

# First Alaskans Institute

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Contact: Karla Gatgyedm Hana'ax Booth  
leadership@firstalaskans.org, (907) 677-1700

## 38TH ANNUAL STATEWIDE FAI ELDERS & YOUTH CONFERENCE TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY

Dgheyey Kaq'; Dena'inaq etnen'aq' qilan (Anchorage, Alaska; lands of the Dena'ina) – First Alaskans Institute (FAI) announces that our 38th Annual FAI Elders & Youth Conference (Elders & Youth) will be held in the unceded **virtual** space of our Alaska Native peoples this October 17-20, 2021.

With over 10,000+ years of ancestral knowledge entrusted into living generations to protect and contribute to the transference of knowledge between our Elders and youth, gathering our most precious Elders and youth in person in such a large gathering, requiring travel for participation, then returning home to their communities is an undue danger during this pandemic that we will not risk. As we center the health and wellbeing of our community, we will once again provide a culturally-rich online environment that will connect and engage our peoples across the state and world.



Photo at left: Amy Modig (Deg Hit'an) and Doug Modig (Tsimshian), pictured in top row, shared tips on how to be open to receiving traditional knowledge, while our two Elders, Harold Esmailka (Koyukon) and Delores Churchill (Haida), who are both in their 90s, pictured in bottom row, shared life lessons during the 2020 Warming of the Hands gathering. Photo at right: Christianna Edwards (Tlingit/Haida) shared the National Anthem in American Sign Language at the virtual 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Elders & Youth Conference.

In 2020, our virtual Elders & Youth Conference included 1,200 registrants. Over 2,000 people participated in the live webcast and broadcast, and 3,000 watched via social media throughout the four-day event. One attendee said, "The virtual world is new to a lot of us, but we still showed up and supported each other." Another shared, "It is so powerful for all of us to come together, yet so important for us not to [be in person] this year. This was a great way for us to come together."

Elders & Youth will begin with Warming of the Hands on October 17, and continue until October 20. We invite all Alaskans to participate and encourage schools to incorporate Elders & Youth into their classrooms. One teacher last year shared, "I loved watching my students connect with their cultures and community. They were empowered and learned to share their voices during this event."

We look forward to seeing you this October! If you are interested in presenting or hosting workshops to share your knowledge with our participants, our Call for Proposals is currently available at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2021EYCallforProposals>. More details will follow for other ways to participate.

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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](http://www.firstalaskans.org), contact us at 907-677-1700 or email [info@firstalaskans.org](mailto:info@firstalaskans.org).*