



FAIRBANKS NATIVE ASSOCIATION

SPECIAL EDITION, FEBRUARY 2026

Notice of Annual Meeting

Friday, March 6, 2026

Chief David Salmon

Tribal Hall

5 p.m. Dinner

6 p.m. Call to order

VOTER INFORMATION INSIDE!

2026 candidates have met the following requirements:

- Descendant of Alaska Native or American Indian
- 18 years of age or older
- A resident of at least 30 days in the Fairbanks North Star Borough
- Not an FNA employee
- Submitted a completed application by Feb. 2, 2026, by 5:00 p.m.

To vote in the FNA elections, you must be:

- Descendant of Alaska Native or American Indian
- 18 years of age or older
- A resident of at least 30 days in the Fairbanks North Star Borough



“Let us have a story”
Mask by Kathleen Carlo

Dear Membership,

It’s time for the FNA 2026 Annual Membership Meeting.

This newsletter is dedicated to our annual meeting. In this issue, you will find information on the six candidates seeking the three open seats for the Fairbanks Native Association board.

The three incumbents this year are Travis Cole, board member, Brenda Krupa, board secretary, and Sharon Hildebrand, board member. Ms. Hildebrand has decided not to seek reelection. We thank her for years of dedicated service to FNA and wish her all the best moving forward.

The election will be held at our Annual Membership Meeting on March 6. The board will elect a board member to the open treasurer’s position immediately after the annual meeting, in accordance with our bylaws. The FNA Annual Membership Meeting begins with dinner at 5:00 p.m. and a call to order at 6:00 p.m. At our meeting, FNA Board President Sharon McConnell and I will be reporting on the successes and challenges of the past year. Altman, Rogers & Company will also present the results of our financial audit.

It has been another challenging year for FNA, to say the least. Our thanks and appreciation to our membership for electing strong leaders to serve on our board. FNA has been resilient for the past 63 years and we will continue to move forward together.

I look forward to seeing all our members at the annual meeting. This is my second report as executive director of the Fairbanks Native Association, and I’m honored to do so.

Baasee’ and see you all very soon.

