



# **ALASKA NATIVE GOVERNANCE**

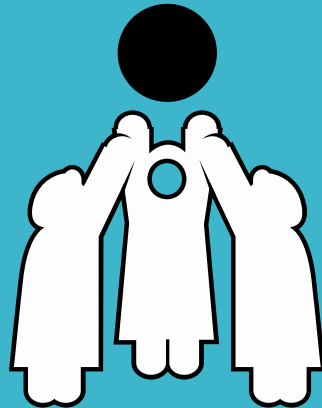
Testimony shared with  
Special Committee on Tribal Affairs – AK Legislature

Presented by:  
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Native Village of Kwinhagak Tribal Member



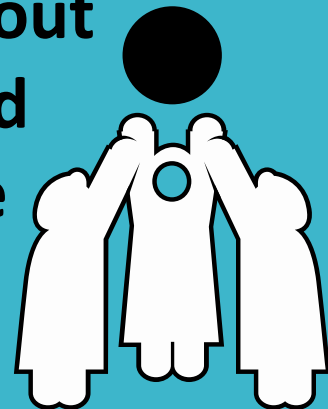
# Overview:

This presentation will enhance knowledge and understanding about Alaska Native history, contemporary issues, and layers of governance to help decision makers better understand their responsibilities and opportunities towards strengthening relationships, and working with the Alaska Native community.



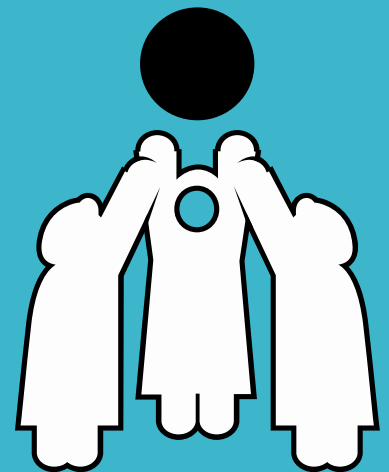
# What all Alaskans need to know:

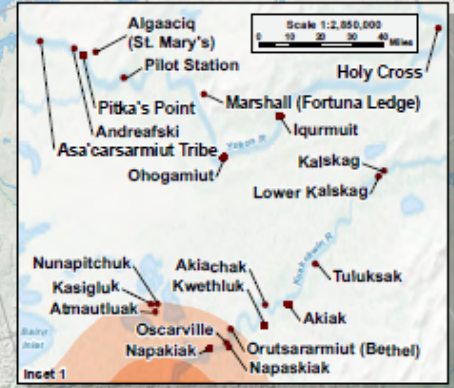
- Alaska Native people have *10,000+ years* of stewardship and connection to these lands now called Alaska
- We still possess intact knowledge systems and connections to place (geographic intelligence)
- Distinct cultural groups, languages, ways of life among Alaska Native people (Haida, Yup'ik, Athabascan, Inupiaq, ect.)
- Similarities in values and things we care about but not monolithic people, diverse ideas and priorities just like any other group of people



# 3 Sovereigns operating in Alaska at *all* times

- Tribal
  - State
  - Federal
- governments**



[illegible]



# We know who we are

People with traditional values and knowledge on  
how to govern, in modern contexts



