

AKPIRG ANNUAL REPORT 2022



www.akpirg.org
info@akpirg.org
(907) 350-2286

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LOOKING FORWARD

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THANK YOU

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

AKPIRG works to ensure the rights of people who are often sidelined, and to create healthy and thriving communities. Our work is done with the understanding that corporations should not have undue influence in our systems of government, especially as corporations are recent constructs and many different types of government have existed on this land for tens of thousands of years. Alaska is an Indigenous place, comprised of 227 federally recognized Tribes, and our work takes place on unceded sovereign land. This fact informs our work and our lives. AKPIRG staff and board live on and are stewards of Sugpiaq, Dena'ina, Auk Kwáan, Taku Kwáan, Lower Tanana Dene, Gwichyaa Zhee Gwich'in, Denaakk'e, and Yup'ik lands and nations.


A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This year again marked incredible growth for AKPIRG as an organization. When I stepped into the role of Executive Director in 2017, I was the only full time AKPIRG employee. Since then, thanks to wonderful community partners and supporters, we have been able to grow AKPIRG to almost 20 employees statewide.

As AKPIRG's capacity has grown, so has the number and depth of issues we can make headway on. From standing up a new utility regulator to preventing dark money in our elections, to increasing language access at the voting booth, our work has been wide-ranging and addressed issues deeply impacting Alaskans.

Our work is only as good as our team, and as AKPIRG has grown, I've fought hard to ensure that our staff are supported. This year we held a staff retreat for the first time, which was the beginning of a culture shift at AKPIRG from working on individual projects to a series of collaborations crossing issues areas and expertise—a more accurate reflection of, and therefore response to, the real world. Staff decided it was time to update our new logo, and AKPIRG's Board recently voted to add retirement benefits for staff. Excitingly, we were able to give Cost of Living Adjustment bonuses to staff to match this year's high inflation of 8%. I am so proud of this team, and excited to continue fighting for the issues with which I've been entrusted as Executive Director of this amazing organization.

As we sit at this pivotal moment of organizational change and look to the future, I want to say: thank you. This would not be possible without the support of AKPIRG volunteers, donors, and engaged community members. We truly thank you for your support, and invite you to take another step into our work anytime: We're always just an email or phone call away.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'V' followed by a stylized, cursive name that appears to be 'di Suvero'.

Veri di Suvero
Executive Director

WHO WE ARE

Our Mission:

Created in 1974, AKPIRG is a non-profit, non-partisan, citizen-oriented statewide membership organization, researching, educating and advocating on behalf of the public interest. AKPIRG advances the public interest by providing individuals with the opportunity and the information to participate equally in and be treated equally by our economic, social, and political systems.

Core Values:

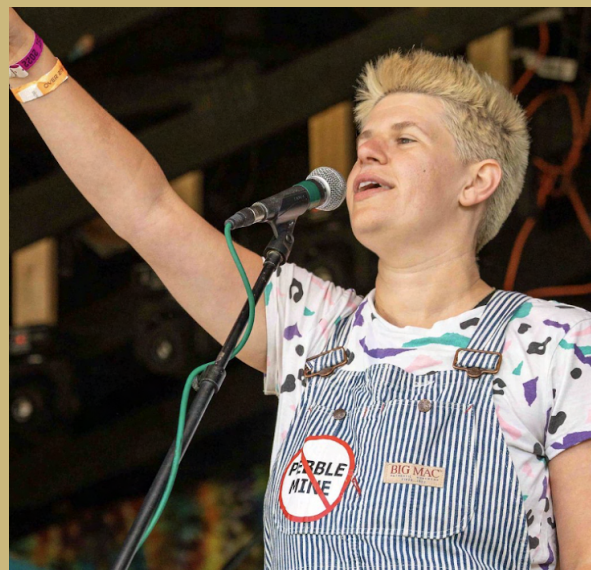
- Justice
- Community
- Accountability

Our Vision:

We are working towards a world of self-determined, thriving communities governed by people, not corporations. AKPIRG removes structural challenges that improve the material conditions impacting people across economic development, climate, and democracy, working towards innovative policies and systems that seek and achieve reform. AKPIRG works on a systems level for systemic change, being responsive and accountable to communities



AKPIRG Broadband Specialist Brittany Woods-Orrison Presents at the Indigenous Connectivity Summit.



AKPIRG Executive Director Veri di Suvero speaks to the crowd at SalmonFest. (Photo thanks to Jeff Chen)

A FRESH LOOK

As AKPIRG has grown as an organization, so has our public image. In order to better reflect this transformation, in 2022 we redesigned our logo!

