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OFFICE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Alaska Natives Listening Session



Summary Report
Fairbanks, AK
October 19, 2016

Working Together to End Violence

U.S. Department of Justice
Office on Violence Against Women

Alaska Native Listening Session

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Introduction and Background

Title IX, Section 903 of the Violence Against Women Act of 2005 (VAWA 2005), as amended in VAWA 2013, mandates that the Attorney General conduct annual consultations with Indian tribal governments about the administration of VAWA's tribal funds and programs.

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) conducts these government-to-government consultations with American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments each year. In 2015, the consultation was held in Shelton, WA, and was attended by representatives from many tribal governments across the nation. Participants included representatives from 11 Alaska Native tribes and villages, the largest representation from Alaska that had ever attended the annual consultation. Testimony from the 2015 annual tribal consultation, including testimony from Alaska Native tribal governments, is reported in the 2015 tribal consultation report, available on the DOJ website at <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/tribal-consultation>.

At the 2015 consultation and on previous occasions, Alaska Native tribes and villages have requested that DOJ come to Alaska for a formal listening session with tribes. In response to testimony from Alaska Native tribal governments and other advocates, DOJ planned a special listening session in Fairbanks, AK, to focus on issues particular to Alaska Native tribes. This report documents the testimony given at the listening session DOJ held in Alaska, and in written testimony. It also includes a record of discussion and recommendations from the Unity Meeting to address violence against Alaska Native women. The record for receiving testimony remained open until November 4, 2016.

Unity Meeting

On October 19, before the listening session, a Unity Meeting to address violence against Alaska Native women took place from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The meeting was hosted by the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center and the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC).

Through an OVW-funded pilot project, NIWRC is working with four Alaska Native villages to develop an Alaska Native curriculum on violence against women. The four villages represent different regions of Alaska:


- Anvik Village, in the Athabascan region
- Emmonak Village, in the Yup'ik region
- Kotzebue, in the NANA region
- Organized Village of Kake, in the Tlingit region

Representatives from these villages gave comments on the pilot project and emphasized that each pilot has been very different because they have been shaped by local culture, where there are differences in subsistence activities, tribal governments, and many other things.

From Anvik, Tamara Truett-Jerue reported that only four of about 60 villages in their region have any law enforcement at all. She also said that the state of Alaska is still not consulting with villages on STOP grants, and that Alaska Native voices are not heard. Ms. Jerue serves as the Executive Director for the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center.

From Emmonak, Lenora Hootch said that she worked as a shelter director there from 1994 to 2005, and curriculums they used from the state were not relevant to the village. The first regional NIWRC





curriculum training was held in Emmonak in April 2015. Christine Teganlakla, also from Emmonak, said that 13 Emmonak representatives attended the 2015 training and used translators to hear and understand the ideas from the training.

From Kotzebue, Roberta Mato reported that in April 2016 she participated in an NIWRC session attended by about 50 people from her area. At the beginning of the session, many of the participants didn't know what VAWA was. She emphasized the importance of including Native languages in the development of the Alaska Native curriculum.

From Kake, Isabell Mills reported that they have been an OVW grantee for 4 years. Reporting to DOJ on the grant every 6 months has been very demanding. She reminded the group that having local domestic violence awareness materials, like T-shirts, makes a difference in raising awareness in a community.

The group also reported on their international advocacy efforts on behalf of Alaska Native women. Several women from Alaska traveled to the UN Council on Indigenous Women's issues in the past year to call attention to Alaska Native women's issues at the United Nations. Priscilla Kameroff, Public Policy Analyst for the Yupik Women's Coalition, Joanne Horn, and Lenora Hootch participated in the World Conference of Indigenous People in 2014 and spoke to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women Rashida Manjoo about violence in Alaskan tribal communities. Ms. Horn explained that because of their presence and their advocacy, the UN heard their voices and agreed to keep the issue of violence against indigenous women at the forefront. This issue will continue to be a priority for the UN Council in 2017, and tribal delegates should attend these meetings. NIWRC has also partnered with the Indian Law Resource Center, located in Washington, DC on international issues.

Alaska Native Listening Session

The Alaska Native Listening Session was held in Fairbanks, AK, on October 19, 2016, from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. It was scheduled in conjunction with the annual Alaska Federation of Natives Convention, which took place in Fairbanks on October 20 through 22, 2016, so that tribal leaders and advocates from across the state could more easily attend.

Opening and Welcome

The listening session began with a traditional opening offered by Joann Horn (Emmonak), the executive director of the Emmonak Women's Shelter.

Lorraine Edmo (Shoshone-Bannock), Deputy Director for Tribal Affairs at the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), introduced the listening session and welcomed participants. Ms. Edmo explained that her role at OVW includes overseeing many of OVW's tribal programs, including the annual government-to-government tribal consultation on violence against Native women, DOJ's Grants to Tribal Governments program, the Tribal Coalitions program, and the new Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction program.

Ms. Edmo introduced the federal staff attending the consultation from DOJ, including:

- **Bea Hanson**, Principal Deputy Director, OVW
- **Marcia Good**, Senior Counsel to the Director, Office of Tribal Justice
- **Tammie Gregg**, Deputy Associate Attorney General, Office of the Associate Attorney General

Ms. Edmo expressed that DOJ was glad to be visiting Fairbanks for the first time and to be conducting a listening session focused on Alaska Native issues within the broader topic of violence against Native women. She recalled that, in recognition of VAWA's 20th anniversary in 2014, DOJ representatives conducted a tour of Alaska that included visits to Anchorage, Kotzebue, Maniilaq, Noatak, Kake, Juneau, and Barrow.

Welcoming Remarks

Ms. Hanson presented welcoming remarks to the group, affirming that “the particular issues of Alaska need particular attention.” She explained that, at the 2015 annual consultation session in Shelton, WA, DOJ heard clearly from Alaska participants that a listening session in Alaska was needed to fully understand the issues faced by Alaska Native tribes and villages. In this listening session, she explained, federal representatives wanted to hear about the challenges faced in Alaska and what assistance from DOJ would be helpful in moving forward. She also reminded participants of the upcoming 2016 annual tribal consultation taking place in Palm Springs, CA, on December 6.

Tribal leaders and other participants at the listening session introduced themselves, and then Ms. Edmo opened the floor for testimony.

Tribal Leader Testimony and Recommendations

Testimony given at the listening session is summarized below with the speaker's name, title, and their tribal or organizational affiliation. The list is alphabetized by speakers' tribe or organization name. Written testimony and recommendations presented at the Unity Meeting on violence against Alaska Native women are also reported in this section.

Akiak Native Community, Akiak, AK


Mike Williams, Tribal Council Member

We appreciate OVW coming up here to listen to the concerns from our communities. Akiak is located in western Alaska, near Bethel, and we have about 370 tribal members in our community. We live in a subsistence way, depending on hunting, gathering, and fishing. Right now, western Alaska has the highest rates of suicide, domestic violence, and substance abuse. The reauthorization of VAWA was a blessing for us, particularly when the Alaska exception¹ was removed. We need to remove all Alaska exceptions from federal policy.

Our community had no domestic violence statistics before first contact. We were a healthy community that governed itself, and we had our own infrastructure, self-governance, and self-determination. When miners and other outsiders made contact with us, we experienced devastating disease. There were so many deaths—there were times when all the bodies could not be buried. Our elders still tell stories of the great death they saw—because, for us, the massive changes of first contact started less than 100 years ago.

¹ Section 910 of VAWA 2013 (Public Law 113-4 Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013) stated that there was no “Indian Country” in Alaska except the Metlakatla Indian Reservation, and that the increased tribal jurisdiction mandated in VAWA 2013 did not apply outside of “Indian Country.” Section 910 was repealed in December 2014, meaning that all Alaska tribes and villages can now legally exercise tribal jurisdiction as expanded in VAWA 2013.





During that time, the state of Alaska was established and our local forms of government changed completely. Assimilation took place. Our parents ended up in boarding schools and were not allowed to speak their language. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was passed. The Venetie court case² ruled that there was no Indian Country in Alaska except for the Metlakatla Reservation. After all that we have seen—the deaths, the losses, and the impacts of alcohol and substance abuse—people try to numb themselves to the pain of this change.

When we initiated our tribal courts, we saw a decrease in criminal activity. Incarceration rates for the state went down, because we could prohibit alcohol, arrest people who imported it, and make judgements against those individuals. The state of Alaska was not providing us the protection we needed, so we took matters into our own hands.

We need ongoing assistance with our tribal courts and funding to build capacity in that area, because the state of Alaska continues to fail us. We need program dollars from DOJ to continue the public safety programs we have in our communities, and we need VAWA programs in place for each of the 229 tribes of Alaska.

We need culturally relevant programs in each community. Alaska has 229 tribes, and we cannot afford to have “haves” and “have nots” in this process. We periodically have opportunities to participate in budget consultations, but those chances to contribute have to be made available on an ongoing basis, so everyone can have the chance to participate.

The top officials who administer DOJ programs should be from our own indigenous communities. Particularly because of the highly coordinated nature of CTAS, people at DOJ who make funding decisions must really understand our communities and how different social issues connect. With Ms. Edmo leaving her post, we will need a replacement of her caliber who has knowledge of our communities. An indigenous person should be running these very important programs at DOJ.

Regarding tribal courts, every community has some sort of tribal court processes. If the community does not have tribal court judges, members of the tribal council take on that responsibility. Until recently, the Bureau of Indian Affairs had not funded tribal courts, but in a recent appropriations bill,³ \$10 million was allocated to tribal courts in Public Law 280 states.⁴ With this additional funding, we anticipate that more tribes will be able to set up their own courts.

Tanana Chiefs Conference has a tribal courts department that works with tribes to offer training and capacity building in this area. Of the 56 tribes in our area, half have courts that are set up to provide adjudication, but many still rely on state courts to handle criminal cases. We need significant capacity building for our courts, and I am glad the Tanana Chiefs Conference resource center has been established to help us.

² In *Alaska v. Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government* (1998), the Court ruled that land held under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 is not Indian Country, as defined in 18 U.S.C. §1151.

³ The FY 2017 Interior and Environment Appropriations bill included support and funding for tribal courts in Public Law 280 states, among other things.

⁴ Public Law 83-280 (Public Law 280), passed in 1953, affected certain states (six mandatory states, as well as other optional states) by removing federal and tribal law enforcement jurisdiction in Indian Country in those states and assigning jurisdiction to the state governments.

Alaska Native Women's Resource Center, Fairbanks, AK

Tia Holley, Board Member/Wellness Consultant

I am of the King Island Inupiat and Kenaitze clans. I am a survivor of childhood sexual abuse and domestic violence. I am a second generation alcoholic in recovery and a victim of intergenerational trauma. My mother is from King Island, where the Alaska Native population was completely removed. No one lives there now.

As a single mother, I became a drug and alcohol counselor and worked for the tribe. The tribe sent me to study social work and I received my bachelor's degree. In my master's-level work, I asked if the school had a social work program that focused on Alaska Native issues, and the school said, "No, why should we?" Instead of continuing to study social work, I got my master's degree in rural development, focusing on circumpolar indigenous issues.

My community needs help with law enforcement, tribal jurisdiction, and tribal judges, as well as debriefing for our first responders. We have these needs just as other Alaskan communities do. When I spoke with Senator Lisa Murkowski about help for communities in rural areas, she told me, "You're different." But we are not. We live in the middle of a colonized location. The population has grown 5 to 7 percent. It used to be wholly indigenous, but we have had an influx of non-Native people. The Western mindset says that we are doing this to ourselves, but we need support and empowerment to address our problems with traditional living and healthy ways.

To have culturally appropriate services, we need to be able to "grow our own" responders, including training our own village public safety officers and mental health responders. When non-Native people are in these roles, they make decisions about the lives of Alaska Native people who are at the worst point in their lives, at their most vulnerable. Non-Native people make the decisions that determine whether our people can access the help they need. Even behavioral health aides in the villages are supervised and governed by someone who got a degree far away and is working from a Western mindset in their training. Our tribal government visited the Maori in New Zealand, and we learned that they do not let anyone do counseling for their people unless they are Maori. This restriction is a good thing—people are much more comfortable talking to someone when they know that person can relate to them.


We need a way to recognize and give authority to people in the villages who have been working hard in their own communities, even when they do not have a specific degree because they have not been able to leave the village for advanced education. I have conducted trainings with these women who have been working in their own communities, I co-teach classes at the University of Alaska Fairbanks with them, and I am amazed at how strong they are and how committed they are to finding solutions. They are the PhDs in this fight.

Anvik Village, Anvik, AK

Carl Jerue, Jr., First Chief

We are a small tribe at Anvik. There are 70 people at most who live there. We have a vacant tribal police officer position. It was filled for a while. The young man in the position was interested in doing the job, and, even with no money for training, he had stepped in and was starting to make a difference. But working for a small village is tough, and he got very frustrated. When you know everyone in the village, you cannot get away. You go home, but the calls keep coming in.





With our tribal courts at home, we do not pound on the desk with a big gavel, giving out harsh sentences and making people feel bad. I have seen that at the state level, and it does not work. When our young men and women go to jail and get out again, there is nothing for them—nothing to do but go back to the villages and offend again.

Our tribal court has been a force for change in our community, particularly for our children. In the beginning, cases are difficult with a lot of tension and anger, but by the time we have worked through to a resolution, parents, children, and counsel are all happy because the child is not being taken away from their home.

It is very important to have a tribal court clerk who keeps the records accurate and protected and ensures that parents' and children's rights are both protected. Our clerk has a great deal of training and experience. With the number of tribes we have in our region, it is hard to imagine that we could have a tribal court clerk for every tribe—it would cost so much money. The cost and the scope of need is why we are pursuing the idea of an intertribal court system. We have a letter of support from four tribes in our area who are willing to work together to create an intertribal court system, and we continue to try and get funding for that project.

Many aspects of tribal courts need funding. We currently have funding for a part-time clerk, but that is not enough with the caseload we have. We need training for counsel who will sit as tribal judges. When we get new, young lawyers, we have to be able to work with them so they can learn the procedures and laws. They are the generation that will be leading after we retire.

We have made changes in our community, and this is prevention for us. Twenty years ago, for New Year's Eve, there were big gatherings with the whole village partying. We have changed that, though it took a while. Today, we have a community dinner. Everyone comes, there is no alcohol, and families and kids are happy. It took all of us working together to make that change.

With the state government of Alaska, they do not know our culture. They do not know how we live or think, or how we work together to help one another. When we say we need programs that are based in culture, they do not understand. In many ways, I feel that we are looked down on by the state.

We also need funding for facilities. Right now, we must make do with only the facilities we have available in our small village.

I would like to invite DOJ to come visit Anvik one of these days.

[Anvik Village, Anvik, AK](#)

Robert Walker, Second Chief

We have urgent law enforcement needs in the village. Alaska state troopers want to help us, but they cannot. Their hands are tied by the rules of so many different entities. And the state troopers are our only law, because we do not have our own police.

Our tribal judges and counsel have it hard, too, in the cases they must listen to. Sometimes, to protect a child, you must take them out of the home, and we always want a better solution than that. There are criminals who walk around our town, but we cannot take any action against them because the statute of limitations has run out.

We did research to find out if our tribal courts could “red stripe” a person’s ID⁵ to restrict alcohol purchases the way the state of Alaska can, but we found that we do not have the authority to do that. The state can do it—why can tribal courts not do it?

For now, we watch over the village ourselves. We see people sneak over from other towns with drugs and alcohol, asking young people to come party. I know we cannot act as the policemen forever—we are getting old, and someday we won’t be here. But right now, I don’t even like to leave town. We need help with law enforcement. Someone has to step up to do something.

Anvik Village, Anvik, AK

Shirley Moses, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Advocate

I join everyone else in strongly recommending funding safe homes and shelters that are for Native people. We have 22 or 23 state-operated shelters, but those do not meet the needs of our people. There are time limitations and restrictions on getting into the shelters, and women have to “prove” that they are in a relationship that has domestic violence. The shelters have lots of rules that women violate, because they come in traumatized, and then they get kicked out even if they do manage to get in.

We need legal advocates in shelters who can accompany women to court. When our domestic violence victims go to court, they end up charged with crimes because they are not believed when law enforcement responds. Children get taken away from mothers at very high rates. We need advocates who can listen and believe victims, and who can go into tribal communities and train tribal courts on domestic violence. Tribal courts need training on the codes they should have in place for domestic violence and how to make appropriate decision for their community members in these cases.


We need advocates who can provide a culturally relevant response to sexual assault. There are high rates of sexual assault in Fairbanks where I live. Of about 560 cases so far this year, 60 percent have been Native women. That is a very high rate—and these are the ones who are reporting it. The Native women who do report sexual assault—our police department calls them “frequent flyers.” They mock them behind the scenes and imply that the assault is their fault because they have been drinking. We need advocates who can stand alongside these women—during the sexual assault medical exam, but also to offer follow-up care. Women may get tested for sexually transmitted diseases, but there are no resources for counseling. If they are from a village, they get sent back to the village. Tribes need access to VOCA money⁶ so we can offer follow-up care, like counseling, that can help victims rebuild their lives.

A high percentage of our women want to stay in their villages rather than go to urban centers for services. Their supports are in the village. They are the breadwinners for their families. Would you want to leave your job to go live in a shelter for 60 days? There is no deposit money for them, no transitional housing, no support, no mom or auntie they can turn to if they need help. This is why we need culturally relevant shelters and safe homes in the villages.

⁵ In the state of Alaska, a red stripe is applied to a person’s driver’s license or state ID card to show that they have been court-ordered not to buy alcohol, often because of an alcohol offense on their record.

⁶ The Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA) established the Crime Victims’ Fund, a fund that is financed by fines and penalties paid by federal offenders. The fund is administered by the DOJ Office for Victims of Crime to provide program funding for victim service providers.





We need funding for prevention. So many of us are tired of responding. Tribes should have access to funds to teach traditional parenting and other cultural values, to teach our culture and celebrate its strength. Up until now, we had survived for ten thousand years without these words in our vocabularies. The introduction of sexual assault and domestic violence is fairly recent, and we can relearn and reteach our traditional ways to future generations to address these issues in a preventative way.

I recommend that DOJ fund a summit on domestic violence and sexual assault in different regions that is open to many different parties. Ten years ago, we had a summit in Fairbanks that included tribal representatives, judicial representatives, state attorneys, magistrates, legislators, legal advocates, law enforcement, and others. The training shared about historical trauma and high rates of recidivism, about the lack of prosecution and the cases that just get dumped or pleaded out. The state prosecutors I work with regularly still ask about that training, saying how helpful it was to them and asking if we can do it again. Court clerks tell me it was the best training they ever had. It makes sense to have trainings that include tribal systems and state systems together. Tribal courts will never be operating strictly on their own—they will always have to work within the larger system of county and state courts, so why not educate everyone on these different legal processes?

Emmonak Village, Emmonak, AK

Herman Hootch, Emmonak Corporation Board of Directors Secretary

Before I was a council member, I used to be a cop. We saw young girls that were sexually assaulted and the offenders would get away with it. Weather plays a factor, and a victim may not be able to go in to a hospital soon enough. Many sexual assaults go unreported in our village and in surrounding villages, as well.

Our police officers have no protection. They cannot carry guns; all they have is the notebook they carry to do investigations. There was a gun incident reported, and I went to respond with no weapon, after others had refused to go because it was too dangerous. I was able to take the gun away from the man, but in that incident, we had called state troopers and no one ever responded. We regularly have to approach people who are violent, who are drunk, and all we can do is ask questions and record the answers in our books.

Our officers are not trained on how to secure a crime scene in the event of a murder or a sexual assault. In the instances where state troopers or FBI do conduct an investigation, they get frustrated with us because our officers have unintentionally tampered with evidence, because they lack the training. Police officers must respond to suicides, as well, and those are not too pretty to look at. Our officers do not get any kind of debriefing or help with dealing with the violence they witness. Overall, we lack proper law enforcement.

Haven House Juneau, Juneau, AK

June I. Degnan, President (written testimony)

I am the founder and president of Haven House Juneau, a transitional home for women leaving prison. Alaska Natives are 19% of our state's population, but we make up more than twice that percentage of our state's prison population. Haven House Juneau houses up to six women and has a staff of three.

I have lived in other states and other countries, and I can say that Alaska is the most racially biased state I have ever experienced. Alaska Native people are the largest landowners and the primary subsistence-

based natural resource extractors in this part of the world. Because of our status, we have encountered bias from government and religion that continues to harm us to this day. Our government's biased and violent treatment has led to devastating impacts among our people, including homelessness, violence, drug and alcohol abuse, racial prejudice, lack of opportunity, and all forms of unhealthy behavior.

My siblings were educated at University of Alaska Fairbanks, as our family's first generation of formal education. Their experiences of racism and unhealthy behavior at the university were shameful and highly objectionable. My father, Frank A. Degnan, was one of the founders of the Alaska Federation of Natives in 1966, and he spent a lifetime organizing people to understand the principles of land claims, land title, and land security. His efforts fed directly into the Alaska Land Claims Settlement Act of 1971.

I believe the greatest need is for truth and reconciliation. The governments and agencies who have visited devastating harm on Alaska Native people throughout their history should acknowledge this harm, address it, and find a way to heal it. These events should be part of the history texts we learn in schools. It is time to overcome White supremacy and work toward healing, becoming compassionate human beings, and finally treating each other as equals.

Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Kenai, AK

Bernadine Atchison, Tribal Council Member

There are many ways that we experience violence. Mothers are encouraged to have their children vaccinated when that is not a natural thing to do, and this is abuse and intimidation against women. In the early 1980s, they did experimental vaccines on indigenous groups, and Kenai was one area where that happened. These vaccines have caused problems, like cancer and asthma, years later. They can also cause suicidal thoughts. This is violence against the child and the woman.

