

First Alaskans Institute

News Release

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INDIGENOUS ADVANCEMENT DIRECTOR ANNOUNCED

Anchorage, Alaska – First Alaskans Institute (FAI), a statewide Alaska Native nonprofit focused on advancing Alaska Natives for the *next* 10,000 years, is excited to announce the hiring of **Melissa Silunggataanit'sqaq Borton** (Sugpiaq) as our Indigenous Advancement Director. In this role, she will contribute to the long-term sustainability of FAI by utilizing values-based innovations to grow the financial foundation that supports our work. With her depth of experience in the realms of development and leadership, she brings the vision, professional skills, and direct experience to our sustainability efforts and brings her strengths to the work we do in service and support of our communities across the state.



Melissa *Silunggataanit'sqaq* Borton
Photo by Alfred Sigoop Price

Silunggataanit'sqaq was born on Kodiak Island and has ties to Chignik Lagoon in the Bristol Bay Region. Her maternal grandparents are Harold Nielsen and Helen Pedersen, and her parents are Bertha Nielsen of Chignik and Laszlo Marton of Hungary. She spent the past 25 years working in the Koniag region helping her people, beginning with the Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) in the Social Services Department programs for village Elders, youth, wellness, behavioral health, tribal operations and Village Public Safety Officers. After working at KANA, she became the Tribal Administrator for the Native Village of Afognak, where she led the Tribe's development and operations for over 14 years. She especially enjoys working with the Dig Afognak summer youth camp and receives much inspiration from youth.

Silunggataanit'sqaq serves as the Kodiak Villages representative on the Alaska Federation of Natives Board of Directors. She has also served as a School Board member and as a member of the historic Governor's Tribal Advisory Council for the State of Alaska under Governor Walker. She enjoys fishing, hunting, kayaking and spending time with family and friends. She is an alumna of the FAI First Nations' Futures Fellowship and most recently volunteered as an emcee at our 2019 Howard Rock & Ted Stevens Smokehouse Gala.

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About First Alaskans Institute (FAI): *At FAI we know we are responsible for carrying more than 10,000 years of ancestral knowledge into the future with rigor, humor, resilience, vigilance, and love. To learn more visit our website at www.firstalaskans.org, contact us at 907-677-1700 or email info@firstalaskans.org.*