AKPIRG staff Casey Chandler and Robin O'Donoghue collaborated to create four unique logo designs, and then sought input from AKPIRG staff, board members and from the public via a ranked choice voting poll in honor of Alaska's new voting system.

The resulting logo was inspired by vintage sew on patches to pay homage to AKPIRG's founding in Alaska in 1974.



AKPIRG BY THE NUMBERS



BOARD ACTIVITY

Thank you to our fabulous board! Aside from the board’s individual commitment to living AKPIRG’s mission, the board made time to meet and gather regularly for strategic planning and coordination. In March, two long-term board members, John Kennish and Nelta Edwards, cycled off the board, and Lois Epstein took on the mantle of Board Chair. In May 2022, the board gathered for a donor call night, effectively reaching out to their community and garnering support. Additionally, the board developed new systems to address impact litigation, addressed large grant proposal notifications, approved the fiscal sponsorship of two new projects, and passed Time Off, Conflict of Interest, and Retirement policies.

STAFF ACTIVITY

Once again the AKPIRG team grew this year. We welcomed our Kodiak GOTV team, our outreach team, grew our communications team, and even hosted an intern! Below is our current roster of staff by issue area.

2022 STAFF ROSTER

Operations Team:



Veri di Suvero
(They/Them)
Executive Director



Camilla Hussein-Scott
(She/Her)
Operations Manager



Casey Chandler
(She/Her)
Development and Outreach Lead



Ashlyn Luckhurst
(She/Her)
Outreach Coordinator

Policy & Communications Team



Robin O'Donoghue
(He/Him)
*Policy & Communications
Manager*



**Bridget Shaughnessy
Smith**
(She/Her)
*Policy & Communications
Strategist*

Energy Team:



Alyssa Sappenfield
(She/They)
*Energy Analyst, shared
staff with Fairbanks
Climate Action Coalition*



Ben Boettger
(He/Him)
*Energy Outreach
Specialist, shared staff
with Cook Inletkeeper*



Phil Wight
(He/Him)
Policy Analyst



Brian Kassof
(He/Him)
*Editor, Alaska Energy
Transparency Project*



Brittany Woods-Orrison
(She/Her)
*Broadband Specialist,
Shared Staff with Native
Movement*



Gabby Markel
(she/her)
Research Intern

Good Government Team:



Andrée McLeod
(She/Her)
*Good Government
Director*



Tanya Iskra
(She/They)
*Government Spending
Analyst **

Economic Justice Team:



Graham Downey
(He/Him)
Consumer Advocate



Erin Baldwin Day
(She/her)
MANA Lead Organizer



Gabby Juntra
(she/her)
*Corporate Accountability
Intern **

Language Access Team:



Rochelle Adams
(She/her)
Language Access Director



Erin Willahan
(She/Her)
*Language
Access Coordinator*



Annauk Olin
(She/Her)
*Indigenous Language
Translation Consultant*



Mary Jane Viray
(She/Her)
*Project Manager **



Nenita Nicolas
(She/Her)
*Deputy Project Manager **



Mary Guilas-Hawver
(She/Her)
*Project Manager **

*** Project term
completed in 2022.**

2022 PROGRAMS IN REVIEW

ECONOMIC JUSTICE



AKPIRG Consumer Advocate Graham Downey presents about how to deal with debt collectors at the Mountain View Library.



Graham appeared on Channel 2 (Alaska's News Source) to discuss the high rates of medical debt in Alaska, and share ways for consumers to reduce their debt.

Program Highlights:

- Organized a new coalition that *won* two major legislative victories at the Anchorage Assembly with bipartisan, nearly unanimous votes on affordable and abundant housing policy: eliminating parking minimums and legalizing accessory dwelling units.
- Led 2 additional coalitions of partner organizations: one to coordinate non-profits, government agencies, and businesses to provide financial resources; and the other to develop a strategy for addressing the high cost of payday loans in Alaska.
- Hosted over 13 Community Events, Presentations & Trainings on consumer issues.
- Staff interviewed by Alaska News Source, Alaska Public Media, and the Anchorage Daily News as an expert on medical debt, payday lending, and the Kroger-Albertsons merger.
- Helped empower Alaskans to save or recover over \$10,000 through debt navigation training.

AKPIRG works to ensure that Alaskans have the opportunity to build wealth. In this work, we help Alaskans advocate for themselves to demand fair treatment from systems of power. In 2022 our economic justice work grew dramatically. In February, we hired a new Consumer Advocate, Graham Downey, who hit the ground running. Graham participated in many community events, strengthened existing coalition partnerships, and developed new relationships. These community connections help us share information widely and build a base of support for advocacy efforts.