Traditionally, we have always fished, and now we have to ask for permission. When you cannot provide sustenance for your children, that is a violence against our people. When our men cannot go out and engage in our subsistence ways to feed their families, it encourages drug abuse and alcoholism.

Language and culture connect us to the land and to who we are. When we do not know, we have a sense of loss, and we do not know where we belong. People do things to cover up this feeling of loss and to numb the pain of what they have experienced as a child.

With the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, our tribe and our claim to the land would not be recognized unless we formed a corporation. But when you do that, you split families. People are thinking about money rather than traditional values and how to remain connected with their tribe.

Education should be turned over to the tribes, and there should be funding for language and culture programs. If the state of Alaska pays \$15,000 for every child to go to school, that money should be given to the tribes to have their own immersion schools in villages. In public schools, when students are recognized as indigenous, they are labeled as having problems, and the school gets more money for that. The system clearly is not working for indigenous students, and we would do a better job at educating our own children.





Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Kenai, AK

Clinton Lageson, Tribal Council Treasurer

When I became a parent, I realized that I needed to do things very differently from what I had seen growing up. I moved away from Alaska and lived in New York, and I got a lot of counseling and took a lot parenting classes. Even living in a big city, using these resources was very expensive, and people living in Alaska villages like where I grew up do not have access to resources like these. Kids who are coming into adulthood in Alaska villages are struggling. Mentoring and culturally appropriate care is not available. They should not have to move away, like I did, to find the right path.

When I was in school, the special education classes were 80 percent Native. The other kids made fun of us, and we did not understand that the state was making money off of designating us as special education. Today, there are charter schools that teach toward Alaska Native learning styles and understand that we learn better by using all our senses.

So many points are not connected for us yet. We need help from A to Z. It needs to start as far back as historical trauma and reach through to the present day. We need mentoring for kids and a court system that provides guidance and healing, like circle courts do, instead of putting you down. We have a circle court in Kenaitze. I look forward to hearing a report back from DOJ on how they are moving forward with culturally appropriate assistance.

Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Kenai, AK

Liisia Blizzard, Tribal Council Secretary

Our children who witness domestic violence, alcoholism, and drug abuse grow up to have the same problems, and that same generational trauma is repeated today. Even in Head Start, we have children who have already been exposed to domestic violence. At ages 2, 4, or 5, they already have behavior problems. In Alaska, we have the highest rate of children in the care of the state than any other state in the union. We have to find a way to put a stop to this cycle of generational trauma.

I agree with Ms. Atchison's comments on education in Alaska. My kids went to public school and were recipients of Title VII. They got special tutoring and other students made fun of them. If we were able to bring back language, culture, and our indigenous ways of life, it would help our children with their identity and self-esteem. They would not be ashamed of being Native.

We need more money for behavioral health treatment. The Kenaitze Tribe is now working with the state court to provide programs for offenders where they receive behavioral health or substance abuse treatment, and not just jail time. If they successfully complete treatment, they can have their offense removed from their record. We hope this new program will be successful, because we really have a problem with drugs and alcohol.

Regarding tribal courts, many smaller villages have tribal court systems, but in such small communities, everyone knows each other and is related to each other. These personal connections make it difficult to assure the community that court decisions are impartial. An intertribal judges association would be helpful, where judges from different areas could go to other communities to hear cases. This idea has been discussed only very recently.

Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Kenai, AK

Carissa Oder, Enrollment and Records Clerk

We are all facing the same problems. In Kenai, we have cops and tribal courts, but we need to address the deeper problems that underlie all of these other issues. We need to resolve the issues that have their roots in how Native people were assimilated into the Western culture.

Native Village of Bill Moore's Slough, Kotlik, AK

Stella Fancyboy, President

I share the concerns that have been mentioned about the lack of funding. We try to help one another, but in my village, everyone knows everyone else. I cannot open up my home to everyone who needs it; I have to be concerned for my own safety and well-being, too.

Native Village of Nunam Iqua, Nunam Iqua, AK

Edward J. Adams, Sr., President

I am concerned about the Native people of Alaska, and I want to see us get back some of our ways rather than depending on outside people to do something for us. Since the boarding school era, we have started to depend on outside people to solve our problems. Solutions that come from our towns and our people work better.

Native Village of Nunam Iqua, Nunam Iqua, AK

Darlene Pete, Tribal Administrator

Nunam Iqua is served by the Emmonak Women's Shelter, and we are part of the Yup'ik Women's Coalition. Our village relates to everything that has been said here. We do not have law enforcement, and we have depended on state troopers for more years than I can remember. The Alaska state troopers ignore even the most serious crimes in our villages. When there is punching, hitting, when blood is drawn, when there is elder abuse, we get no response from the troopers. Because there is no law enforcement response, abusers know that they will never be held accountable for their actions.

I will share the example of a young lady in our village. She had black eyes and visible bruises on her face. When she ran away from her abuser, she contacted state troopers from a nearby village. There were two young village police officers in this village, and one of the officers brought her to his house to protect her because she had nowhere to go. The officer knew the abuser and was scared of him. In the end, the abuser's threats were so serious that the woman returned to the home she had run away from. State troopers knew about the bruises and evidence of abuse, and they did nothing.

Several days before I came here, there was a physical fight between two men. A state trooper was on his way to the village to serve a subpoena, but when he arrived, he did nothing about the fight that had just occurred. He said there was nothing he could do about it, and he could not make an arrest. This lack of response was so upsetting and disheartening for our tribal council and city workers. We were left feeling hopeless, knowing that we would continue to have this perpetrator among us, and there was nothing we could do about it.





Native Village of Ruby, Ruby, AK

Katie Kangas, Tribal Council Member

It is mind-boggling to listen to all the acronyms that everyone here uses. At meetings like this, an acronyms list should be handed out to everyone so we can understand what is being discussed.

How does OVW network with other offices to address common problems? It seems like domestic violence and the other social issues that have been mentioned go hand in hand.

DOJ Response to Katie Kangas – Tammie Gregg, Office of the Associate Attorney General

DOJ has worked to increase coordination across the many areas that influence domestic violence by creating the Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation (CTAS). This program is a Native-specific DOJ funding source. It cuts across OVW, Office of Justice Programs, and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Solutions, and combines funding for all these programs under a single application. The solicitation goes out every November and is open for 90 days. Tribes can apply for funding to meet many different public safety needs under nine different purpose areas. To decide what is funded, all three grant-making agencies review the applications as a group and work to provide for tribes' needs across funding areas.

DOJ also created training to offer to tribes who applied for CTAS funding, but were not chosen to receive it. To find out how tribes experience the CTAS application process, we have a survey every year, and we hope to hear back on the process.

Native Village of Tanana, Tanana, AK

Julie Roberts-Hyslop, Vice President, Tanana Chiefs Conference

As others have mentioned, we have a severe lack of law enforcement. We lack safe houses for our women and children, and there is no safe place for them to go. We do not have holding cells for people who commit crimes. We also lack homes for foster children; we simply do not have the capacity to take in more children. Many of our kids in state custody. We try to keep them in tribal custody, but sometimes they end up living in different communities and it is very difficult to bring them home.

We also lack follow-up care for when a person is victimized. Victims have no access to counseling, and it falls on family members to support them and help them regain a sense of well-being. Our tribal court and tribal council work to help victims as much as they can, but we need assistance to train people as counsellors. When you are victim of trauma, you can become a victim to substances, as well, and people need support to avoid those risks.

In the Tanana Chiefs Conference region in the Alaska interior, about half of our 39 villages have a tribal court. Some villages use their tribal council as their court system, while others have elected judges. Our courts need a great deal of support. We try to work with the state, although Alaska does not consistently recognize tribal sovereignty, and we have implemented circle sentencing⁷ and other forms of innovative problem solving. Our tribal court judges also face a difficult situation when they are forced

⁷ Circle sentencing, sometimes referred to as peacemaking circles, is a restorative justice strategy where the response to a crime is determined by a "circle" of community members that includes victims, offenders, family and friends, and other respected community members.

to make decisions against family members or friends. We need a stronger support system and more training for our judges.

Organized Village of Kake, Kake, AK

Casimero Aceveda, Tribal President

Knowledge is a big thing for us. To survive in the world today, we need to gain knowledge—and the way we do that is by people like OVW coming up here and meeting us, sharing information, and helping us. When you teach us ways to help our own people, that is priceless.

When we do not say anything about the problems of domestic violence or rape, it means we condone it. We need to start talking about it, even when it is hard. As a Native person, you do not talk about your hurts, but we are starting to, which makes this a very healing time.

We appreciate getting the chance to say what we have to say, and we appreciate that DOJ visited so many places in our large state. We were amazed and pleased that DOJ came down to Kake. We appreciated that you got to see firsthand the remoteness of the area and the conditions we endure. We do want you to send the message to Washington, DC, that we need your help.

Organized Village of Kake, Kake, AK

Gary Williams, Executive Director

I cannot add to the words that have been shared by all these others, and my heart goes out to all the people who have had to deal with domestic violence, sexual assault, and other issues. I also give my compliments to everyone who is working to resolve them, including OVW, advocacy groups, tribal councils, and staff.

I am a big advocate for resolving issues at the local level, and I can report that we have had good results with working out our tribal self-governance compact with BIA. Through the compact, we are working to develop our local capacity and staff.

One term I have not heard mentioned today is trust responsibility. People in Native communities can volunteer, we can scrimp with table scraps, but we need more resources from the federal government. The federal government has a responsibility to Native nations of the United States, and I challenge them to offer block funding to Native nations the way they do to territories. There should be tribal shares, so tribes do not have to write proposals, hoping that they may get funded. All tribal nations should have a share, and we should do what we can to move in that direction at a federal level.


Organized Village of Kake, Kake, AK

Isabel Mills, Program Coordinator/Domestic Violence Advocate

As a domestic violence advocate, I find it hard to receive the calls that we receive. It can be very dangerous. Sometimes it is a child on the line saying, “Come quick, and bring someone big.”

We have no village public safety officer. We have state troopers who are available on weekends. This is very different from being in Anchorage or in Washington, DC, where resources are more readily available. I believe that someone from the state should be here listening to our testimony, and there should be someone representing the village public safety officers, as well. I have called the village public safety officer representatives, I have sent them emails, and I was told they only respond to the city. I never hear from the city unless I ask, and I really have to bother them to get a response.





When you are a domestic violence advocate in a place where there is hardly any law, it is scary. Domestic violence incidents do not happen at a convenient time. They happen in the middle of the night when everyone else is sleeping. Sometimes both people are inebriated. Children are there. Other family members are there trying to calm the perpetrators. Then we have to try and find a safe place where people can stay.

In funding we apply for, I have asked why it is so hard to get funding for a place where we can give accommodations to people who have children. We are not looking to build a gigantic building. We just want a safe house. In my experience, the mothers do not want to leave Kake. They do not want to take their children away from the village. We keep diapers in our office and stacks of shoes, because people leave domestic violence situations so quickly—with no jacket, no shoes, no clothes. We need Washington, DC, to put it in writing that we need housing, we need someplace safe in the village so we do not have to send them away. Oftentimes, they would rather go back to where they came from in the middle of the night rather than leave town.

The discussion of tribal courts is new to me. When I return to my community, I will ask why we do not have a tribal court.

I think it is important for advocates and for people in the communities to be able to purchase awareness materials like T-shirts, because they do make a big difference in helping people become more aware of issues like domestic violence.

[Sealaska Heritage, Juneau, AK](#)

Marlene Johnson, Board Chair

I have served in many different roles, including as an executive committee member of Tlingit and Haida Central Council and the board chairman of the Sealaska Corporation. While I worked with the Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc., I traveled to 50 percent of the Alaska villages. In my travels to villages in my region, I heard about the domestic violence and sexual assault that took place in Alaskan boarding schools. It really got you—gray-haired ladies telling about what happened to them in those schools, primarily by staff. We worked hard until we got all of them closed. Kids are better off living with their families and parents and going to school where their families live.

Now we are talking more about sexual assault of children and how it affects families. It used to be that our elders addressed these things in villages, but we are no longer allowed to do that. But we have to start talking about it before it will change. As adult Native people, we are responsible for starting the conversation.

[Yup'ik Women's Coalition, Emmonak, AK](#)

Christine Teganlakla, Rural Outreach Coordinator

The Yup'ik Women's Coalition serves 13 villages. When I talk with the villages and ask them about their concerns, they consistently report concerns about getting a village public safety officer to their village. For a tribe to get a village public safety officer stationed in their village, the criteria is that there must be a building available with all expenses paid. Often, tribes do not have the money or the facilities to accommodate that. The facilities requirement for village public safety officers should be reevaluated so that many tribes are not automatically disqualified for their lack of facilities.

In Emmonak, we had an incident where there was a gun shooting in the housing area where I live. We have no village public safety officer or a village police officer. We only have state troopers. I tried calling the trooper post, but there was no answer. My son called 911, where the call is dispatched to another center, and he was advised to call the state trooper post in Fairbanks. Fairbanks is 700 miles away. When we finally got hold of a trooper, they told us that they could not take any action until there was an assault—a gun shooting was not enough. We got no response from the troopers, no response from our community, and no response from our city government to address the gun incident, and that is not right.

Emmonak just voted to be “damp”—to allow the possession of alcohol, while alcohol sales and importation are not allowed. The city municipality is implementing this decision and working with the state on regulations. My concern is that I have heard other areas deciding to be “damp” are required to have a certain level of law enforcement to support alcohol enforcement. Of course, we do not have law enforcement at that level. Our state trooper does not respond to misdemeanor or domestic violence cases, only to felonies.

A lack of housing is another concern. When no housing is available, multiple families must live together in one home, and this increases tensions and domestic violence incidents. Housing from the Department of Housing and Urban Development has strict income qualifying criteria, and many people in our community cannot qualify for the housing because their income is too low or too high. There is no land in our community, as well. We have tried to get land opened through the city or our corporation so young people could purchase it and build houses, but there is no land available. If land is held personally, it can be purchased directly from that person—but this is the only way.

Regarding tribal courts, seed money is sometimes available to start a tribal courts project, but there is no place where we can get ongoing funding to maintain a court over the long term. We also need legal advocates for people who experience violence and assault. People do not know the legal terminology or understand indigenous rights declarations, so when we try and advocate for ourselves in the state system, we get pushed aside and ignored. People in the state system treat us like we have no rights, and so we begin to feel like we have none.


I also strongly recommend that schools have counselors available for students to address social and emotional issues. Kids are socially and emotionally drained from witnessing violence at home, and academic counsellors are not equipped to address those issues.

Villages should have more local control over schools and what is taught there. The schools teach about Alaska state history—why can’t they teach local history, too? Kids should learn how their village was formed to impart a sense of identity to them as villagers. Then our young people would not feel lost between two worlds, the way they do now, when they do not know their local history.

We also need more funding for behavioral health services. Some behavioral health services are available through Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation, and some are available through Indian Health Service, but several years ago, there were deep cuts in funding, and many behavioral health clinicians who served villages were eliminated. Now, only certain villages have access to behavioral health services.

On a personal level, one of my daughters is involved with the state legal system. She is facing a court hearing, and I learned that she has other incidents on her record that I was unaware of. For some time, I





have been advocating with her schools, trying to find help for her with anger issues. But the schools tell me they are not trained to handle issues like this, and that I should consider sending her away from our community for help. As a mother, I do not want to be forced to send my daughter away for help; I want services available for her in our community.

We have the highest rates of everything in Alaska, but we have no real solution to address these problems. We need to go back to traditional ways, and we need traditional teachings in our school systems. We also need schools to understand about brain development and behavioral health, so they can teach students strategies to calm down when they get angry, and to help them understand why they react the way they do.

Video Presentations

At the end of the listening session, two videos were presented.

Christine Crossland, Senior Social Science Analyst on Violence Against Women at the National Institute of Justice, shared a video presenting the findings released in the May 2016 National Institute of Justice Report titled *Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men: 2010 Findings from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey*.⁸

Leslie Hagen, Native American Issues Coordinator for the Executive Office for United States Attorneys, announced the release of a five-part training video on domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking in Indian Country. The intended audience for the video training resources is people who work with Alaska Native populations, including state and federal partners. The training emphasizes the need to address pain and trauma, including historical trauma, in a culturally sensitive way.

After the video presentations, Ms. Edmo and Ms. Hanson reminded participants that written testimony could be submitted until November 4, 2016, and then closed the listening session.

⁸ The NIJ report *Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men: 2010 Findings from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey* is available online at this link:

<http://nij.gov/publications/pages/publication-detail.aspx?ncjnumber=249736>

A summary of the research and the video presented at the listening session are available online at this link:

<http://nij.gov/journals/277/pages/violence-against-american-indians-alaska-natives.aspx>

APPENDIX 1:
LISTENING SESSION PARTICIPANTS





Listening Session Participants

Tribal Representatives

Name	Title and Organization
Sophie Kasayulie	Yupiaq Tribal Education Director, Yupiit
Melanie Alexie	Akiachak Native Community
Tara Bourdukofsly	Director, Dept. of Education Workforce, Aleut Comm. St. Paul, APIA
Gretchen Kameroff	Vice Chair, Emmonak
Tamara Truett-Jerue	Executive Director, Alaska Native Women's Resource Center
Shirley Moses	DVSA Advocate, Anvik
Priscilla Kameroff	Public Policy Specialist, Yup'ik Women's Coalition
Katie Kangas	Council Member, Ruby Tribe
Princella Redcorn	Communications Officer, National Indigenous Women's Resource Center, Omaha
Dorma Sahneyah	TA Director, National Indigenous Women's Resource Center, Hopi
Isabel Mills	Domestic Violence Advocate, Organized Village of Kake
Mike Williams	Tribal Council, Akiak Native Community
Roberta Moto	Wellness Program Manager, Maniilaq Association
Christine Teganlakla	Rural Outreach Coordinator, Yup'ik Women's Coalition, Emmonak Tribe
Francine Eddy-Jones	Director, Tribal Family & Youth Services Department, Tlingit & Haida Central Council
June Degnan	President, Haven House Juneau, Sitka Tribe
Liisia Blizzard	Tribal Council, Kenaitze Indian Tribe
Clinton Lageson	Kenaitze Indian Tribe
Candy Keown	Human Development Department Director, Hoonah Indian Association, Tlingit & Hoonah Indian Assc.
Jacqueline Agtuca	Policy Consultant, National Indigenous Women's Resource Center
Tia Holley	Board Member-Wellness Consultant, Alaska Native Women's Resource Center, King Island/Kenaitze
Edward J. Adams Sr.	Nunam Iqua Tribe
Paula Julian	Policy Specialist, National Indigenous Women's Resource Center

Name	Title and Organization
Stella Fancyboy	Tribal President, Native Village of Bill Moores Slough
Geraldine Woods	Yupit of Andreafski
Tasha Bird	Rural Outreach Coordinator, Emmonak Women's Shelter, Emmonak Tribe
Desiree Joseph	Practicum Student, Tanana Chiefs Conference
Mary Johnson	Child Protection Program Coordinator, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Sitka Tribe
Tonya Esmailka	Rural DVSA Coordinator, Tanana Chiefs Conference,
Carl Jerue	1st Chief, Anvik Tribe
Herman Hootch	Emmonak Corporation Board of Directors Secretary
Joann Horn	Executive Director, Emmonak Women's Shelter, Native Village of Bill Moores Slough
Darlene M. Pete	Tribal Administrator, Nunam Iqua Traditional Council, Native Village of Nunam Iqua
Gary E. Williams	Executive Director, Organized Village of Kake
Marlene Johnson	Sealaska Heritage Institute
Casimero Aceveda	President, Organized Village of Kake
Sheila Carl	Tribal Administrator, Akiachak Native Community
Maggie Williams	Teacher, Akiachak Native Community
Julie Roberts-Hyslop	Vice President/Chairwoman, Native Village of Tanana
Robert A. Walker	2nd Chief-Tribal Judge, Anvik Tribe
Jaylene Peterson-Nyren	Executive Director, Kenaitze Indian Tribe
Bernadine Atchison	Council Member, Kenaitze Indian Tribe
Sasha Jackson	Tribal Operations Associate, Kenaitze Indian Tribe
Karissa Oder	Enrollment and Records Specialist, Kenaitze Indian Tribe
Raven Willoya-Williams	Kenaitze Indian Tribe





Federal Representatives

Name	Title and Organization
Christine R. Crossland	Senior Social Science Analyst, National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice
Lorraine Edmo	Deputy Director for Tribal Affairs, U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women
Marcia Good	Counsel to the Director, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Tribal Justice
Bea Hanson	Principal Deputy Director, U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women
Leslie Hagen	National Indian Country Training Coordinator, EOUSA, U.S. Department of Justice
Steven Hafner	Research Assistant, National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice
Tammie Gregg	Deputy Associate Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice
Adrenis Hooks	Advisor to OVW Director, U.S. Department of Justice

APPENDIX 2:
LISTENING SESSION AGENDA



U.S. Department of Justice
Office on Violence Against Women
Alaska Native Listening Session
Fairbanks, AK

Agenda

Wednesday, October 19, 2016

9:00 am to 12:30 pm

Participate in Alaska Native Unity meeting

1:00 pm to 2:00 pm

Registration for Tribal Leaders and Advocates

2:00 pm to 2:30 pm

Traditional Opening

Opening Remarks: Bea Hanson, OVW Principal Deputy Director
Lorraine Edmo, OVW Tribal Deputy Director

2:30 pm to 4:45 pm

Tribal Introductions

Presentation of Testimony from Tribal representatives

4:45 pm

Video Presentations:

Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men, a video based on a study by Dr. André Rosay. This video describes the findings of an NIJ-supported study on the prevalence of violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women and men. (based on 2010 data from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey).

"A Healing Journey for Alaska Natives," presented by Leslie Hagen, National Indian Country Training Coordinator for US Department of Justice

5:30 pm

Closing and Next steps discussion