*In memory of Roy S. Ewan  
(Ahtna) Kluti-Kaah*



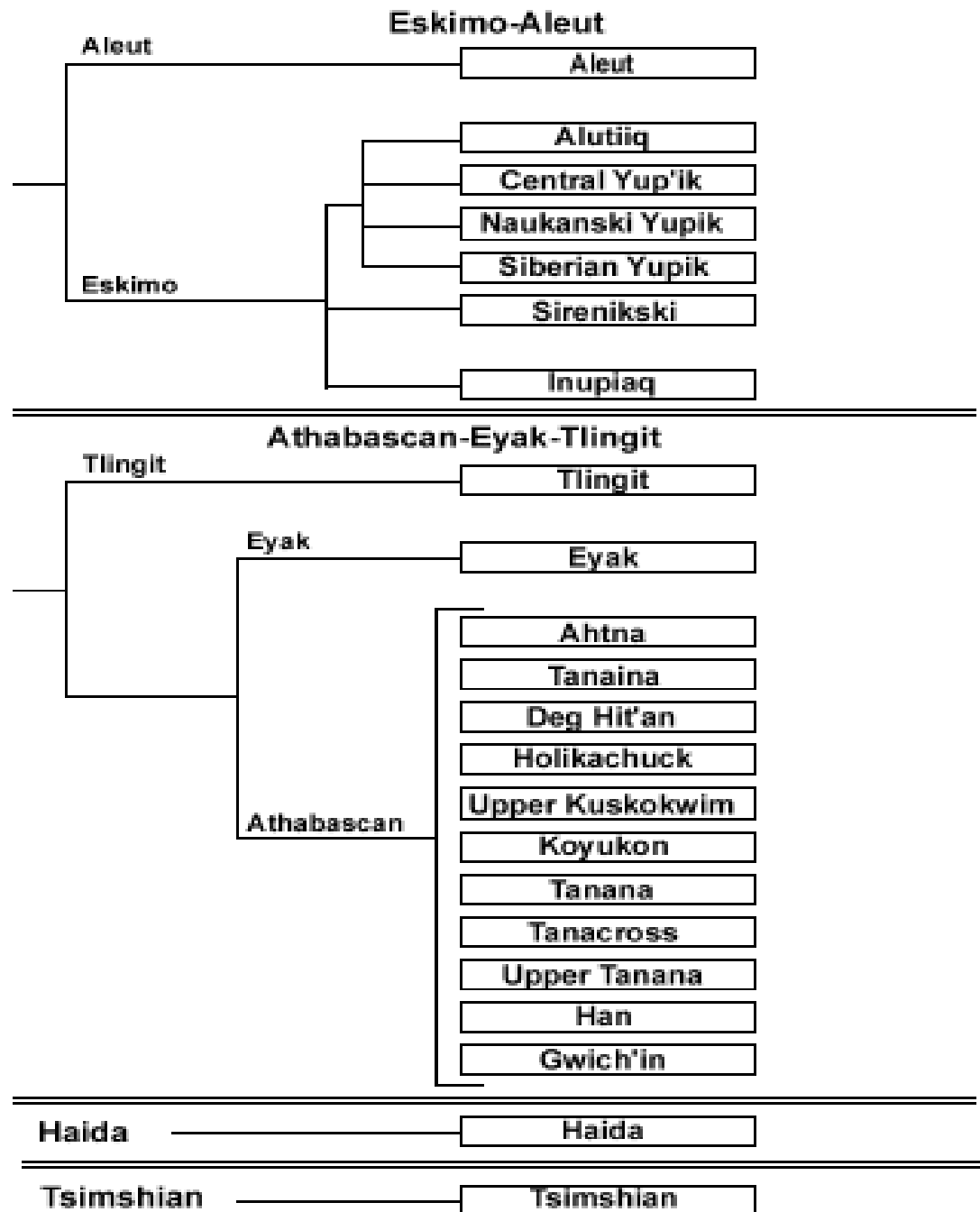
*In memory of Paul John  
(Yup'ik) Toksook Bay*

