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Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council Publishes Recommendations

March 29, 2016 ANCHORAGE – While Alaska Native languages are declining at an alarming rate, the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council (ANLPAC) firmly believes that well-planned and well-implemented language programs can reverse the trend. The [ANLPAC 2016 biennial report](#) highlights important issues and includes specific recommendations to promote thriving daily use of Alaska Native languages. The ANLPAC's recommendations are a collection of strategies that foster an environment conducive to language use and revitalization throughout Alaska communities.

"Our languages went to sleep. It takes every single one of us to wake it back up," said Walkie Charles, ANLPAC member.

While none of the recommendations in the report is directly tied to the survival of any specific language, together they will aid policymakers, regions, communities, and families in their interconnected efforts to leave a healthy linguistic legacy for future generations.

"One of the things that we found when we traveled across the state and listened and heard people speak was that, from one region to the next, you might have a load of language programs in one region and then you go to the next and they have next to nothing," said Annette Evans Smith, chair of the ANLPAC. "We need to begin connecting regions that are building new language programs to those regions that have well-established, long-running programs that have integrated early Head Start, elementary school, and even in secondary."

Languages cannot be saved by affecting only one aspect of society—it will take partnerships between governments and individuals, between schools and tribes. The ANLPAC has tremendous statewide support for the work ahead. It is through these partnerships and collaborations that ANLPAC hopes to achieve ambitious goals.

Created by the Alaska Legislature in 2012, the ANLPAC collects public testimony and researches language preservation solutions. The ANLPAC provides recommendations to the governor and legislature on programs, policies, and projects. The ANLPAC meets regularly via audioconference and invites participation from the public. The governor appoints to the council five voting members who are professional language experts and who represent diverse regions of the state. In addition, one member of the Senate and one member of the

House of Representatives serve on the council as nonvoting members. The biennial report is required by AS 44.33.520(b)(3). While the Division of Community and Regional Affairs provides staff to support the council, the report does not constitute an official position or opinion of the division.

The Division of Community and Regional Affairs is a division within the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED) that advises and assists local governments. DCCED is tasked with promoting a healthy economy, supporting strong communities, and protecting consumers in Alaska. For information about the Division of Community and Regional Affairs, visit commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra. For information about DCCED and its other agencies, visit commerce.alaska.gov.

ATTACHED: Summary of Recommendations from the ANLPAC 2016 Biennial Report

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Summary of Recommendations from The Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council's 2016 Biennial Report

The Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council (ANLPAC) urges all Alaskans

- to avail themselves of new amendments to Sec. 6004, Alaska Native Educational Equity Program (ANEP) and the Sec. 6133, Native American and Alaska Native Language Immersion Schools and Programs in the recently signed-into-law Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), to provide funding for Alaska Native language immersion programs.

The ANLPAC urges the Alaska Legislature

- to adopt HB 157 in support of language immersion schools and for training for Alaska Native language teachers in a framework that leads to teacher certification.
- to amend AS 14.30.420 to clearly apply to *all schools* in which a majority of students are Alaska Natives—calling for a Native language curriculum advisory board to be established and, furthermore, directing that school districts *shall* create Native language programs if so directed by their Native language curriculum advisory boards.
- in order to create an environment of healing, and following in the spirit of the apologies issued by the U.S. Congress and the BIA, to declare an official apology, on behalf of the State of Alaska, for the earlier role that Alaska had in suppressing and forbidding Alaska Native languages in village schools and in boarding schools across the state.
- to declare April 21st of each year as Alaska Native Languages Day, to celebrate and recognize Alaska Native languages.
- to declare that the second Monday of every October annually be *Indigenous Peoples' Day* in Alaska.
- to restore the PCN and the budget to support the return of the 2012-2015 position of Administrative Assistant to the ANLPAC section within the Division of Community and Regional Affairs.

The ANLPAC urges the University of Alaska

- to offer instruction in Alaska Native languages, including the traditional language of each campus, in programs designed to lead to conversational fluency through best teaching practices. The University should offer such courses with free tuition to all Alaskans and not cancel classes because of pre-determined minimum enrollment levels. Furthermore, the University should insure that it offers comprehensive instruction in the most effective teaching methods and curriculum design for Alaska Native language instruction.

The ANLPAC calls upon the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development

- to create a Division of Indigenous Languages that supports Alaska Native language teachers, teacher training in best practices, and school programs that lead to fluency in Alaska Native languages.

The ANLPAC calls on all state, borough, city, and other regional groups

- to consider using traditional, Alaska Native place names when the local community desires and, to the degree possible, to recognize these names formally with the state and federal governments and to use these names in maps, signage, publications, and school curricula.

The ANLPAC urges schools, public offices, businesses, Native corporations, and local leaders

- to make use of Alaska Native languages in their daily operations.

The ANLPAC urges Alaska Native communities (villages, regions, language communities)

- to assess your own state of its language, to share this information with ANLPAC, and to begin using these data to form plans for the future of your language.
- to assess which language-learning opportunities exist locally, to coordinate with other villages and regions who share your language, to share this information with ANLPAC, and to consider language policy and planning steps to increase the opportunities for everyone to learn to speak Alaska Native languages.

The ANLPAC urges the artist community

- to express Alaska Native Languages as both critical to our daily lives and to use artistic expression to create healing moments that promote our languages and cultures.

The ANLPAC also encourages the creation of electronic means to promote the learning and the everyday use of Alaska Native languages and supports human teaching, rather than learning from tech alone.

Download the full [ANLPAC 2016 biennial report](#). Created by the Alaska Legislature in 2012, the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council provides recommendations to the governor and legislature on programs, policies, and projects. The ANLPAC meets regularly via audioconference and invites participation from the public. The biennial report is required by AS 44.33.520(b)(3). The Division of Community and Regional Affairs provides staff to support the council but the report does not constitute an official position or opinion of the division.