Dear Partners,

I hope this message finds you healthy and happy this holiday season. As 2020 comes to an end, we reflect on a year that has tested us in ways we never imagined.

This year, Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) focused on balancing service and safety. As a provider of essential services, we set our sights on overcoming obstacles to keep our doors open, ready to serve our community. Like many of you, we’ve leaned on technology, but we also had to be creative in developing hybrid in-person service models that ensure safe continuity of support. When the pandemic began, CITC immediately looked for ways to serve. We launched a $100,000 Participant Emergency Fund to provide essential support such as food, housing, and transportation. We partnered with Bean’s Café and the Food Bank of Alaska to help reinforce their community support operations. Our Fab Lab staff went to work making masks for healthcare providers and Tribal partners. We immediately deployed a team to Anchorage’s temporary homeless shelters to deliver critical in-person support and outreach for our most vulnerable populations.

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When we met Richard and Andrea at the onset of the pandemic, they were homeless but had the desire for change. CITC’s Employment & Training team was able to quickly arrange transitional housing for Richard and Andrea and help find job placements.

It was the type of hand-up they needed to propel their lives in a hopeful new direction. These stories are happening each day in our community and they serve to remind us that, no matter the obstacle, there is always a way forward together.

As we adapt to change, CITC continues to operate with great resilience. This winter, through federal grants and a unique partnership with Cook Inlet Housing Authority (CIHA), we provided more than $500k in assistance for rent, mortgage, emergency housing, utilities, internet, food, and winter clothing. Since September we’ve received more than 1,000 applications for this support, and we continue working to meet that community need.

At a time of rising unemployment, we’ve expanded Alaska’s People, our premier job placement and referral network, adding a statewide career platform in AlaskaNativeHire.com. Earlier this year, we acquired Get Out The Native Vote and immediately launched a communications campaign to support voting and civic engagement among Alaska Native people in the November election—even safely hosting an early absentee polling location at our Nat’uh Service Center for nearly 1,600 socially-distant voters. At the Alaska Native Justice Center (ANJC) we partnered with the Alaska Court System to install a remote Court Kiosk to provide participants secure, private access to the court system and to lessen barriers of access to justice.

In November, ANJC held its annual Voices for Justice fundraising campaign, this year an innovative all-virtual effort that resulted in more than $108,000 in donations. We’re profoundly grateful for this generosity and excited to put these funds to use in support of ANJC’s work in the justice system.
Throughout 2020, our Youth programs have adapted to serve students both in-person and virtually. Our Fab Lab saw over 10,000 participant hours and we even extended STEM learning into Tyonek through our Innovation Station project, as students learned how to craft hand drums, screen-printed aprons, and laser-engraved rocks. Our Education team is developing a digital badging program and continues proactively supporting students through outreach and virtual tutoring.

CITC has also worked this year to reinforce our relationships with Tribal partners, further opening lines of communication, and developing broad-based agreements to frame our work together. This effort is particularly timely, as we collaborate with Tribal partners to ensure we are thoughtfully serving Our People together.

Adaptability, as you surely know, often requires humor. We lean on humor in many ways at CITC, but this year I was especially pleased to see our Child & Family Services (CFS) team design colorful face shields featuring popular cartoon characters or animals to bring joy to their little ones and participant families. It is just one example of how laughter and humor can brighten our days.

I want to thank you for being our valued partner. You make our success possible and I look forward to continuing our work together on behalf of Our Mission and Our People.

From the bottom of my heart, I wish you and your family a healthy and joyous holiday season.

Sincerely,

—Gloria O’Neill
President & CEO
Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc.

2020 Impact Highlights

Despite this year’s many challenges, your support provided opportunities for CITC participants toward their efforts in improving their lives and achieving their potential. Thank you!

- **10,851** participant hours in CITC Fab Lab
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- **$13.78** average hourly wage increase for training participants
- **214** families served through preservation and reunification services
- **376** individuals advocated for within the criminal justice system

617 employed through all services