

Master of Arts in Teaching Indigenous Languages

University of Alaska Southeast



Program Overview

- Addresses Alaska's critical shortage of certified Indigenous language educators
- Supports revitalization of Alaska Native languages across the state
- Alaska has 23 Indigenous languages, but few certified PK–12 teachers instructing in this
- Many educators rely on Type M certificates, limiting licensure, pay equity, and career growth
- Creates a pathway for fluent speakers and advanced learners to earn full teacher certification
- Designed to allow educators to remain in their home communities
- Prepares graduates to teach PK–12, strengthen culturally grounded education, and advance language revitalization efforts



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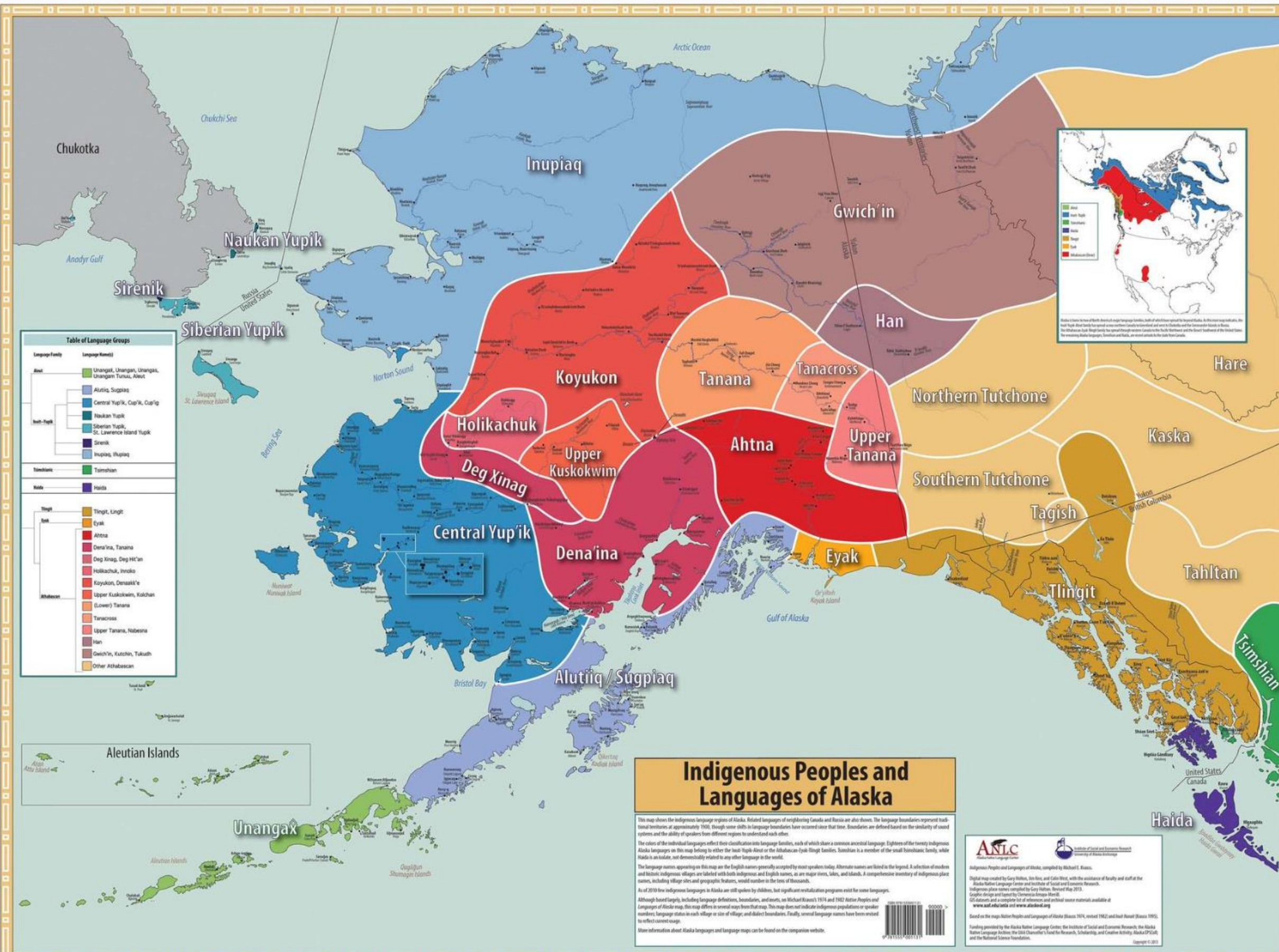
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“We need to continue to make sure that those languages thrive and survive.”

— Rep. Benjamin Nageak

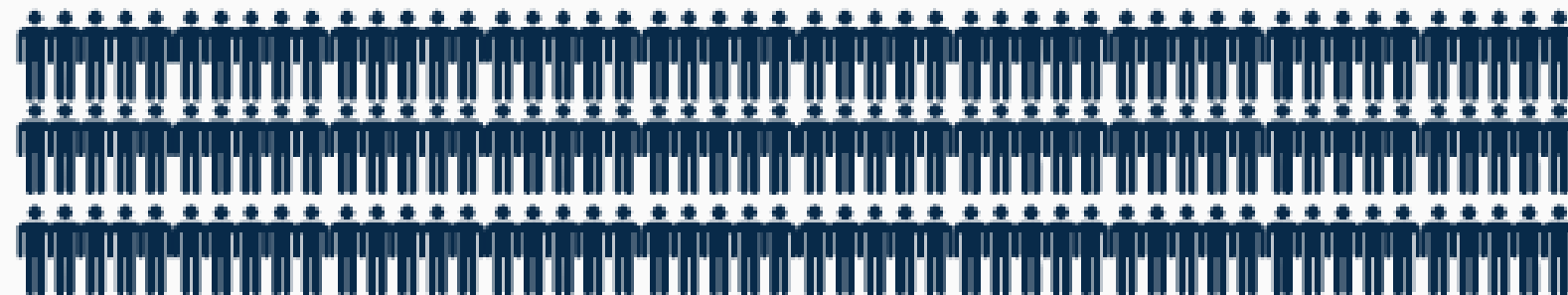
2014 KTOO coverage, Alaska Native languages bill



Workforce Need and Student Demand



- Alaska school districts face ongoing challenges recruiting and retaining Indigenous language teachers
- Demand for instruction exceeds the number of educators with Alaska Native language endorsements
- Many communities rely on cultural knowledge holders in limited-certification roles with little long-term stability
- MAT IL creates a licensure pathway for fluent speakers, community language workers, and program graduates
- Projected enrollment: ~6 students in year one, growing to ~20 students annually once established



State language preservation initiatives recommend an aspirational goal of one Alaska Native language teacher for every 150 students.



Solution through Program Design



MAT in Teaching Indigenous Languages

- Creates a pathway to full teacher licensure
- Designed for:
 - Fluent speakers
 - Community language workers
- Indigenous studies graduates
- Delivered primarily online to serve rural and place-bound students

Program Design:

- Integrates language, culture, and teacher preparation
- Coursework includes pedagogy, culturally responsive curriculum, and revitalization methods
- Includes field-based experiences + 15-week student teaching internship
- Built on existing UAS faculty and programs
- Cost-effective and sustainable



This program turns existing knowledge into a certified workforce.

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Built to Meet Alaska's Unique Needs



- Addresses rural access and high teacher turnover
- Supports educators staying in their home communities
- Grounded in Indigenous knowledge systems and cultural practices
- Built through statewide collaboration with tribes, districts, and partners
- Aligns with the Alaska Native Languages Action Plan
- Strengthens a “grow your own” educator pipeline

This program is not a one-size-fits-all model. It is intentionally designed around Alaska's communities, cultures, and workforce realities.

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Ready and Sustainable



- Strong district demand and ongoing vacancies
- 20+ prospective students already identified
- Scales from ~6 to ~20 students annually
- Uses existing resources
 - → cost-effective + revenue generating

The MAT IL creates a sustainable, community-centered solution to one of Alaska's most urgent educational and cultural needs.

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