Melissa Charlie, FNA Executive Director



FAIRBANKS NATIVE ASSOCIATION

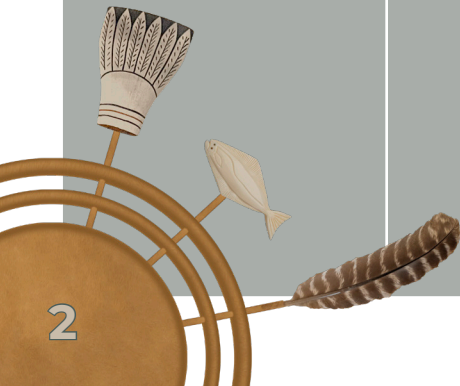
2026 FNA Pageants

- Miss FNA
- FNA Princess
- FNA Baby



Application Deadline is March 12
www.fairbanksnative.org

2026 Board Candidates	Finance & Budgeting Experience	Grant Regulation Experience	Strategic Planning Experience
 <p>Travis Cole Allakaket</p> <p>Employment Tanana Chiefs Conference Incumbent</p>	<p>I've learned a lot about Fairbanks Native Association's finances over the years. I've learned how FNA staff is able to balance their grant money to keep important programs running, even in today's financial climate.</p>	<p>There is a diverse amount of grants that fund the many programs that FNA oversees. They all have many requirements that FNA must be in compliance with to qualify for grants. By learning about these requirements, we as a board better understand how we can influence by setting goals for FNA that they could reach and have more success in seeking funding. My influence is what I hear and see in the community. I take what people tell me is important to them and their families and I try my best to pass that on to the board.</p>	<p>I feel that it is our responsibility to pay close attention to the growth of FNA and how its evolved over the years, so we can better understand how we must step into the future as we try our best to keep FNA evolved as our people's needs changes and still hold onto the key values the leaders before us instilled into FNA. We must always keep the people's needs before us.</p>
 <p>Brenda Krupa Rampart</p> <p>Employment: Grants Manager & Programs Director, Native Village of Tanana Incumbent</p>	<p>My finance experience comes from 30 years of employment structuring and implementing budgets and applying for and managing grant applications from multiple federal and state funding, to include: Head Start, JOM, Child Care Assistance, Child Protection/BIA, 477 Grants -ASAP/ Education/Employment & Training; LIHEAP Energy Assistance, Elder Nutrition/ Caregivers Title VI Part A and C, and most recently Office of Victims of Crime grants, and State Senior and Disabilities funding. Many of which are FNA programs which I am intricately familiar with and understand. Through previous FNA and other board affiliations, I have had much experience with understanding accounting spreadsheets, approving budgets, and going over organizational yearly audits.</p>	<p>Working with FNA, Tanana Chiefs Conference and now working for the Tanana Tribal Council, I have gained extensive experience in applying for, obtaining, and maintaining funding for a huge amount of grants. Regulations are rules we follow to apply for and implement grants and are to be followed to be able to continue receiving funds. Especially in these current times of uncertainty, there is much scrutiny by granting agencies, many holding grantees accountable like never before. I understand this and will bring support to FNA in this area via the Board if elected.</p>	<p>Strategic planning is so important because it gives us goals, and FNA has been continuously on top of this through the years and continues today. There has been strategic planning for FNA's organization as a whole and what the Board envisions in the future. These strategic planning meetings hold Elder and Youth visions as utmost important. I have served in multiple work and BOD capacities on multitudes of strategic planning, which I believe I would continue to contribute very well in this area. Through consistent planning, FNA continues to move forward and get great things accomplished.</p>



Program Planning & Evaluation Experience

Other Board Experience or Special Skills

Why are you interested in running for the board?

I've been on the Board Planning and Development Committee during my 12 years on the Board. I've listened to community members talk about what they need. FNA listens to board. We will hear about a grant proposal, then hear about the doors opening, to learning how the program is progressing. The process can take two or three years.

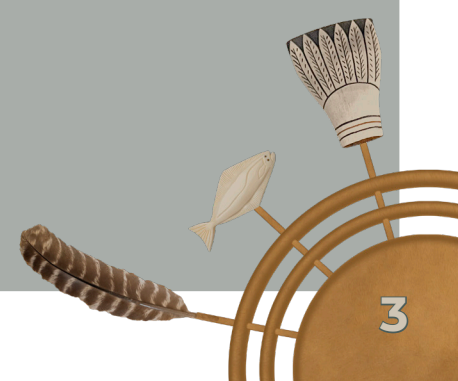
I've been on almost all the Committees of FNA. I once on served on the Diversity Council for the City of Fairbanks and on the Board of Directors for WEIO. It was too much, so I cut back from it all to just serving FNA.

My 12 years of serving on FNA board has been an honor. I love to serve my people whether its drumming at a potlatch or serving soup. I believe there's no higher calling then service. I didn't graduate college, but all my education has come from 12 years of service and my many years in the community helping others. As a single father of three children, I bring them to help me help others, so they learn the simple lesson of community service.

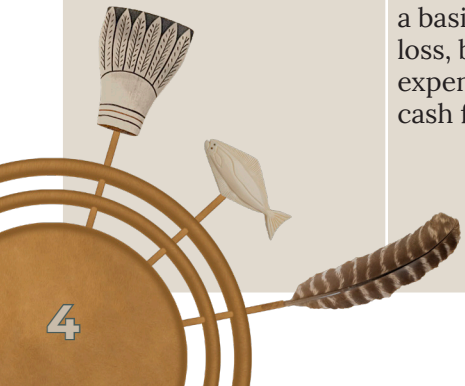
Personally I have done a bunch of program planning through applying for grants, because you need to have a plan of action how to spend a department's grant funds, and one that coincides with what the funding is intended for and how that relates to your organization. Mostly the program directors of FNA along with their leader, FNA's Executive Director, works that out with the FNA BOD passing any and all grant applications individually. Sometimes we may have questions, but even with continued funding, there is much planning and evaluations from previous years on what works, are our needs changing, what is needed now? The Board trusts the management team, their staff, and the Executive Director, but with experience in doing this myself, it gives me a little knowledge of how the whole things works from evaluating programs and utilizing that into the planning for the next grant cycles.

