

# Human Trafficking in Alaska



House Judiciary Committee  
January 24, 2024

Alaska Native Women's Resource Center  
Tami Truett Jerue, Executive Director



# Introducing Tami



Tami Truett Jerue, citizen of the Anvik Tribe. As Executive Director of the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (AKNWRC) Tami brought 40 years of direct services experience to this journey, beginning with the formation of AKNWRC in 2016. Tami joined a group of Alaska Native women passionate about ending interpersonal violence across Alaska, Tami and the now Board of Directors, believe interpersonal violence is a result of colonization and has no place in native culture. Ms. Jerue has testified before Congress and the United Nations bringing attention to the disproportionate rates of violence experienced by Alaska Native women and the lack of resources faced by tribes. Under Tami's management, the AKNWRC has become a voice for Alaska Native issues, particularly affecting women, children and families, telling truths to promote understanding, building partnerships, and most importantly supporting Alaska Native tribes as they tackle the complex issues of interpersonal violence.

Ms. Jerue, has a Bachelor's degree in Social Work and master's work in Community Psychology. She worked for over 28 years for the Anvik Tribal Council in Tribal Administration, Indian Child Protection, Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault (DV/SA) and Counseling/Advocacy. She is married to Carl Jerue, Jr. of Anvik sharing 4 beautiful children and 6 grandchildren.



# About AKNWRC

Since 2015, the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center has been dedicated to strengthening local, tribal government's responses through community organizing efforts advocating for the safety of women and children in their communities and homes, especially against domestic and sexual abuse and violence.

AKNWRC board members are Alaska Native women raised in Alaska Native Villages and have over 141 years of combined experience governments, nonprofit management, domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy, and other social service experience.

## Our Mission

The Alaska Native Women's Resource Center envisions our Tribal women, communities and families free from violence, healing the trauma and utilizing the wisdom of our ancestors to create effective community/Tribal responses to domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, trafficking, sexual assault, and related injustices.



# About AKNWRC

AKNWRC is the only Alaska-based member of the Domestic Violence Resource Network (DVRN) funded by the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Family Violence and Prevention Services (FVPSA) through the Office of the Administration for Children and Families**, and the FVSPA designated Alaska TTA provider to work collaboratively to promote practices and strategies to improve our nation's response to domestic violence and make safety and justice a priority. DVRN members ensure that victims of domestic violence, advocates, community programs, educators, legal assistance providers, law enforcement and court personnel, health care providers, policy makers, and government leaders at the local, state, tribal, and federal levels have access to up-to-date information on best practices, policies, research, TTA, and victim resources.

AKNWRC is also the designated Alaska Native Tribal Resource Center and TTA provider responsible for focusing on the intervention and prevention of family violence, domestic violence, and dating violence by offering culturally sensitive statewide information, training, and technical assistance designed to reduce tribal disparities within Alaska Native communities.



# AKNWRC Partnerships

Participation and partnership with tribal, state, and federal partners, including:

- The Emmonak's Women's Shelter
- The Yu'pik Women's Coalition
- Healing Native Hearts Coalition
- University of Alaska Fairbanks
- RurAL Cap
- Alaska Native Justice Center
- Association of Village Council Presidents
- Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
- The National Indigenous Women's Resource Center
- The Indian Law Resource Center
- The National Congress of American Indians
- Pouhana O Nā Wāhine
- The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
- The Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault





# Victim Voices at the Center

*“And be it further enacted if any person or persons should undertake to force a woman and did it by force, it shall be left to woman what punishment she should satisfied with to whip or pay what she say it be law”*

*1825 Mvskoke Written Criminal Law*



# Federal Definition of Trafficking

22 U.S. Code § 7102– Trafficking Victims Protection Act

The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by **force, fraud, or coercion**, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.



# Alaska Definition of Trafficking

AS § 11.41.360; 11.81.900 – Definition in Labor Trafficking

A person commits the crime of human trafficking in the first degree if the person **compels or induces another person to engage in sexual conduct**, adult entertainment, or labor in the State **by force, threat of force against any person, or by deception**.





# Alaska Definition of Trafficking cont...

## AS § 11.66.110 – Definition in Sex Trafficking of Minors

A person commits the crime of sex trafficking in the first degree if the person does any of the following:

- **Induces or causes a person to engage in prostitution** through the **use of force**
- As other than a patron of a prostitute, **induces or causes** a person **younger than age 20** to engage in prostitution
- **Induces or cause a person in that person's legal custody** to engage in prostitution



# Sex Trafficking in Alaska

Since its inception, National Human Trafficking Hotline has identified **124 cases** of human trafficking in Alaska. **236 victims** were identified in these cases.

## Cases Identified in 2021

**16**

cases were identified in 2021.



**25**

victims were involved in these cases. Cases can involve multiple victims.



# Sex Trafficking in Alaska

A National Congress of American Indians study found that 40% of women who are victims of sex trafficking identify as American Indian, Alaska Native, or First Nations

A Loyola University report found that homeless youth in Anchorage were being trafficked at a rate of nearly 30% - more than 1 in 4

- Higher than any other city studied, including New York City
- 42% were Alaska Native



# Not Invisible Act Commission

The Commission is a multi-agency effort to enhance protections and basic guidelines to engage, coordinate, and consult with tribal governments, survivors, families, and experts who best understand the needs of tribal communities to lead Federal efforts to ensure indigenous people don't continue to go missing by developing strategies to address the crisis by developing:

- Administrative changes to identify, report, and respond effectively to cases of missing persons, murder, and human trafficking of Indians within Indian lands;
- Best practices for Tribal, federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to follow in combating violent crime against Indians within Indian lands, including missing persons, murder, and human trafficking; and
- Guidance on how to address any gaps in services for Indian victims of violent crime.



# NIA Commission Recommendations

**Finding:** There is a lack of available data at all levels of government but especially at the national level to ascertain the extent of the problem of (1) missing AI/AN persons, (2) homicides and violent deaths of AI/AN people, and (3) **AI/AN individuals who are trafficked**.

**Finding:** A lack of coordination and oversight contributes to the insufficiency and ineffectiveness of the federal government's response to the **MMIP and Human Trafficking crisis**. When federal agencies fail to coordinate, Tribes lose.

**Finding:** Federal funding for criminal justice and victim services as it is currently administered is wholly unsuitable to address the **MMIP and Human Trafficking crisis**.

**Finding:** The jurisdictional framework in Indian country and Alaska Native Villages poses significant challenges to public safety and the effectiveness of the **MMIP and Human Trafficking response**. Under federal law, Tribal nations do not have the full authority needed to address all crime on their lands and are reliant on state and federal authorities. **This significantly contributes to the MMIP and Human Trafficking crisis.**



# Victim Blaming/Shaming Keeps Victims Silent



# Supporting Victims Promotes Healing and Justice







**STRONGHEARTS**  
Native Helpline

1-844-762-8483

<https://strongheartshelpline.org/>



# Questions?



Gunalcheesh/Quyana/Thank You



# Quyana - Gunalchéesh - Háw'aa – Mahsi'Choo - Baasee' - Maasee' - Dogedinh



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