2026 Annual Convention Agenda

Thursday, October 22 – Morning Session

8:30 a.m. **Dene Eslaanh'**

9:00 a.m. **Call to Order & Safety Moment**
Gayla Hoseth and Joe Nelson, Co-Chairs, AFN

Posting of the Colors - Mt. Susitna Drum and Alaska Native Veterans Council (State Flag Song and Veterans' Song)

National Anthem – Buz Daney

Invocation – Alaska Native Veterans Council

Recognition of Major Sponsors
Gayla Hoseth and Joe Nelson, Co-Chairs, AFN

Welcome Remarks from Dena'ina Leaders
Aaron Leggett, Chief and President, Native Village of Eklutna
Michael Curry, Board President & Chair, Eklutna, Inc.

Welcome from the City of Anchorage
Mayor Suzanne LaFrance

Welcome Video from the Governor
Governor Mike Dunleavy

9:45 a.m. **Keynote Address**
Dr. Rosita Worl

10:15 a.m. **Welcome Video from U.S. Senator Brian Schatz (Hawaii)**

10:20 a.m. **President's Report**
Ben Mallott, AFN President

10:45 a.m. **Billy Kirkland, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior**

11:00 a.m. **U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski**

11:30 a.m. **Denali and Citizen of the Year Awards**

12:00 p.m. LUNCH BREAK

Thursday, October 22 – Afternoon Session

12:30 p.m. Tikigaq Traditional Dance Group

1:00 p.m. Call to Order
Gayla Hoseth and Joe Nelson, Co-Chairs, AFN

Preliminary Credentials Report – Nikki Stoops, AFN Vice President

1:05 p.m. Mark Cruz, IHS Director – introduced by Kimberley Strong, Chair, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

1:20 p.m. Supreme Court Justice Jude Pate

1:35 p.m. Tapping into the Independent Travel Market

Today's independent travelers want more than a vacation—they want authentic connections. Visitors want to learn about subsistence, listen to stories, create art, and experience our traditions firsthand. Many community members want to meet this demand by creating tourism experiences but simply do not know where to start.

This panel bridges that gap. Hear from three industry leaders who have successfully navigated the market. They will share actionable insights on how to build a business from the ground up, protect your cultural intellectual property, capture the independent travel market, and access key resources for technical and marketing support.

To turn these insights into action, this panel will be followed by two opportunities to attend a workshop to map out your business, from ideation to budgeting, pricing, packaging, and marketing.

Moderator

Alexis Bunten Naficy, Ph.D. and CEO WAQAA

Panelists

Jillian Simpson, President and CEO, ATIA (Alaska Tourism Industry Association); Joe Williams, CEO, Where the Eagle Walks LLC and Tribal President for the Organized Village of Saxman; Camille Ferguson, Owner of Cultural Tourism Development (CTD) Consulting

2:00 p.m. U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan

2:20 p.m. **U.S. Representative Nick Begich**

2:40 p.m. **Chairman John Lowery, Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina**

3:00 p.m. **60 Years: The Decisions That Shaped AFN, and Tyonek Recognition**
Julie Kitka, Ana Hoffman, Nelson Angapak, Emil Notti, and Willie Hensley

3:45 p.m. **Justice and Public Safety Initiatives in Alaska: Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons, VAWA-Related/Violent Crimes, and Drug Trafficking**
Michael Heyman, United States Attorney for the District of Alaska, and Ingrid Goodyear, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) Great Plains and Alaska Regional Coordinator in the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Alaska

4:15 p.m. **No on 2 Presentation**
Nicole Borromeo

4:30 p.m. **Investigator Lonny Piscoya**
Murder/Missing Indigenous Persons, Alaska State Troopers

5:00 p.m. **RECESS**

Friday, October 23 – Morning Session

8:30 a.m. **Qasgirmiut**

9:00 a.m. **Call to Order**
Gayla Hoseth and Joe Nelson, Co-Chairs, AFN

Recognition of Major Sponsors
Gayla Hoseth and Joe Nelson, Co-Chairs, AFN

Invocation - Louise Leonard and David Chanar

AFN Board Resolution 26-02 Presentation to Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Leadership