Navigating Debt: Know-Your-Rights Training

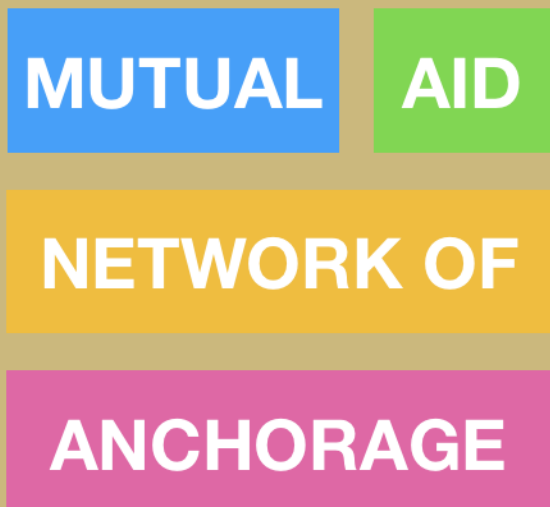
AKPIRG's know-your-rights training helped Alaskans address immediate financial issues. For example, one Alaskan was able to cut her student debt in half, by \$6,500, thanks to a conversation about her basic debt-collection rights. Several others were able to recover thousands in stolen wages, one through a know-your-rights conversation and the other by referral to legal services.

Housing Reform Advocacy

Additionally, AKPIRG convened a new coalition focused on improving the quality and availability of housing in Anchorage. As a first issue, this group focused on removing the parking mandate from the zoning code. Thanks to our organizing efforts, in late November 2022, the Anchorage Assembly unanimously eliminated parking mandates city-wide. By reducing the barriers for housing development and allowing for the redevelopment of vacant properties, this reform will help make Anchorage more affordable. AKPIRG will continue to bring together diverse coalitions to develop meaningful policy solutions to reduce the high cost of housing in Alaska.

Mutual Aid Network of Anchorage (MANA)

AKPIRG has served as the fiscal sponsor for the Mutual Aid Network of Anchorage since 2020, and in 2022 we were excited to solidify our working relationship with Lead Organizer Erin Baldwin Day and the 600+ member MANA network. Developed as a response to Covid-19, MANA is presently pivoting its operations from short-term, pandemic-focused relief work to long-term community resilience and regenerative economics, and AKPIRG welcomes the opportunity to collaborate more closely with MANA on projects of common concern, including economic justice advocacy, grassroots leadership development, and practical resource sharing.



MOVEMENT BUILDING & OUTREACH



AKPIRG Staff tabling at the 2022 Alaska Federation of Natives conference in Anchorage, Alaska - left to right: Graham Downey, Alyssa Sappenfield, Ashlyn Luckhurst, Brittany Woods-Orrison, and Casey Chandler.



AKPIRG Outreach & Development Lead Casey Chandler tables at the University of Alaska Anchorage Mental Health Fair.

Program Highlights:

- Hosted and participated in over 40 community events across the state.
- Continued to build public trust through personal connections; discussing and sharing the impacts and importance of AKPIRG's work.
- Hosted a series of educational workshops on debt, housing, and energy systems.
- Strengthened working relationships within Alaska's non-profit network
- Added 580 new members to AKPIRG's supporter network

As we built deeper connections in the Alaskan community, we continued to establish AKPIRG's authority as a trusted representative of the public interest within our advocacy network and systems of power. We had great conversations this year, discussing and sharing our values and the purposes for our work with community members and decision-makers alike. This spring we were lucky enough to add Casey Chandler to the team as our Development & Outreach Lead! In this position, Casey has been building relationships with AKPIRG supporters, donors and community partners, and been an integral part of getting AKPIRG out into the community at events all across the state. Casey has also been hard at work grant writing and fundraising to support all of the work AKPIRG does.

This fall, AKPIRG's outreach team grew again with the addition of Ashlyn Luckhurst as our Outreach Coordinator. Ashlyn joined AKPIRG during the peak of our GOTV and voter education efforts this past election season, and jumped right into our voter engagement work with the Alaska Voter Hub. In her role as Outreach Coordinator, she is supporting AKPIRG's outreach efforts to donors, supporters and volunteers, and representing AKPIRG at community events statewide.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & GOOD GOVERNANCE



AKPIRG Good Government Director Andrée McLeod at the Alaska Public Offices Commission office in Anchorage, Alaska.