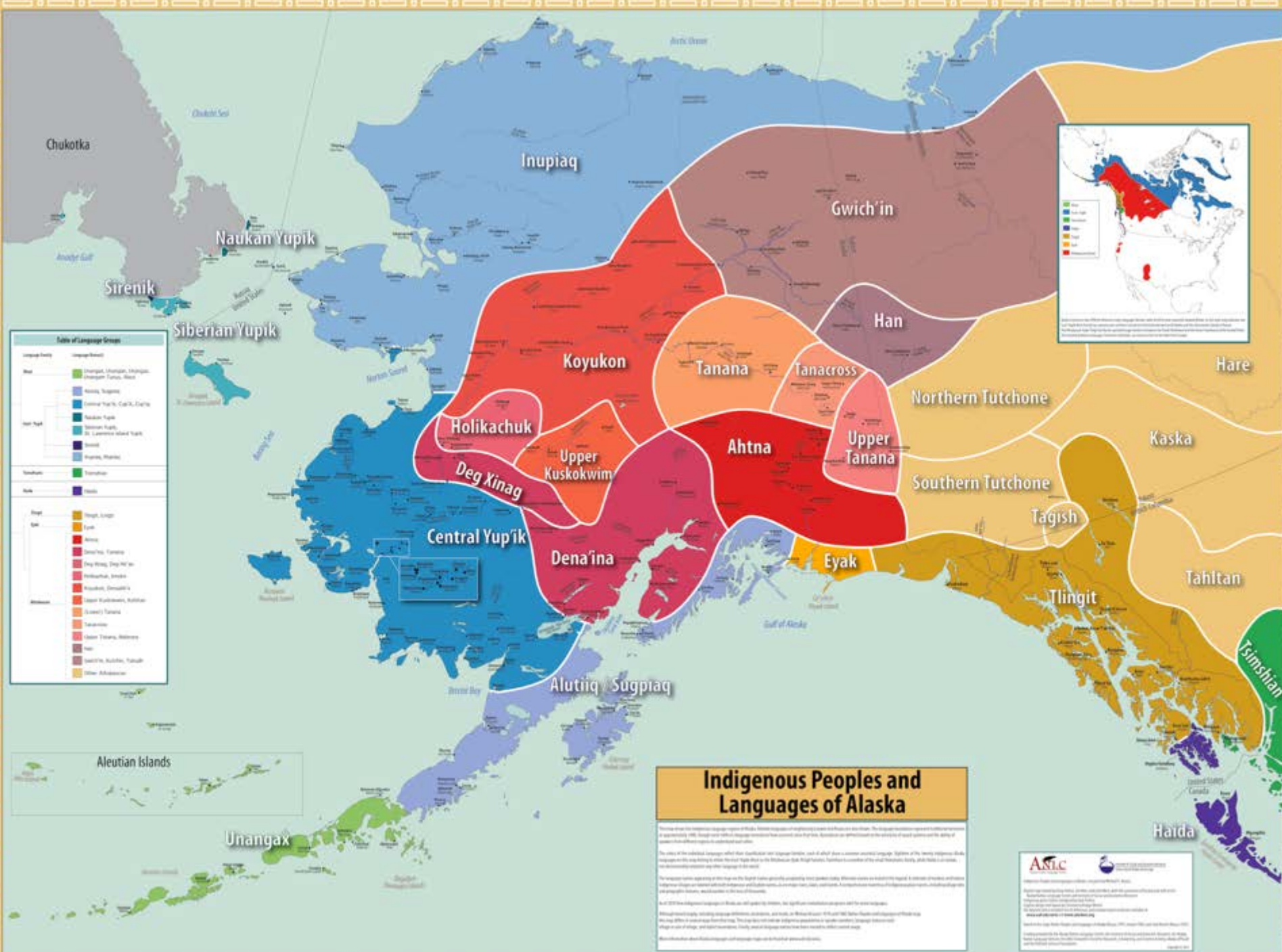


**Alaska Natives:**

**20+ distinct  
cultural groups  
and languages**

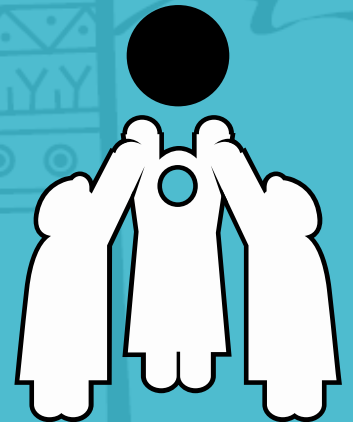
**19.5% of the  
states  
population,  
fastest growing**



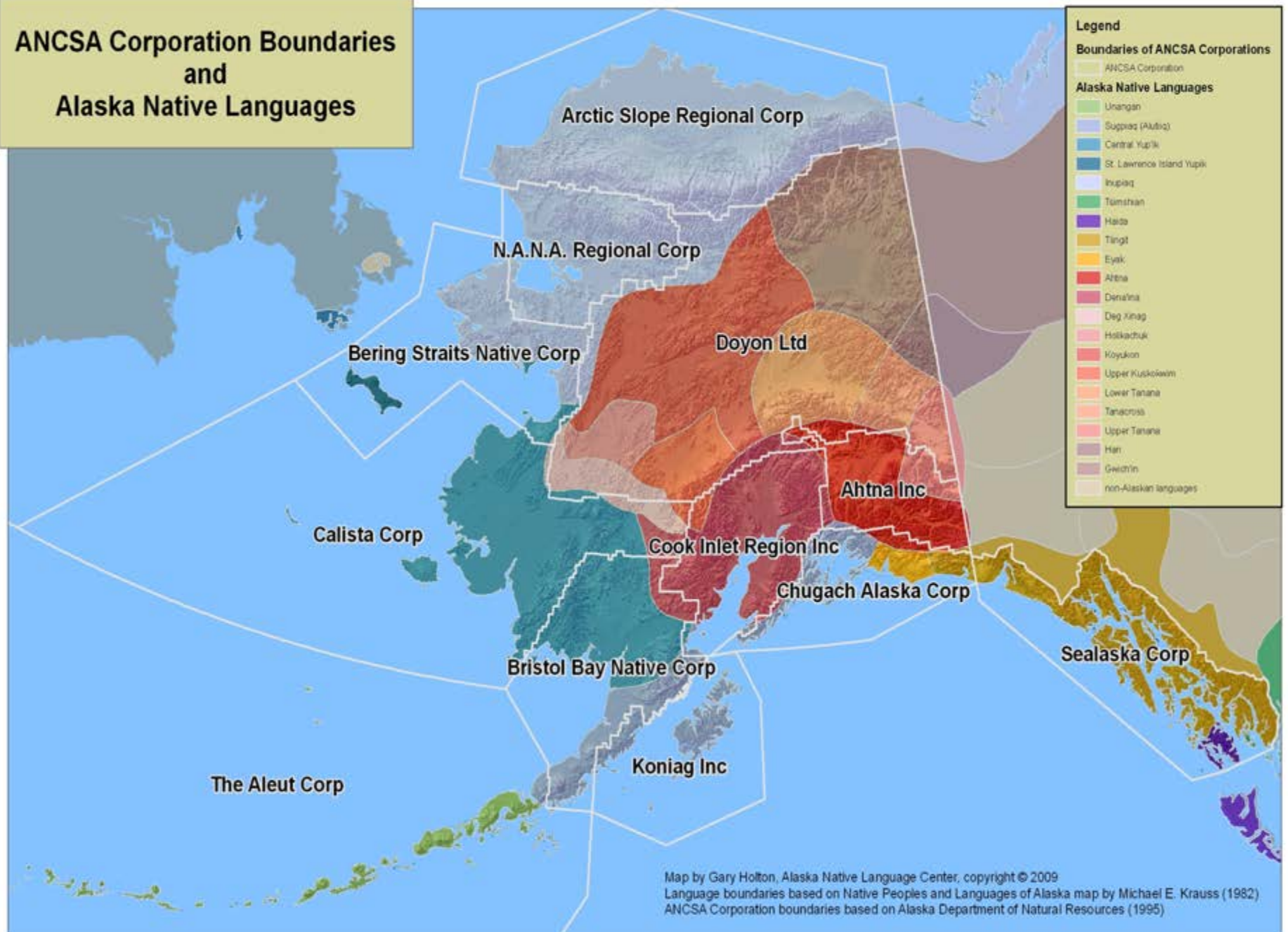




**Government-to-government  
relationship is based  
on the political  
not racial status of  
American Indian and  
Alaska Native people.**



# ANCSA Corporation Boundaries and Alaska Native Languages



# Types of Alaska Native Organizations

- 229 Tribal Governments
- 12 ANCSA Regional Corporations
- 195 ANCSA Village Corporations
- 12 Regional Native Non-Profit Associations/Consortiums
- 7 Statewide Native Non-Profit Orgs
- 50 Cultural and Heritage Centers/Museums
- 5 Marine Mammal Commissions
- Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council
- 1 Indian Reservation – Metlakalta

## **TRIBES**

**Inherent sovereignty, pre-dates US Constitution**

**“Federally Recognized Tribes” Pre-date ANCSA, but not mentioned in Act**

- **Govern and maintain jurisdiction over members; can enact laws**
- **Government to government relationship with the U.S. government and State of Alaska (per former Attorney General Lindemuth memo)**
- **Often own little or no land (problematic for governance)**

## **CORPORATIONS**

- **Construct of law; are state incorporated; exist to make profit; own ANCSA land in fee simple**
- **They do not govern**
- **Same relationship with state and federal governments as any other corporation; they pay dividends to shareholders**
- **Some federal laws include ANCSA corps as beneficiaries to the law that also include Tribes as beneficiaries**
- **Can develop land to increase revenue, if develop natural resources must share 70% of revenue with other ANCSA corps (7(i))**

### **12 REGIONAL NATIVE NON-PROFITS**

- **Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association**
- **Arctic Slope Native Association, Ltd.**
- **Association of Village Council Presidents**
- **Bristol Bay Native Association**
- **Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indians**
- **Chugachmiut**
- **Cook Inlet Tribal Council**
- **Copper River Native Association**
- **Kawarek, Inc.**
- **Kodiak Area Native Association**

**Manillaq Association**

**Tanana Chiefs Conference**

### **OTHER STATEWIDE NON-PROFITS**

**Alaska Federation of Natives**

**First Alaskans Institute**

**ANTHC**

**Alaska Native Health Board**

**Inuit Circumpolar Council**

**Alaska Native Heritage Center**



- **Many villages have operating at the same time, concurrently:**
  - Tribal Government
  - Municipal Government (State Charter)
  - ANCSA Village Corporation
- **Additional layers our villages are connected to:**
  - ANCSA Regional Corporation
  - Regional Non-Profit
  - Consortiums and Commissions
  - Statewide Non-Profits
  - Borough Governments
  - Borough School Districts
  - State Government, and all its departments
  - Federal Government, and all its departments, agencies, offices and programs

**Important to Understand:**

- Many Tribes and municipal governments are separate types of governments. Tribe's sovereignty exists ***inherently*** and is also recognized by federal law. Local governments derive their authority from their sovereign, the state government.
- Some Tribes and Municipalities operate cooperatively, some do not, some enter into contractual agreements or MOA's to share resources and administrative duties

# OUR WAYS OF LIFE

“I share what's on my table with you.

When I share with you my heart is happy,  
so is yours, and this is the  
way of [the] subsistence way of life.

I never heard the word Subsistence  
until 1971 under the Native Land Claims Act.

Before that time, when I was brought up  
in the culture of my people,  
it's always been our culture and our land.”

*-Jonathon Solomon, Fort Yukon*

# OUR WAYS OF LIFE

Stewarded and managed for thousands of years by Native peoples

- Our Ways of Life a rigorous stewardship system with exacting behavior & interaction expectations (ceremonies, protocols, societal laws, customs, practices, values)

Alaska Natives are not a ‘special interest’ or ‘stakeholder’ group.

Federal and State wildlife laws have a resource shortage use priority

Federal law - Rural resident priority under ANILCA

State law - All residents qualify

# Solutions for all Alaskans Exist

- Utilizing Self-Determination/Self-Governance
- Federal + State + Tribal Governments partnering
- Reimagining solutions with Tribes at the table

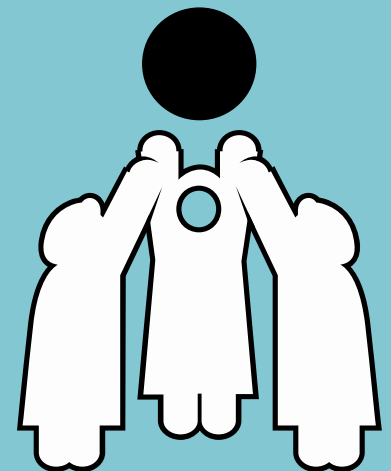




**Key to working with Native people is building relationships, trust, respect, recognition of self-determination.**

**Chin'an, 'Awa'ahdah, Dogedinh, Enaa Baasee',  
Gunalchéesh, Háw'aa, Igamsiqanaghalek, Masasee,  
Mahsi', Nt'oyaxsism, Qağaasskung, Qu yana,  
Qu yanaasinaq, Qu yanaqpak, Tsen'anh, Tsin'aen,  
Tsin'ee, Tsen'ii**

**Thank You**





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