

**Yup'ik Language Assistance Tribal Outreach:  
Report to the Alaska Division of Elections  
Part I: Pre-Meeting Comments and Meeting Summary  
Part II: Post-Meeting Feedback**

Prepared for  
Alaska Division of Elections

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## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Part I: Pre-Meeting Comments and Meeting Summary</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Methodology: Part I .....	2
Summary of Pre-Meeting Comments from Tribal Organizations .....	3
Summary of the Meeting Participants' Feedback and Comments .....	4
<b>Part II: Post-Meeting Feedback</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Methodology: Part II .....	9
Summary of Post-Meeting Feedback from Tribal Organizations and Participants.....	9
Appendix A: ISER Script for Pre-Meeting Contact .....	A-1
Appendix B: ISER Letter of Invitation to Tribal Organizations.....	B-1
Appendix C: ISER Letter of Invitation to Plaintiff Tribal Organizations .....	C-1
Appendix D. List of Participants—Bethel Election Outreach Meeting .....	D-1
Appendix E: Agenda—Bethel Election Outreach Meeting .....	E-1
Appendix F: Pre-Meeting Interview Responses .....	F-1
Appendix G: Post-Meeting Letter to Tribes .....	G-1
Appendix H: Post-Meeting Survey .....	H-1
Appendix I: Post-Meeting Interview Summary .....	I-1

## Introduction

The Division of Elections contracted with the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Alaska Anchorage to help develop a network of key tribal organization and village representatives in the Bethel census area to work with the division on their Yup'ik language assistance program. The division asked ISER to help them communicate with tribes about the division's current programs and to document additional ways that the division can improve its language assistance program.

The Alaska Division of Elections is required under the Federal Voting Rights Act (VRA) to provide language assistance to voters in areas where more than 5% of the voting age citizens are members of a single-language minority and are limited English proficient. In July 2008, a federal court ordered the division to take the following remedial actions, many of which the division had already taken prior to the court order:

1. Provide mandatory poll worker training.
2. Hire a language assistance coordinator fluent in Yup'ik.
3. Recruit bi-lingual poll workers or translators.
4. Provide sample ballots in written Yup'ik.
5. Provide pre-election publicity in Yup'ik.
6. Ensure the accuracy of translations.
7. Provide a Yup'ik glossary of election terms.
8. Submit pre-election and post-election reports.

Although the division has a Yup'ik language assistance program and has been addressing the court order, interviews with Bethel census area residents show that some people are unaware of the elements in the division's language assistance plan. In addition, some Bethel area residents said they feel the election workers and the division should interpret the meaning of the ballot measures and explain the positions of the various candidates—activities that are forbidden by state statute.

ISER agreed to help the division address this lack of awareness and the misconceptions about their programs by contacting tribal organizations and inviting them to attend a meeting in Bethel, Alaska, on May 27, 2009. Part I of this report, issued in July 2009, describes ISER's contacts with tribal organizations and summarizes the comments and feedback from the participants at the election outreach meeting in Bethel. Part II describes ISER's post-meeting contacts with tribal organizations and meeting participants and summarizes their responses to the post-meeting survey.

## Part I: Pre-Meeting Comments and Meeting Summary

### Methodology: Part I

ISER researchers telephoned, faxed, and e-mailed a broad list of village contacts in the Bethel census area including five municipal governments, twenty-five tribal governments, and ten election workers. They asked people to identify appropriate representatives to attend a meeting in Bethel on May 27, 2009, to learn about the Division of Elections language assistance program and to give the division feedback on its tribal outreach efforts. After verifying contact information, ISER then faxed or e-mailed a letter inviting the tribal council to designate a representative to attend the Bethel election outreach meeting (see Appendix B). ISER followed up with further telephone calls to ask some preliminary questions about language assistance needs in the villages and to arrange travel for the tribal representatives (see Appendix A).

ISER researchers also extended meeting invitations to other Native organizations in the area—the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC), Bethel Native Corporation (BNC), and the Kuskokwim Native Association.

Because of the pending lawsuit in federal court, ISER did not directly contact the four plaintiff villages<sup>1</sup> but did send a letter to the Division of Elections' attorney to be forwarded by the plaintiff's attorney to the plaintiff tribal organizations (see Appendix C). No representatives from the plaintiff tribal councils responded to ISER's invitation.