AKPIRG Policy and Communications Manager Robin O'Donoghue with Alaska Redistricting Board Members Nicole Borromeo (left) and Melanie Bahnke (center).

Program Highlights:

- Tracked the Alaska Redistricting Board's efforts to approve a fairer legislative district map.
- Backed a lawsuit and legal defense fund against the Alaska Redistricting Board to un-gerrymander East Anchorage, Muldoon, and Eagle River.
- Successfully advocated for the passage of the Alaska On-line Checkbook Act.
- Filed a series of APOC reports that successfully kept \$2,500,000 of Dark Money out of Alaska's gubernatorial election.

Redistricting

This year, AKPIRG continued our work on Redistricting to follow through on our efforts to get a fair and equitable map in the 2020 Redistricting process. The scope of this year's work primarily involved tracking the Alaska Redistricting Board's actions taken to reconcile the court ordered reversal of unconstitutional decisions.

Additionally, to ensure that the Redistricting Board's attempts to gerrymander did not go unchallenged, AKPIRG participated in fundraising efforts for the legal defense of the East Anchorage Plaintiffs, who successfully won a lawsuit against the board for the unconstitutional and illogical pairing of Eagle River and East Anchorage. Both the superior

and supreme courts directly referred to the public comment record of testimony organized by AKPIRG staff in reaching this decision.

As the map is remanded to the Redistricting Board again following the 2022 General Election in which an interim map will be used, AKPIRG will remain vigilant to any further attempt at gerrymandering.

Good Governance and Watchdog Work

In 2022 AKPIRG Good Government Director Andrée Mcleod worked on a variety of transparency and good governance issues. Her work involved the filing of multiple complaints with the Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC), testifying before the legislature on issues such as the splitting of the Department of Health and Social Services, and successfully advocating for the passage of the Senate Bill 25: the Alaska Online Checkbook Act. This new law requires that state revenue and expenditures are accessible to the public at no cost through a user-friendly website, ensuring accessible transparency of our state funds that is so desperately needed.

Andrée also closely tracked the Alaska Legislature’s Legislative Council’s process to set new social media rules for Representatives and Senators. Prior to taking this action, neither Alaska’s laws nor legislative guidelines provided for any rules or accountability relating to the social media usage by elected officials. This will continue to be a process that we monitor in 2023.

REGULATORY TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY



AKPIRG Broadband Specialist Brittany Woods-Orrison at the Net Inclusion 2022 Conference.



AKPIRG Energy Analyst Alyssa Sappenfield presents on Electric Cooperative Governance.

Program Highlights:

- Hosted informational & educational presentations open to the public.
- Published informational articles and op-eds on various energy topics.
- Continued to educate Alaskans about the electric co-ops through grassroots organizing and community partnerships.
- Established the Rail Reliability Council.

Electric Utility Regulation

AKPIRG is active in a group of utilities and consumer advocates who, this spring, successfully applied to be Alaska's first electric reliability organization, a new regulator called the Railbelt Reliability Council (RRC). Our staff has especially worked to ensure the public is able to meaningfully participate in the RRC's future decisions.

Local Energy, Local Power

One of the ways that AKPIRG is educating and empowering Alaskans to engage with their respective Electric Cooperative Boards is through the *Alaska Transparency Project*, an editorially independent publication bridging the gap of energy news coverage in Alaska, and highlighting the democratic process of energy production in our state.

Oil and Gas Industry Accountability

Hilcorp, a privately-owned oil company, recently bought out BP without proving they can pay for the restoration of Alaska's land after an emergency like an oil spill. This would mean, in the case of a disaster, Alaskan taxpayers would foot the bill. The Regulatory

Commission of Alaska (RCA) was the only entity to hold a public hearing on this across all State regulators. On a technicality, the RCA permits confidentiality to outweigh public interest and no financial documents have been released.

AKPIRG has supported legal efforts related to the RCA's approval of the BP-Hilcorp deal, a case now before the Alaska Supreme Court. In March 2023, oral arguments in support of transparency will be heard by the Alaska Supreme Court. AKPIRG is working with legal counsel and community partners to continue advocating for financial transparency and the energy future in our state.