I have served on the FNA BOD previously in my younger years, at other times with other BOD members and other Executive Directors. It has been a great privilege to serve. I have also served on other boards and committees, such as the Food Bank, the Soup Kitchen, president of the Northwest Indian Head Start Coalition for five years, and on the FNSBSD Board Ethnic Committee. The last three years serving on FNA's BOD has given me the opportunity to also serve on the Chena Bingo Board, FNSBSD Parent Advocacy Committee for Alaska Native Education, Head Start Parent Policy Council, and Effie Kokrine Parent Committee. In addition, for the last two years I have been honored to serve as a delegate for FNA on the TCC's full board of directors conferences in March. It has been exciting to do this and in this position I work closely with the board to make joint decisions on important issues that arise from these important meetings of the Chiefs and our organization.

I believe in a cohesive environment where everyone is free to express their ideas and opinions, while also disagreeing at times. FNA Board has maintained this safe atmosphere because we all strive to work together for one main goal—to keep FNA a healthy organization that continues to flourish and is flexible with the times. All along the way, all Board members remember why we are there, because the Native population of Fairbanks allowed us to participate in our roles. I want to be on the Board because no matter what we are doing, whether it be strategic planning, or approving budgets, or dealing with an issue that arises, we all make decisions based on what would the Native people of Fairbanks want? What would the Elders want or need, also the Youth? The Native population always drives us to do the best we can and work hard for our cause. That is why I am interested.



2026 Board Candidates	Finance & Budgeting Experience	Grant Regulation Experience	Strategic Planning Experience
 <p>Kristen Moreland, Khanaandaii Gwichyaa Zhee</p> <p>Employment: Executive Director, Gwich'in Steering Committee</p>	<p>I have served as an Executive Director for the past four years, where I have gained hands-on experience managing organizational finances and ensuring fiscal responsibility. I am confident in reading and interpreting profit and loss statements, budgets, and financial reports, and I understand the importance of financial transparency and accountability. As a board member, I take my fiduciary responsibility seriously and am very vocal and engaged when it comes to ensuring funds are being spent appropriately, tracked accurately, and aligned with the organization's mission. I believe strong financial oversight is critical to sustaining programs that truly serve our Alaska Native families and community.</p>	<p>Through my leadership and management roles, I have developed a solid understanding of grant-funded programs and the importance of compliance with grant regulations. I recognize the responsibility boards have in ensuring organizations meet funding requirements, track outcomes properly, and remain accountable to funders and the communities they serve. I am diligent about asking questions, reviewing reports, and supporting systems that ensure grants are managed ethically and effectively.</p>	<p>I bring many years of experience in strategic planning, both as an Executive Director and as a board member. I understand the role of the board in setting the longterm vision of an organization and ensuring leadership is supported and held accountable in working toward established goals. I am skilled in helping shape strategic direction, monitoring progress, and making adjustments when necessary to ensure the organization remains mission driven, responsible, and sustainable.</p>
 <p>Caleb James J'ughut'sen Peters Tanana</p> <p>Employment Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center</p>	<p>I have had many job opportunities that required me to have a sense of this skill and be able to apply it daily. The first one would be my time as door-to-door salesman, needing an intimate knowledge of the services we provided, and being able to assess properties to get proper pricing. I was also a shift lead at Panda Express and was in charge of inventory and making sure that I order enough. In my current job, I am also in charge of inventory and have to make sure I am within my limits and not overspending the department's money. I have a basic knowledge of profit/loss, budgeting, equipment expenses, price points and cash flow.</p>	<p>Having been a beneficiary of many grants growing up and getting education, I understand the importance and benefit of them in my community. As well as having been in the food business and medical field, adhering to regulations in place are very common to me and having to keep up to date on all certifications to remain eligible has become routine. I am excited to get to know more.</p>	<p>My experience with this would have to be in weekly/monthly team meetings at my current job, where we discuss areas that we might need to adjust or to maintain. I have been on the inside of some big strategic planning at Panda Express, where I was tasked as the lead, it was brought to my attention from my coworkers that they felt they weren't being paid to match the effort and work they were putting in day to day. I brought a proposal to my boss and he tasked me with researching other fast food places and to come up with new proposal to raise pay and become competitive.</p>