It was frequently difficult to contact tribal councils for several reasons—flooding and flood watch warnings created emergency situations in some villages; phones and faxes didn't work in many areas; and tribal staff members weren't in offices because of reduced funding.

Initially, ISER arranged travel to Bethel for thirty-two participants. Three of these participants cancelled and three participants did not attend the meeting. Twenty-six participants did attend the meeting. Twenty-one of the participants were from tribal councils; three were from municipal governments; two were election workers; and one was a representative from the Kuskokwim Native Association. Together they represented twenty-four communities in the Bethel census area.

The meeting was held on Wednesday, May 27, 2009, at the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center on the Kuskokwim campus in Bethel. Alice Fredson, a member of the Yup'ik translation panel, welcomed the participants in Yup'ik. Gail Fenumiai, Director of the Division of Elections, introduced her staff: Shelly Growden, Election Systems Manager; Dorie Wassilie, Yup'ik Language Program Coordinator; Becka Baker, Region IV Election Supervisor, Nome; and Mickey Speegle, Region III Election Supervisor, Fairbanks. The staff had prepared PowerPoint presentations

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<sup>1</sup> Kasigluk Traditional Council, Kwigillingok IRA Council, Tuluksak Native Community (IRA), Tuntutuliak Traditional Council

to describe the Yup'ik language assistance program; improvements ordered by the court, July 30, 2008; the work of the Yup'ik language translation panel and the language coordinator; and the election worker training program. After each presentation, meeting participants were encouraged to ask questions and give feedback.

Prior to the meeting, ISER contacted the *Delta Discovery*, KYUK, and the *Tundra Drums* to tell them about the meeting and to encourage them to send a reporter to participate. KYUK did interview some election staff after the meeting.

Stephanie Martin and Mary Killorin, researchers at ISER, took notes at the meeting in order to prepare a summary for participants and tribal organizations. Part I of this report addresses the pre-meeting and meeting contacts and feedback. ISER summarized its follow-up contacts with meeting participants and tribal organizations in Part II.

### **Summary of Pre-Meeting Comments from Tribal Organizations**

ISER researchers talked to many tribal and municipal organizations to explain the purpose of the Bethel outreach meeting and to determine who could participate in the meeting. ISER used this opportunity to ask people to share their concerns on three key questions about the state's language assistance program in their respective communities. Staff from nineteen tribal councils responded to the questions (see Appendix F). These staff included fifteen tribal administrators, three tribal council presidents or chairmen, and two staff members. Three municipal government organizations—including two mayors and one city administrator—also responded to the questions. In addition, one executive director of a Native organization and one election worker shared their observations. Below are the initial responses in summary form.

#### ***Has language assistance been a problem for Yup'ik speakers in your community?***

Approximately two-thirds of the respondents<sup>2</sup> did not think that language assistance was a problem in their communities. Often this was because they had fewer Elders in their communities. Two respondents mentioned that election translators had problems translating the English into Yup'ik because they didn't understand the ballot measures. One respondent commented that he thought it was important for translators to pass a test for integrity.

One-third of the respondents did think language assistance was a problem for Yup'ik speakers in their communities—especially the Elders. They expressed several concerns: (1) Elders are not always comfortable asking for assistance, and election workers sometimes don't actively offer help. (2) Many Elders do not speak English well and they don't understand the ballot—especially the ballot measures. (3) Many Elders read traditional Yup'ik, rather than modern central Yup'ik. (4) In

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<sup>2</sup> Of the 22 respondents who answered this question, 8 said that language assistance had been a problem and 14 said that it had not been a problem.

the past, there have been mistranslations of election materials. One respondent mentioned that he did think voters were impressed when they received materials written in Yup'ik.

***Are there voters in your community who commonly use and read materials translated into Yup'ik?***

The majority of respondents<sup>3</sup> who answered this question said that many people in their community both read and speak Yup'ik. One respondent suggested it would be better if materials were translated into Yup'ik and Cup'ik. Fewer than half of the respondents thought that written translation of materials was necessary. This was frequently because the Elders often have trouble seeing and reading, or they only read old Yup'ik because the Yup'ik bible is written in traditional Yup'ik.

***What is the best way to get election information out in your community?***

Almost all respondents suggested sending a letter to the tribal council that they could post and making announcements on VHF. Most respondents also suggested posters that could be placed in tribal and city offices, the post office, stores, the clinic, and the bingo hall. Many respondents also suggested KYUK—especially Yup'ik news—and one respondent suggested KNOM and cable vision. Some respondents also suggested the *Delta Discovery* and the *Tundra Drums*.<sup>4</sup>

**Summary of the Meeting Participants' Feedback and Comments**

The meeting on Wednesday, May 27, 2009, was held at the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center on the Kuskokwim campus in Bethel. Twenty-six participants from outlying villages in the Bethel census area flew in to attend the meeting. Five staff members from the Division of Elections attended. The meeting was scheduled from noon to 3:00pm.

ISER researchers structured the meeting to encourage questions and feedback from the participants. Division of Elections staff gave four brief presentations: (1) an overview of Division of Elections Yup'ik language program; (2) improvements ordered by the court on July 30, 2008; (3) Alaska elections Yup'ik language assistance program and the challenges the division faces (including the introduction of a draft of the Yup'ik language glossary and translation panel); and (4) an explanation of the election worker training program (see Appendix E). Participants were encouraged to ask questions and provide feedback after each presentation.

ISER researchers took notes during the meeting and summarized the conversations between the division and participants after each presentation. Subsequent to this report, ISER will distribute this information to participants and

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<sup>3</sup> Of the 20 respondents who answered this question, 11 said that there were many people in their community who read and speak Yup'ik; and 8 said there were not.

<sup>4</sup> Twelve respondents said VHF, and 16 said to send something to the tribal council to post. Nine respondents suggested putting up a poster in public places; 6 suggested radio announcements; and 3 respondents suggested newspapers.

tribal organizations to make sure it accurately reflects the meeting discussions and to ask for additional comments and feedback.

Almost all of the participants' comments and questions were in response to the division's summary of eight challenges that it faces when implementing Yup'ik language assistance:

- Finding fluent Yup'ik speakers in each village who are willing to serve as bilingual outreach workers and/or bilingual poll workers
- Training poll workers and retaining those workers who attend training
- Dialect differences for translated materials
- Expectations about explanation of ballot measures—both English and Yup'ik
- Obtaining feedback and input from villages
- Legal schedule constraints during elections
- Limited resources
- Reconciling villages requests with state/federal guidelines—especially preclearance

We have summarized the comments and the divisions' explanations by topic.

### ***Finding, training, and retaining bilingual poll workers who are fluent in both English and Yup'ik***

The division explained that it is difficult to find election workers who are willing to commit to attending training and being available for the 13 hours or more required on election day. The division often must train election workers a month or more before election day because it must provide training throughout the entire state with a limited number of staff. As a result, some workers who take the training are unable to work on election day. The division asked the tribal representatives to collaborate with the division to find qualified election workers in their communities.

Some participants suggested that the division train more young people to help with elections. The division agreed and told the group about their Youth Vote Ambassador Program that allows qualified high school students who are at least 16 years old to serve as election poll workers. They also said that the election board can have additional people come in to help count ballots after the polls close. They asked tribal representatives to encourage their tribal councils to recommend appropriate local people for election training. One participant commented that it would be helpful if the division of elections could pay their election workers more.

### ***Dialect differences between the communities***

To illustrate the difficulties of multiple Yup'ik dialects, one participant held up his glasses and then his pen for the group. He asked the other participants to tell him what the Yup'ik word for each object was. Participants responded with different

words, depending upon the dialect they spoke. Participants wanted to know how the division resolved the problem of different dialects.

The division explained that federal regulations require the division to translate election materials into the most commonly used dialect in the jurisdiction, which is modern Central Yup'ik. The division provides written training materials in modern Central Yup'ik to bilingual poll workers in the village; the poll workers can then provide language assistance to voters in their local dialect. One participant who had been an election worker for several decades stressed that it was important for bilingual workers to study translated materials before providing language assistance to ensure that any translation into the local dialect was accurate.

### ***Translating election terminology into Yup'ik***

Participants commented that translating election terms is difficult even for people who speak English and Yup'ik fluently. There are no Yup'ik words for many of the terms used in elections. Many participants also noted that they had trouble understanding ballot measures—both in English and in Yup'ik. One participant suggested that the division write ballot measures more clearly so the “no” (vote) means “no” and “yes” means “yes.” The division explained that ballot measures are written by citizen initiative committees and often are very difficult to summarize in plain English. The ballot measure summaries that appear on the official ballot must comply with Alaska statutory requirements, and the division is not allowed to interpret any of the information on the ballot.

### ***Accuracy of translations***

Participants wanted to know how the division determined what Yup'ik words to use in their translations. The division described the on-going process of creating a Yup'ik glossary of election terms. In June of 2008, the division contracted with Mary Gregory—a Bethel Elder—to prepare a written translation of ballot measures and a draft Yup'ik glossary for election workers for the fall 2008 election. In July 2008, the ballot measures and glossary were sent to all Yup'ik tribal councils for comments.

The division realized that the glossary needed to be a continuing work-in-progress since many election terms didn't exist in Yup'ik. As a result, the division brought together a seven-member Yup'ik translation panel coordinated by Dorie Wassilie, the division's Yup'ik language coordinator. Ms. Wassilie and Alice Fredson, a member of the translation panel, presented the current draft of the glossary, provided an explanation of the process the panel went through to translate the terms, and encouraged participants to have their tribal councils review the glossary and provide feedback.

### ***Translating election materials into modern, Central Yup'ik instead of Moravian Yup'ik***

One participant commented that Elders over 45 were not taught written modern Central Yup'ik, and the written Yup'ik they read was the Moravian Yup'ik used to translate the bible. The division explained that it gave election workers materials

and sample ballots in modern Central Yup'ik because that is the dialect most commonly understood in the region. The election workers then orally translate materials for the Elders. The written information is only for election workers and cannot be given to the general public. They explained that federal law strictly limits what the division can do, and any materials for voters must be pre-cleared by the U.S. Department of Justice.

### ***Voter expectations that poll workers should explain the ballot measures and provide information about candidate positions***

The division explained that it has received feedback in post-election assessments that poll workers did not provide an explanation of the ballot measures or candidate positions. The division told participants that it is not the poll worker's responsibility to interpret the meaning of ballot measures and to tell voters what a candidate stands for. The poll worker's responsibility is to translate the ballot measures as they appear on the ballot, not to provide an explanation of the meaning of the measure.

A poll worker at the meeting told the gathering how difficult it was for her to have an Elder ask her for an explanation and to be unable to respond. "I really honor someone and they are asking me for an explanation and I have to say I can't explain." The division responded that if the poll workers were to explain the meaning of ballot measures or talk to voters about candidate positions, the poll worker could be influencing the voter on how to vote. Instead, it is the voter's responsibility to take the time to learn about measures and candidates.

The division also explained that every voter is allowed to bring one person with them to the polling place to help them vote. The division said that it was making an effort to make sure people in the villages understood this. One participant mentioned that Elders frequently brought a family member to regional or village corporation meetings to help the Elders understand the voting process.

### ***Obtaining feedback from tribal councils***

One participant asked why the division didn't send the glossary and a survey to every voter. Another participant asked why the division didn't provide information about the candidates in Yup'ik. Everyone agreed that it is important to give voters accurate and clear information in their language. The division explained that the initial glossary was sent to villages in 2008 along with the division's request for feedback. In addition, the division requested participants to provide comments on the updated glossary distributed at the meeting and said that they would also be sending the glossary to tribal councils for feedback and comments.

### ***Reconciling tribal requests with state and federal laws, especially preclearance requirements***

The division explained that Section 5 of the federal Voting Rights Act requires any voting change to be "pre-cleared" by the United States Department of Justice prior to being implemented—even polling place changes. The division then briefly summarized the act and explained how the preclearance requirements and recent

preclearance denials constrain their efforts to respond to requests to improve language assistance.

The purpose of the Voting Rights Act is to make sure that everyone has equal access to voting and that the election system does not discriminate against any ethnic group. The law directs the Alaska Division of Elections to provide language assistance to voters in areas where more than five percent of the voting age population is limited English proficient. This means that the division must provide Yup'ik language assistance to Bethel and the surrounding villages in all stages of the election process. However, if the division wants to provide voters with any new information—a sample ballot in Yup'ik or a new election poster—the U.S. Department of Justice must review and approve the material before the division can release it. This federal review process is called “preclearance.” Preclearance takes at least sixty days and often much longer. Failure to have new information pre-cleared by the Department of Justice is a serious violation of the federal Voting Rights Act.

The division also told participants that they will soon be submitting requests for preclearance to provide Yup'ik on the electronic voting equipment, to produce an audio version of the glossary for placement on the division's website, and to provide the Yup'ik sample ballot to persons providing language assistance to voters. The division asked participants attending the meeting to assist in their efforts by signing individual support letters for these improvements that the division can submit with the preclearance request. Participants told the division staff that they could not speak on behalf of their tribal councils and the division replied that it understood the support letters would be coming from them as individuals.

## **Part II: Post-Meeting Feedback**

### **Methodology: Part II**

During August and September of 2009, ISER researchers telephoned, faxed, and e-mailed twenty-five communities in the Bethel census area including twenty-five tribal governments, five municipal governments, and five regional Native organizations.<sup>5</sup> ISER researchers sent each of these local governments and organizations a letter (Appendix G) and ISER's summary of both the pre-meeting comments from tribal organizations and the meeting itself (Part I of this report). In the letter, ISER researchers said that they would contact the organization with a short follow-up questionnaire (Appendix H) to evaluate the effectiveness of the Bethel meeting and to document any corrections to the ISER summary or additional comments and suggestions.

ISER researchers also attempted to contact the twenty-six people who had attended the Bethel meeting to get their feedback on the effectiveness of the meeting and the accuracy of the ISER summary. ISER was able to complete follow-up interviews with 23 of the 26 meeting participants.<sup>6</sup>

### **Summary of Post-Meeting Feedback from Tribal Organizations and Participants**

ISER frequently talked to more than one person in a community because interviewers were trying to get feedback from tribal councils, municipal governments, and meeting participants. In total, ISER researchers interviewed representatives of 23 of the 25 communities.<sup>7</sup> The people interviewed included 15 tribal council representatives, 15 tribal administrators, 4 election workers, and 6 municipal representatives.

ISER researchers asked respondents five questions:

- Did you feel that the May 27<sup>th</sup> meeting in Bethel was an effective outreach tool for the Division of Elections?
- Was there anything you learned at the Bethel meeting that you have taken back to your tribal council?
- Did your tribal council receive a copy of the ISER meeting summary?
- Are there any additions or corrections you want to make to the ISER summary?

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<sup>5</sup> Municipal governments were Mekoryuk, Napakiak, Napaskiak, Nightmute, and Quinhagak. Regional Native organizations included the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC), Bethel Native Corporation (BNC), Orutsaramuit Native Council Senior Center, and Kuskokwim Native Association.

<sup>6</sup> ISER was unable to speak with participants from Akiak, Crooked Creek, and Kipnuk. However, ISER interviewers were able to talk to the tribal administrators in those communities.

<sup>7</sup> ISER was unable to interview any one from Akiak Native Community (IRA) or Bethel Orutsaramuit Native Council (ONC).

- Do you have any additional comments or suggestions that would help the Division of Elections provide better service to members of your community who need Yup'ik language assistance?

Not all respondents answered all of these questions. Some had not yet received or read the ISER summary. Many tribal councils had not met due to subsistence activities over the summer, and so the materials had not been presented to the tribal council. However, no one commented that the meeting was ineffective—in fact, those who did respond all agreed that the meeting was a success. No participant or tribal council requested any addition or correction to the ISER summary.

***Was the May 27th meeting in Bethel an effective outreach tool for the Division of Elections?***

All twenty-three participants interviewed said they thought the meeting was effective. Eleven nonparticipants also commented on the meeting's effectiveness based upon the report of the community participant, the materials made available by the Division of Elections at the Bethel meeting, and the ISER summary.

A participant from Nunapitchuk commented:

The outreach by the Division of Elections for that meeting was just great. They got together village tribal leaders, city clerks and other city leaders, and election workers like me from all over the area. It was a good idea to get them all together, and now they will all spread the word back to their village. The time of the meeting was very good for me, and I think it was good for others, too. The presenters were really good, and they were all so helpful, explaining everything we wanted to know and answering all our questions. The food was good, and there was plenty of it, too, which was very good because, for some reason, when we travel we always get very hungry.

A city administrator who had not attended the meeting said:

Yes, I liked reading the material you sent us, and I also made copies of the material you sent for the mayor and gave it to him. It was discussed at the city meeting and, I think, at the council meeting. Everyone was very pleased with the information and thinks that this election work that has been done is a very good thing.

Eleven respondents said they thought the presenters at the Bethel meeting were well-prepared and that the material was both informative and understandable. Six respondents talked about the effectiveness of the participation and sharing that happened at the meeting. One participant who was new to the election process said that he appreciated the comments of more experienced participants. Another commented that the questions asked and the answers given were very helpful.

All participants who talked about the meeting location thought the Bethel location was a good choice. They also thought that having a half-day meeting was a good

idea. One person said that a one-day meeting is good so that people can get back to their families; another said that a short meeting was easier for Elders. Only one nonparticipant said that he thought a longer meeting might be better because there was so much material to present. People also liked the timing of the meeting in May because it was before they started subsistence activities. Four participants also said the food was great.

Several participants commented on the importance of the Yup'ik election terms glossary. An election worker said: "They did a great job translating all those election terms into the Yup'ik language...everything made sense to me and the glossary will be really helpful for us in explaining the election terms to the Elders in Yup'ik."

A nonparticipant described the importance of the glossary to him personally as well as to his tribal council:

The council thought the glossary was the most important part. If the Elders do not understand something, they can get the help they need or get someone who can read to help them. If my Dad were alive now he would love this part. He could not read and he wanted to vote because he cared and knew it was important, but in his day he did not vote because he could not read the ballot.

A tribal council president said: "The glossary they gave her was excellent! I am taking courses in Yup'ik myself and the Yup'ik words in the glossary were easy to read and they really helped to understand the election terms. The elections' people all did a very good job. Also, the translators."

***Was there anything you learned at the Bethel meeting that you have taken back to your tribal council?***

ISER researchers asked respondents if the meeting participant from their community had shared meeting information with the tribal council. They also asked whether the tribal council had received a copy of the ISER summary of the meeting. Meeting participants from fourteen communities had already given a report to their tribal council. Five participants had not met with their tribal council yet, but were on the agenda for the next meeting. Three participants had met with their tribal administrator but had not appeared at a council meeting. Only four tribal councils said that they had not received the ISER summary of the meeting. ISER researchers then sent them another copy and asked for corrections or additions. No participant or tribal council offered an addition or correction.

Most participants did not respond with detail to the question, "Was there anything you learned at the Bethel meeting that you have taken back to your tribal council?" One respondent said he told that tribal council about the need to standardize the Yup'ik ballot so that all Yup'ik voters are getting the same translation. Another respondent said that the council thought that the glossary was the most important part. A third respondent stated:

"I took everything I learned back to the council...The council members did not have any comments or suggestions but they liked the

presentation very much. It interested them and they said it would give the elderly a better chance to understand what they are voting for. We believe if we use this material consistently over time things will get better.”

***Do you have any suggestions that would help the Division of Elections provide better service to members of your community who need Yup'ik language assistance?***

The final question ISER asked respondents was: “Do you have any suggestions that would help the Division of Elections provide better service to members of your community who need Yup'ik language assistance?”

One respondent suggested that KYUK in Bethel broadcast information about elections in Yup'ik. Another respondent said: “We have no problems but maybe they could think about getting electronic voting—we still use pencils.” A third respondent said that their community was trying to find more people willing to do translations and asked if there was anything they needed to know about getting more people to translate.

One participant said that the tribal council asked him if Yup'ik names will be used on the ballot in addition to the candidate's regular English name. Another participant suggested that the glossary should contain more legislative terms translated into Yup'ik. A third participant commented: “Standardize the Yup'ik ballot so that the voter in Goodnews Bay, Platinum, or any village is getting the same information as the voter in another village. The current system only allows the polling place translators' version, which may be biased.”

A participant expressed concern about teaching translators to respond to Elders' questions without giving opinions:

We have spoken to some of the Elders about this new information and they just keep asking us—who do I vote for?" We have to keep explaining to them—you have to choose. Over the course of time, if we keep telling them this, I think things will get better. It will also take a little time to have all the translators get to know what they are supposed to be doing and saying. Then—when everyone is saying the same thing to the Elders again and again—they will understand and it will get better. If we get our Elder explanations across, I think it will be better. We are helping the Elders validate their right to vote by telling them that they need to choose. The election workers need to sit down and talk to the Elders. They also need to be reminded about what they need to do when the Elders ask: "How do I vote? What do you think? Who should I vote for? Who is the best candidate?" The election worker should have a response to give without giving their opinion.

Another participant was concerned about getting people to register to vote: “My main concern right now is how to get the young people to register to vote. It seems like there are so many in our village who do not even realize that they have to register to vote.”

Respondents from Kipnuk and Upper Kalskag suggested that all election materials should be sent to city governments:

Once any materials go through the pre-clearance everyone should get copies. It is important for the tribal councils to know the material, but it is also important for the city offices to have the materials because the election workers are often under them and not the councils.

When I went to the meeting all of the Elders commented and wanted to know why all the information—particularly the glossary—is being sent to all the tribal councils and not to the city administrators and their offices. All of the elections are run by the city and all the election workers work for the city. The tribal councils are only responsible for tribal elections. The councils have very little money to print this information. The city governments need to have this information so they can copy it and get it into the hands of the elections workers.

Finally, one election worker expressed how the meeting had strengthened her hope for the future:

Last year the election ballot was very difficult to translate for the Elders, particularly the initiatives. If we had the glossary at that election, it probably would have been a lot easier. Now we have all these new tools and I think it will be much better. At least, I feel hopeful about it at the moment. The other thing I was worried about was that before the meeting someone had called me and asked me to be a witness against the election board at some sort of hearing. I wasn't sure whether or not to do it because I knew we have some real problems translating for the Elders, but after I went to the meeting I knew I would not testify against them because I could see they have been really trying.



## **Appendix A: ISER Script for Pre-Meeting Contact**

I am calling from the institute of Social and Economic Research at UAA. The division of elections has asked us to contact tribal organizations and ask what Yup'ik language assistance programs have worked for their members and what improvements could be made to language assistance programs in the future.

During the past year, the division has hired a Yup'ik language assistance coordinator and convened a six member advisory panel to translate election terms into the Yup'ik language.

We need someone from your tribal organization to help us make sure that Yup'ik translations are accurate and that bilingual poll workers and outreach workers are adequately trained.

We (ISER) are putting together a lunch meeting in Bethel on Wednesday, May 27 from noon to 3:00pm. The meeting will be held at the cultural center on the Kuskokwim campus. We hope that someone from your tribal organization can participate. We can provide round-trip air fare to Bethel.

We know that this is a busy time of year but the Yup'ik translation panel has been meeting all winter and we would like to get your feedback before people leave for fish camp. This meeting will be an opportunity to meet Dorie Wassilie, the Yup'ik language coordinator, as well as other division of election staff. Dorie will provide Yup'ik translation at the meeting.

Has language assistance been a problem for Yup'ik speakers in your community?

Are there voters in your community who commonly use and read materials translated into Yup'ik?

What is the best way to find fluent Yup'ik language speakers in your village who are willing be outreach workers and/or poll workers?

We would like your tribal organization to review the Yup'ik translation of election terms. Who is the best person to contact?

What is the best way to get election information out in your community? [Letter to tribes, posters in community (where), radio station, local radio, Web site, other internet (Twitter)]

What is the best way for the division of elections to contact your organization?

How do you usually get to Bethel? [air, boat?]

What airline do you usually fly?

What is the best time to plan this sort of meeting? [time during the year]

## **Appendix B: ISER Letter of Invitation to Tribal Organizations**



UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE  
**Institute of Social and Economic Research**  
College of Business and Public Policy

May 7, 2009

The Alaska Division of Elections has been working on improvements to their Yup'ik language assistance program and wants to make sure that they are providing elders and other Yup'ik speakers with effective language assistance. The Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Alaska Anchorage is organizing a meeting in Bethel to seek input from tribal representatives on how the current language assistance program is working and to get suggestions from tribes about changes that would be useful in their communities.

This gathering is an opportunity for tribal governments to learn about the division's language assistance efforts and their plans for improvements as well as to communicate directly with Division of Elections representatives. It is also an opportunity to learn about the Yup'ik translation panel and their work on the Yup'ik glossary of elections terms. Dorie Wassilie, the division's Yup'ik language coordinator, will translate the meeting for Yup'ik speakers.

The meeting will be in Bethel on Wednesday, May 27<sup>th</sup> at the cultural center on the Kuskokwim campus from noon to 3:00pm. We will provide round-trip air fare to Bethel and lunch for your tribal representative.

ISER researchers—Suzanne Sharp and Pat DeRoche—will contact your tribal administrator to answer any questions you may have about the meeting and to arrange travel for your tribal representative. We know that it is a very busy time of year but we hope that someone from your community will be able to participate.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Martin  
Assistant Professor of Economics and Public Policy  
Institute of Social and Economic Research  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
907-786-5430  
Fax: 907-786-7739  
Stephanie@uaa.alaska.edu

Telephone (907) 786.7710 • Fax (907) 786.7739 • E-mail: [ayiser@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:ayiser@uaa.alaska.edu)

## **Appendix C: ISER Letter of Invitation to Plaintiff Tribal Organizations**



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**UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE**  
**Institute of Social and Economic Research**  
College of Business and Public Policy

May 11, 2009

Dear Tribal Council Member:

The Alaska Division of Elections has been working on improvements to their Yup'ik language assistance program and wants to make sure that they are providing elders and other Yup'ik speakers with effective language assistance. The Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Alaska Anchorage is organizing a meeting in Bethel to seek input from tribal representatives on how the current language assistance program is working and to get suggestions from tribes about changes that would be useful in their communities.

This gathering is an opportunity for tribal governments to learn about the division's language assistance efforts and their plans for improvements as well as to communicate directly with Division of Elections representatives. It is also an opportunity to learn about the Yup'ik translation panel and their work on the Yup'ik glossary of elections terms. Dorie Wassilie, the division's Yup'ik language coordinator, will translate the meeting for Yup'ik speakers.

The meeting will be in Bethel on Wednesday, May 27<sup>th</sup> at the cultural center on the Kuskokwim campus from noon to 3:00pm. We will provide round-trip air fare to Bethel and lunch for your tribal representative.

Please contact Mary Killorin at ISER to answer any questions you may have about the meeting and to arrange travel for your tribal representative. We know that it is a very busy time of year but we hope that someone from your community will be able to participate.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Martin  
Assistant Professor of Economics and Public Policy  
Institute of Social and Economic Research  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
907-786-5430  
Fax: 907-786-7739  
Stephanie@uaa.alaska.edu

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ayiser@uaa.alaska.edu**

**Appendix D: List of Participants—Bethel Election  
Outreach Meeting, May 27, 2009**

**ELECTIONS TRIBAL OUTREACH MEETING  
Yup'it Piciryarait Cultural Center  
Bethel, Alaska  
Wednesday, May 27, 2009 – Noon to 3:00pm**

**AGENDA**

**Traditional Welcome**

**Alice Fredson, Elections Yup'ik Translation Panel Member**

**Welcome Message**

**Gail Fenumiai, Director, State of Alaska, Division of Elections**

**Overview of Elections Yup'ik Language Assistance Program**

**Shelly Growden, Election Systems Manager, Alaska Division of Elections**

**Improvements Ordered by the Court July 30, 2008**

**Shelly Growden, Election Systems Manager, Alaska Division of Elections**

**Alaska Elections Yup'ik Language Assistance Program**

**Dorie Wassilie, Yup'ik Language Program Coordinator, Alaska Division of Elections**

**Alice Fredson, Yup'ik Language Translation Panel Member**

**Explanation of the Election Worker Training Program**

**Becka Baker, Region IV Election Supervisor, Nome**

**Michelle Speegle, Region III Election Supervisor, Fairbanks**

**Feedback from Participants and Facilitated Group Discussion**

**Stephanie Martin, Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), UAA**

**Mary Killorin, Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), UAA**

**(There will be time for questions after each brief presentation. ISER staff will provide a written summary of the feedback from tribal representatives to tribal organizations and the Division of Elections)**