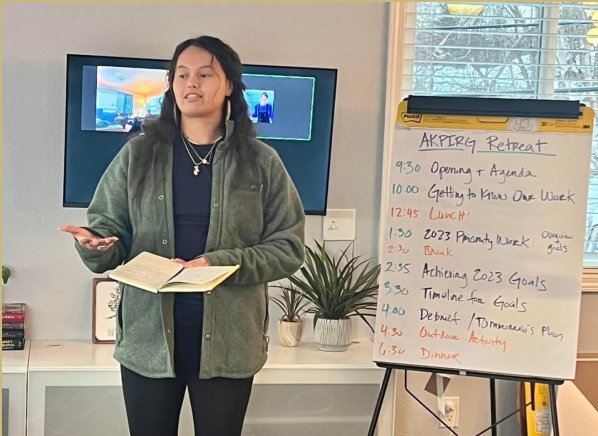
Get Out the Vote - Kodiak

AKPIRG was able to do more direct voter engagement during the 2022 election cycle than ever before. After the 2020 census, population growth of the Tagalog-speaking community in Kodiak activated Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, which ensures that Tagalog-speaking voters have access to voter information and the Alaska Division of Elections provides ballots in Tagalog. Through the partnership of Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC), we were able to hire three voter engagement staff in Kodiak to spread the word not only about the availability of Tagalog voting materials, but also to share essential information about the new Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) system and offer general voter assistance.

The team, lead by Mary Guilas-Hawver, with support from Mary Jane Viray and Nenita Nicolas, were incredible project leaders. They knocked on 300 doors, hosted 5 community events, met with 10 community leaders, and spoke to over 150 individuals during their visits to local canneries. As leaders in Kodiak's Filipino-American community, our team was able to encourage voter participation and break down the barriers to voting, ultimately improving voter accessibility. After receiving feedback from community members that improved access to citizenship services would increase civic participation amongst the Filipino-American community, the team began a larger dialogue with elected officials and government agencies about the need for a U.S. Customs & Immigration Services (USCIS) office in Kodiak.

We are so proud to have been able to work with the GOTV team in Kodiak, and we hope to continue working together in the future.

BROADBAND ADVOCACY



Broadband Brittany presenting at AKPIRG's 2023 staff retreat.



Brittany Presents at the March 2022 Net Inclusion Summit during a lighting round of presentations.

In 2022 AKPIRG and Native Movement Broadband Specialist, Brittany Woods-Orrison, took part in many initiatives at the state, federal, and international level to advocate for local voices driving Alaskan broadband access. This included giving informational presentations in Alaska for broadband users and testifying on HB 363, a bill that created the Alaska state broadband office with its passage. Brittany represented non-industry voices at two state broadband conventions, in meetings with Rasmuson, the foundation charged with State Digital Equity planning, and at the Alaska Federation of Natives annual conference. Brittany spoke about the critical need for equitable internet access at; Net Inclusion, Bipartisan Tech Policy Conference, and the National Congress of American Indian Mid-Year meeting. Internationally, Brittany received scholarships to attend the Pacific Telecoms Conference and the Indigenous Connectivity Summit.

As millions of dollars enter the state for broadband, Brittany is continually sought out as a Tribal liaison and expert in equitable broadband deployment in the state of Alaska. While serving on Digital Equity steering committees, she focuses on uplifting local voices and demanding transparency and accountability from funders. Looking ahead to next year, she hopes to bring more digital literacy programming in Alaska to increase confidence and safety for internet users statewide.

LOOKING FORWARD

After dealing with the many ways in which COVID-19 complicated our work for the past several years, 2022 was the year of getting back on our feet. Organizationally, we made many strides this year and came up with many strategic and long term plans we look forward to implementing in the year 2023. Next year we will be focusing on payday lending, Hilcorp regulatory litigation, community solar policy, campaign finance contribution limits, Alaska Native language protocol implementation, and more! We look forward to continuing our mission to achieve healthy and self determined communities in Alaska.

ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS

Memberships & Coalitions:

Railbelt Reliability Council – Small Consumer Representative

Alaska Just Transition Collective - Partner

Alaska Financial Partnership Network – Chair

Alaska Voter Hub (formerly Alaska Civic Engagement State Table) - Steering Committee

Alaska Coalition for Justice - Member

Alaskan Artists for a Just Transition – Member

Alaskans for Fair Redistricting - Coordinator

Save Our State - Member

Renewable Energy Alaska Project (REAP) - Member

Consumer Federation of America - Organization Member & Board Member

Foraker Group - Member

National Community Reinvestment Coalition - Member

Non-profit Quarterly (NPQ) - Member

Organizational Partners:

We couldn't do the work we do without incredible support from our partners. Below is an incomplete snapshot of our partners. These organizations are doing amazing work.

- Alaska Center
- Alaska Community Action on Toxics
- Native Movement
- Alaska AFL-CIO
- Anchorage Community Land Trust
- Native Peoples Action
- Money Management International
- Alaska Poor People's Campaign
- