

Alaska Native Arts FOUNDATION

2026

Mid-Year Report



Water Protectors, Rachel Martin (2021), Loan from Anchorage Museum Collection (2022.028.001), to be included in upcoming Resistance exhibition

Mid-Year Report

During the first half of 2026, the Alaska Native Arts Foundation focused on advancing fundraising, communication, and program development efforts that will support the next phase of artist services statewide. New support for an upcoming workshop series has also positioned ANAF to expand community-based arts learning in 2026 through programs that foster connection, cultural knowledge, and artistic skill development. At the same time, ANAF continued building its Leadership Anchorage partnership to better document and communicate the economic impact of Alaska Native arts.

ANAF has also continued updating public-facing [Artist Directory resources](#), developed donor and outreach communications, and supported board and steering committee engagement through regular planning and reporting. ANAF successfully prepared and submitted multiple grant proposals to expand the Alaska Native Artist Portrait Photography Series and Urban Cultural Workshop Series and strengthen broader professional development opportunities for Alaska Native artists. Thank you to the Alaska State Council on the Arts, Spruce Roots, and more for making the workshops possible. Together, these efforts have helped build momentum for expanded programming, stronger artist visibility, and increased long-term capacity in support of Alaska Native arts.



John Hagan taking photos at Artist Gathering at ANHC



Seal skin slipper workshop with Joni Spiess

January - April 2026

- Collaborated with the Alaska Native Heritage Center on an artist gathering that included photography services with John Hagen and Chris Arend. More than 60 artists joined us for this event in February.
- Advanced planning and fundraising for the next phase of the Alaska Native Artist Portrait Photography Series, including proposed sessions in Utqiagvik, Juneau, Nome, and other communities statewide.
- Supported artist services, portrait photography expansion, and broader professional development programming.



Joni Spiess, Seal Skin Slippers

- Strengthened ANAF's outreach and communications infrastructure through newsletter content, donor communications, print materials, and social media campaigns.
- Maintained and updated public-facing [Alaska Native Artist Directory](#) resources, including website content, events listings, and related promotional materials.
- Continued collaboration with Leadership Anchorage to formalize a framework for measuring the economic impact of Alaska Native arts.
- Formalized a collaboration with the Alaska Native Museum Sovereignty Group to be a fiscal sponsor for upcoming programs.
- Began development of the October 2026 pop-up exhibition, featuring at least 20 artists and centered on the theme Resistance, with support from Native Movement for artist honoraria and curatorial fees.
- Secured new support for a 2026–27 Alaska Native arts workshop series from the Arctic Willow Advisory Group, allowing ANAF to expand hands-on learning opportunities for artists and community members over the coming year.
- Launched the workshop series this spring with upcoming sessions in sewing and beadwork and additional fall workshops in areas such as printmaking and bentwood technology.

Expanding Access For Artists

As we move through the middle of 2026, the Alaska Native Arts Foundation is continuing to build practical, statewide tools to strengthen the visibility, economic opportunity, and professional wellbeing of Alaska Native artists. This year has already been a productive one, and we are grateful to share an update on the work underway.

A major focus of our efforts this year has been expanding the Alaska Native Artist Portrait Photography Series, an initiative designed to remove one of the most immediate barriers artists face: access to high-quality professional photography. For many artists, especially those in rural communities, professional portraits and artwork images are essential for portfolios, grant applications, websites, exhibitions, media outreach, and sales opportunities, yet are often financially or geographically out of reach.



Artist Gathering at ANHC



Victoria Marquez photographed by Maka Monture

Building on a strong pilot phase in Anchorage and Bethel, where more than 50 artists were photographed, ANAF has been actively preparing for a broader 2026 rollout that will bring these services to additional communities across the state. At the end of February, ANAF hosted an Artist Gathering at the Alaska Native Heritage Center, joined by over 60 artists, where we were also able to offer professional headshots to 20 artists.



Glacier Stories mask, Drew Michael

Portrait Photography Series and Workshops

Our work so far has included refining project plans for the 2026 Alaska Native Artist Portrait Photography Series, planning the annual Alaska Native pop-up exhibit scheduled for October 2026, developing outreach materials, and preparing major funding requests to support sessions in communities including Utqiagvik, Nome, Juneau, and others still to be confirmed based on community readiness and partner capacity. We have developed proposals centered on holding a photography session in Utqiagvik during Nalukataq, the spring whaling celebration, so that artists can be reached during a significant community gathering. We have also prepared plans to align another session with the Museums Alaska Conference in Juneau, reflecting our effort to bring services directly to places where artists are already convening.



Seal skin slipper workshop with Joni Spiess

ALASKA NATIVE ARTISTS PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY SERIES IN NOME

FREE event, open to all Alaska Native Artists

PROFESSIONAL PHOTOS TAKEN BY
ESTHER PEDERSON



**FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2026, 12-4PM
@ NOME RECREATION CENTER**
TO JOIN US, PLEASE CONTACT:
LILLIAN: (907) 538-5276
ANAF: (907) 258-2623

KATIRVIK
CULTURAL CENTER

ALASKA STATE
COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

Alaska Native Arts
FOUNDATION

The first part of the year also brought new momentum for ANAF's workshop programming. With new funding secured, we are preparing to offer a new series of Alaska Native arts workshops over the coming year. The first sessions this spring will focus on sewing and beadwork, followed by additional workshops later in the year in areas such as printmaking and bentwood technology. These programs are designed not only to support artistic practice, but also to create space for community connection, shared learning, and the continued transmission of Alaska Native arts knowledge.

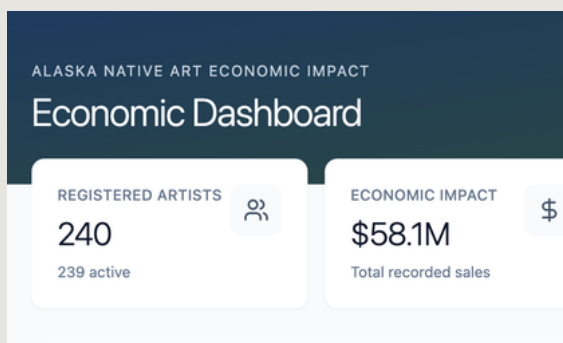
Leadership Anchorage Community Impact Project

ANAF's collaboration with Leadership Anchorage is another important part of this year's work. Through the Leadership Anchorage Community Impact Project, ANAF is helping build a stronger framework for understanding Alaska Native art as a measurable economic sector in Alaska. This effort is directly connected to planning ahead of anticipated Artist Development workshops later this year, where ANAF aims to present clearer data about the role Alaska Native artists play in the state's economy.



Leadership Anchorage cohort

The project is focused on identifying what data already exists, determining what additional information still needs to be gathered, and creating a structure for organizing and maintaining that information over time. In doing so, ANAF and Leadership Anchorage are working toward a more credible and sustainable way to document the economic significance of Alaska Native arts.



App in progress

This work also aligns with what will be a public-facing Alaska Native Art Economy Tracker, reflecting the broader goal of making the economic contributions of Alaska Native artists more visible to artists, partners, business leaders, policymakers, and communities across the state. By helping define and communicate this impact more clearly, the Leadership Anchorage collaboration supports ANAF's larger mission to expand visibility, market access, and opportunity for Alaska Native artists.



Mellisa Maktuayaq Johnson

Strengthening Infrastructure and Outreach

Alongside program planning, ANAF has continued to strengthen the statewide infrastructure that supports artists year-round. The first half of 2026 included ongoing updates to the Alaska Native Artist Directory and its public-facing resources, including adding new pages and materials to the Foundation site, updating the events calendar, and improving related website content. We also worked on press and communications materials connected to the Directory and shared regular updates with ANAF's board and steering committee. These efforts are critical to ensuring that artists can be found, supported, and connected to opportunities across Alaska and beyond.

Communication and outreach have also been an important part of this year's work. ANAF created and shared new social media content highlighting both Pick.Click.Give. and past workshops, developed new print materials for outreach, and continued using newsletters and email updates to keep board members, steering committee members, and supporters informed. The second half of 2026 will see an initiative to share ANAF's Directory promotional short film by Inupiaq filmmaker Alex Sallee in various screens and theaters across the state. These communications are part of a broader strategy to increase awareness of ANAF's programs, encourage artist participation, and strengthen community engagement around Alaska Native arts.



Nadia Jackinsky at RISD Museum exhibit

Long-Term Sustainability

At the same time, ANAF has been investing significant energy into grant writing and fundraising to support the next phase of this work. During this year, we prepared and advanced applications to the RurAL CAP Foundation, Alaska Airlines Foundation, Crowley, First National Bank Alaska, and the Mayor's Arts Grants—each tailored to support artist services, portrait photography access, and the broader professional development needs of Alaska Native artists. By investing in tools like professional photography, artist directories, and business-support workshops, we help artists strengthen both cultural continuity and economic sustainability.

We are also continuing to shape ANAF's broader workforce and small business development efforts. As described in recent funding materials, ANAF's mission is to increase visibility for artists and provide platforms, trainings, and professional tools that reduce barriers to market access. Current planning includes workshops and community-based trainings that support pricing, marketing, financial management, and professional presentation—all practical areas that can make a meaningful difference in artists' ability to sustain their work.

Join the Movement to Sustain Alaska Native Arts



Contribute today!

Looking ahead, we are excited about the momentum that is building. With additional support, ANAF will be able to expand rural and regional photography sessions, strengthen the Alaska Native Arts Directory, share its promotional short film, continue developing its economic impact work with Leadership Anchorage, and delivering professional development opportunities that help artists thrive on their own terms.

To learn more, collaborate, or further support this work, please contact info@aknativearts.org or (907) 258-2623. You can also contribute at the ANAF donation page. Thank you for being part of this work.

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Alaska Native Arts
Foundation

Directory: @aknativeartists

The Alaska Native Arts Directory was launched by the Alaska Native Arts Foundation and made possible through the guidance, partnership, and support of artists, culture-bearers, nonprofit leaders, public agencies, and organizations across Alaska, whose insight, generosity, and shared vision shaped every step of its development.