Hymn for Halong – Introduced by Nicholai Joekay

9:15 a.m. **Co-Chair Candidate Presentations**

9:30 a.m. **Bush Caucus Update**

10:00 a.m. **2026 President's Awards**

Moderated by Tabetha Toloff, Convention Committee Chair

11:30 a.m. **One People, One Voice: Standing Up for Alaska's Salmon & Our Way of Life**
Sharon Hildebrand, Chief/Chair, Tanana Chiefs Conference Chief/Chair; Vivian Korthuis, President, Association of Village Council Presidents; Gayla Hoseth, AFN Co-Chair; and Richard Peterson, President, Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

12:00 p.m. **LUNCH BREAK**

Friday, October 23 — AFTERNOON SESSION

12:30 p.m. **Naqsragmiut Dancers**

1:00 p.m. **Call to Order**
Gayla Hoseth and Joe Nelson, Co-Chairs, AFN

1:00 p.m. **Alaska's Existing Subsistence Framework & AFN's Subsistence Listening Sessions Findings Report**
Jaeleen Kookesh and Nikki Stoops

1:30 p.m. **AC Locklear, Chief Executive Officer for the National Indian Health Board**

1:45 p.m. **Alaska Resource & Tribal Infrastructure Coordination (ARTIC) Project Update**
Sarah Lukin

2:15 p.m. **The Importance of Voting**
Heather Shá xat k'ei Gurko, Alaska Native Brotherhood Grand President, and Heather Lgeik'i Mills, Alaska Native Sisterhood Grand President

2:30 p.m. **Chief Chuck Hoskin, Jr., Cherokee Nation**

2:45 p.m. **Candidates Forum - Welcome & Ground Rules**

5:30 p.m. **RECESS**

Saturday, October 24 – Morning Session

9:00 a.m. **Call to Order**
Gayla Hoseth and Joe Nelson, Co-Chairs, AFN

Invocation
Reverend Doctor Anna Frank, accompanied by Victor Joseph

Recognition of Major Sponsors
Gayla Hoseth and Joe Nelson, Co-Chairs, AFN

Final Credentials Report
Nikki Stoops, AFN Vice President

9:05 a.m. **Section 29 Report,** Alyeska Pipeline Services Company

9:15 a.m. **When Tribes Lead, Youth Rise: Self-Determined Pathways to Native Youth Wellbeing - Native Children's Commission Way Forward Report**

In 2024, the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children delivered The Way Forward, a report built on what Tribes, families, Elders, and youth shared in listening sessions and site visits across Alaska, Hawai'i, and the rest of the country. Its message is clear: Native communities already hold the solutions for their children, and those solutions are strongest when Tribe's lead. That same year, AFN delegates affirmed the report's 29 recommendations through Resolution 24-06, recognizing that what is designed, implemented, and controlled by Tribes and Tribal organizations works best for Native children and youth, and calling on federal agencies, Congress, and the State of Alaska to act. This panel explores how those recommendations are moving from vision to policy and practice, and how tribally led approaches can strengthen the wellness of Native youth, including efforts to prevent suicide and nurture the connection, culture, and belonging that protect young lives.

Panelists:
Gloria O'Neill, CITC President and CEO; Kim Hicks, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Tribal Affairs, Administration for Children and Families; Tayler Higgins, CITC Youth Advisory Council Vice Chair; Dr. Tina Woods, CITC Chief Clinical Officer; and Amber Ebarb, Staff Director, SCIA

9:55 a.m. **2026 Elders and Youth Conference Report**
Roy Agloinga, President, First Alaskans Institute

10:05 a.m. **2025 Resolutions Update**

10:15 a.m. **Consideration of 2026 AFN Convention Resolutions & Announcement of Co-Chair Election**
Moderated by Jodi Mitchell, AFN Resolutions Committee Chair

12:00 p.m. **LUNCH BREAK**

Saturday, October 24 – Afternoon Session

12:30 p.m. **Chevak Tanqik Dancers**

1:00 p.m. **Call to Order**
Gayla Hoseth and Joe Nelson, Co-Chairs, AFN

1:05 p.m. **The Next 60 Years**
Tayler Higgins, Moses Wiseman, and Sam Schimmel

1:30 p.m. **OMB's Proposed Uniform Guidance Overhaul: What Tribal Nations need to know—and how to prepare**
Craig Jacobson, Hobbs Straus Dean & Walker

2:00 p.m. **Lieutenant General Robert Davis, Commander, Alaskan NORAD Region, Alaskan Command, and Eleventh Air Force**

2:15 p.m. **Recognition of Joe Nelson**

Announcement & Welcome of AFN Co-Chair and Village Representatives

3:00 p.m. **Adjournment**
Gayla Hoseth and Joe Nelson, AFN Co-Chairs