Program Planning & Evaluation Experience	Other Board Experience or Special Skills	Why are you interested in running for the board?
<p>I have over 6 years of experience in program planning and evaluation through various managerial roles. I am confident in my ability to contribute at the board level by supporting effective program development, asking critical questions, and ensuring programs are evaluated regularly for impact and effectiveness. I believe strong programming requires continuous evaluation, measurable goals, and a willingness to improve. I am committed to working collaboratively to ensure programs achieve the best possible outcomes for individuals and families we serve.</p>	<p>I currently serve as the Chair of the Interior Regional Housing Authority (IRHA) Board of Commissioners and have been a board member for three years. In this role, I provide leadership, advocate for necessary changes, and ensure governance responsibilities are carried out with integrity. I am not afraid to speak up when change is needed, and I value respectful, solution based dialogue. My leadership style is grounded in accountability, transparency, and cultural respect. In addition to formal board experience, I bring strong advocacy skills, cultural knowledge, and lived experience as an Alaska Native woman who understands the systemic challenges our people face.</p>	<p>I am deeply committed to improving the quality of life for Alaska Native individuals and families in the Fairbanks area. I believe meaningful change happens when we have strong, informed voices at decision-making tables. Too often, our families face discrimination, barriers within the justice system, and a lack of culturally grounded support. I have personally experienced these challenges, and those experiences drive my passion to serve. I want to be a voice for families who are too often unheard and to help ensure Fairbanks Native Association continues to promote justice, healing and wellness in meaningful, practical ways. Serving on the FNA Board would allow me to advocate for culturally responsive solutions, strengthen systems of support, and contribute to positive, lasting change for our community. I am committed, experienced, and ready to serve with integrity, courage, and respect for our people and our future. Mahsi' choo</p>
<p>I have some experience coming up with a plan for events within my current work place. The biggest thing I work with is having to train students or new hires on all the rights and responsibilities of being an efficient and effective phlebotomist. Some times we have to train them from the ground up or have to just “shake the rust off” of them. But at the end, there is an evaluation that we must do to review and determine if they met the proper requirements, but we also base on “soft skills”, such as the temperament and attitude of them to see if they would be a proper fit in their future careers.</p>	<p>This would be my first official board member experience but I would love an opportunity to expand my horizons and skill set. I am a collaborative team player and a quick learner. It does not take me much time to get comfortable with whoever I am working with. I have a high speaking ability and was also a peer mediator from middle to high school, had multiple leadership trainings, am community oriented, and very compassionate, I am a strong advocate for the youth and won the principal's award at West Valley High School, which is awarded to those students who are standout members inside the school and out in the community.</p>	<p>I am interested, as it has been on my heart and mind for some time now to be in a position to provide hope and shine a new light on what it means to be a young Alaska Native man in this modern world. To ensure that every Native child, youth, and young adult has the opportunity, as well as the resources, to succeed in any area of life that they may experience. And to give them the peace of mind that there are people like them working to uplift them higher then we ever could alone. Getting to be part of something bigger then myself and to be part of my community is more then enough for me.</p>



2026 Board Candidates

Finance & Budgeting Experience

Grant Regulation Experience

Strategic Planning Experience



Fatima (Lord) Tiepelman
Nenana

Employment
Co-chair FNA Parent Policy Council

Managed multi-million-dollar and homeowner projects as a project engineer. I have also been the Vice President of Finance for the Graduate Student Government at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, and Zeta Tau Alpha. I also manage the finances of our family and extended family.

As the board Co-Chair of the Parent Policy Council, FNA, we review progress on FNA Head Start grants and attend training.

As the FNA PPC board member, co-chair, and secretary, I have initiated multiple targeted proposals for strategic planning and ongoing data collection to ensure our Native population's needs are met and prioritized.



Brittany Woods-Orrison
Rampart

Employment:
Sole Proprietor at Nots'ehulnek

Every industry I've joined has developed my financial skills. Being in film work requires flexible budgeting, maximizing funds, confidently pitching ideas to funders, building dependable partnerships in this work + staying on top of payroll, applying to film festivals, and balancing multiple projects at once.

A huge source of the experiences I gained was working as a broadband internet specialist with AKPIRG and Native Movement from 2021-2025. During that time I learned how to apply to philanthropy and federal grants for statewide projects, while meeting the reporting requirements for the grant that funded my position. During this role I was an organizer for a statewide conference for the Just Transition Summit 2022 (and 2024) along with co-hosting an international Tribal conference called the Indigenous Connectivity Summit in 2023. Being a key partner in these gatherings taught me about finances, media, networking, logistics, and building a stronger community.

My earliest experiences of finances was when my mother gave me a business license at 12 years old to open up a snack shop in Rampart. That was my main source of spending money until I was 18 years old, and all of those years of budgeting and owning a business prepared me for college.

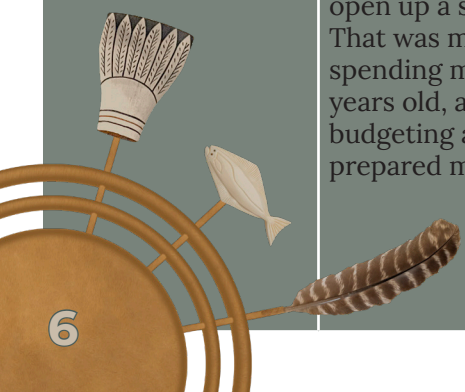
My finance experience includes grant regulations, and my most intense grant reporting experience was involved with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Alaska received digital equity funds to create a statewide plan on how to help improve internet in the state along with raising technology skills so that people could use the internet safely and confidently.

A statewide coalition was created to write the "Alaska Digital Equity Plan." Over 10 organizations worked together to travel to over a hundred communities to hear from hundreds of Alaskans in hopes to meet the requirements for Alaska to have access to millions of more dollars to improve internet in the state. Tragically, the federal funding was canceled, but in the process we shared resources with Alaskans, created more programs, strengthened our network, and educated people along the way.

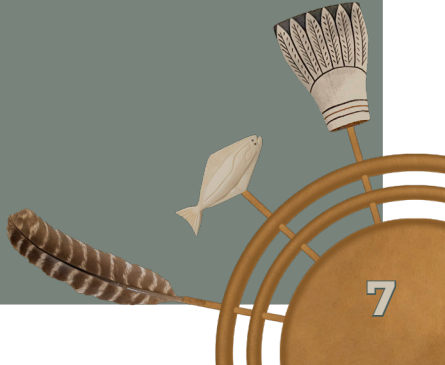
All my work requires a wide range of strategic planning. The entire process of film making from concept to screenings requires long term planning, timelines, check points, and follow ups.

Any of our traditional skills (such as hide work, harvesting, or hunting) requires planning out the seasons, preparation, lots of communication, and getting things in place. These skills for strategic planning were developed further after helping host camps to teach more people hide work.

Not only did I help write our Alaska State Digital Equity Plan, I was also part of Benton Institute's national project for writing "Visions of Digital Equity" which was written for "The best visions of digital equity are community centered and focused on creating change, specific and clearly articulated, and ambitious but attainable."



Program Planning & Evaluation Experience	Other Board Experience or Special Skills	Why are you interested in running for the board?
<p>I am involved in FNA PPC council program planning and re-evaluation of assessments. I also like to ask staff, clients, and partnering organizations about their needs and what can be improved. I am also involved in the community by planning wellness initiatives through cultural events.</p>	<p>Co-Chair & Secretary of FNA Parent Policy Council, Executive Council of Dene Eslaanh Athabascan drum group, Vice President of Finance, American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), Vice President of Graduate Student Government, Worcester Polytechnic Institute.</p>	<p>I have nearly 100% attendance and voting in all the boards I am involved with. I value teamwork, company culture, accountability, Native culture for healing, and our Native people's needs and community strength.</p>
<p>Program planning and evaluation has been integral to all of my work, and I have been on both sides of evaluating or being evaluated.</p> <p>In my film work I have to be open to constructive feedback at all times of the process. It's a career where communication is critical as a creator and as someone who is sharing a message on screen.</p> <p>My nonprofit work lived by grants, therefore had to be evaluated at all times. While working on broadband, I was the only employee working on this issue full-time so I was in charge of the whole program.</p>	<p>This is my first time being encouraged by an elder to apply for a board member position. With that said, I have been on various sorts of teams, cohorts, collectives, and Tribal organizations that have me prepared to take this next step.</p> <p>Another area of work that I have been committed to for essentially my entire life has been our traditional Arctic Native Games. What once were games I competed in as a child has turned into a career. Starting in 2024 I began traveling as an international athlete to compete and building a community that spanned across borders.</p> <p>In 2025 I began coaching youth to learn these games and values. I plan on being engaged with the games for the rest of my life because they strengthen our Tribal unity, our people's health, and are an agent to connect our people to more aspects of our culture.</p> <p>I have a vast range of experiences to pull from: raised in Rampart, grew up in Fairbanks, attended Mt. Edgecumbe High School, attended college in the Bay Area of California, and now internationally traveled. I always return home to ground in various parts of our culture, and this balances well with going abroad to do cultural exchanges with Tribes from around the world. I want to use all of this knowledge and connections I gained to give back to my community.</p>	<p>I have been connected with Fairbanks Native Association for all my life and with the generations before. I am an FNA Head Start baby, a past dance group member, a prior JOM basketball player for the youth tournament, a voter for the FNA board member position, and someone who stays actively updated on the work FNA does.</p> <p>The interest areas that FNA focuses on are important to me. I am a sober Indigenous person that prioritizes culture practices as the highest forms of health.</p> <p>Recently I have been listening to old Elder interviews and reading stories from the generation that help built up FNA, including my great-grandpa's sister Sally Woods Hudson who did so much for FNA in the early years. I hope to honor the family legacy by joining the board while still in my 20s. I envision starting young will jump start my learning, integrate my own experiences, and create a positive-lasting impact.</p>



FAIRBANKS NATIVE ASSOCIATION

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FAIRBANKS NATIVE ASSOCIATION

Annual Membership Meeting
Friday, March 6, 2026

5 p.m. Doors Open
6 p.m. Meeting Called to Order



FAIRBANKS NATIVE ASSOCIATION



2026 FNA
Annual Potlatch
Saturday, March 14

5 p.m.
Chief David Salmon
Tribal Hall

FAIRBANKS NATIVE ASSOCIATION



2026 ANNUAL MEETING of Shareholders
8 STAR EVENTS CENTER · FAIRBANKS, AK
FRI. MARCH 13 · DOORS OPEN AT 8a.m.

Vote ONLINE



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CREATING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

ROOTED IN STRENGTH
RISING TOGETHER

2026 TCC ANNUAL CONVENTION & FULL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MARCH 9 - 12, 2026 · 8:00 AM - 5:00PM
8 STAR EVENT CENTER
FAIRBANKS

[HTTPS://WWW.TANANACHEADS.ORG/CONVENTION2026/](https://www.tananachiefs.org/convention2026/)