGE EQUITY

The damaging practices of colonization in Alaska has resulted in a privileging of English over Alaska Native languages. The State of Alaska must make a commitment to increasing the social status and prestige of Alaska Native languages through public education campaigns, increased language use in State facilities, and through partnerships that create real and lasting benefits for speakers of Alaska Native languages that are intended to undo decades of inequitable treatment.

Policy Recommendations

1. Move the Council from the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development to the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development.
2. Declare Alaska Native Languages Day annually on April 21st.
3. Reconfirm the Linguistic State of Emergency that was declared in 2018.
4. Restore Funding for the ANLPAC Administrative Assistant Position, and for Council travel.

GOV: Declare Alaska Native Languages Day, reconfirm the declaration of *State of Linguistic Emergency* for Alaska Native languages in 2018, include Alaska Native languages in more statements made to the public, and express a commitment to the health and future of Alaska Native languages. Reaffirm within each State department that the State of Linguistic Emergency stands (A.O. 300) and make a formal commitment to the health and future of Alaska Native languages.

LEG: Restore funding to the ANLPAC and move the Council from the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development to the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development and develop standing legislative committees that place Alaska Native languages into the regular work of Alaska's government.

FGOV: The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) allocates funding for language and cultural programs and positions across all tribes, enabling them to exercise self-determination in administering initiatives for cultural revitalization. Establishing dedicated positions and funding streams would empower each tribe to reclaim and revitalize their unique identities, aligning with the principles of self-determination. This approach will empower tribal nations to reclaim their own Indigenous languages identities that the Federal Government systematically tried to eradicate. Develop direct allocations for Native American language educational programs, with a focus on developing and implementing dual-language and language-medium schools and holistic adult-immersion programs.

PUB: Work within your community to develop and implement a language plan and to raise awareness of the need to focus on the health of Alaska Native languages, analyze the resources that are in your community and commit to develop methods of gathering and sharing those resources, and work with Alaska Native language speakers and teachers to develop and distribute new resources. Every region should develop a strategic language plan to promote the continued survival of their language(s).

FOCUS AREA #4: NORMALIZE THE USE OF ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES IN PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL SPACES ACROSS THE VAST LANDSCAPES OF ALASKA

When languages are suppressed to the point of endangerment, they can reach a point where they are rarely heard or seen, and conscious efforts are required to reconnect peoples, languages, and places. The act of normalization involves strategies and actions that ensure that Alaska Native languages are commonly heard and seen in the spaces where those languages were born. The State of Alaska must commit to language normalization through Indigenous place name restoration, increased language use in public spaces, and the development of Alaska Native language spaces.

Policy Recommendations

1. Restore Alaska Native Place Names.
2. Direct State, federal, and municipal offices to include local Alaska Native languages in signage within facilities.
3. Develop “Alaska Native Languages in the Workplace” documents within each Alaska Native language for distribution to local organizations, encouraging an increased presence of Alaska Native languages.
4. Increase the presence of Alaska Native languages within public media.

GOV: Work with Alaska Native Tribes, Alaska Native Regional Corporations, and Alaska Native Village Corporations to reclaim Alaska Native language place names and highlight those names and phrases in a series of short public presentations in collaboration with Alaska Native language speakers and teachers.

LEG: Initiate an Alaska Native language place name restoration project, direct State offices to include local Alaska Native languages in public spaces, and allocate funding to support Alaska Native languages on public media.

FGOV: The Secretary of the Interior works with Tribes, Alaska Native Regional Corporations, and Alaska Village Corporations to reclaim Alaska Native language place names on Federal public lands and waters and highlight those names and phrases in a series of short public presentations in collaboration with Alaska Native language speakers and teachers.

PUB: Use Alaska Native languages as often as possible in as many different physical and social settings, and work within communities and regions to celebrate those who are teaching and learning.



Kusamasiluataumasi!

Reading each Christmas card for parents. Inupiaq immersion class, Nome Public Schools, 2023.

To view the complete report visit:
<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/Portals/4/pub/ANLPAC/AYARUQ%20Final%20Draft%202024.pdf>

Or scan the QR Code:

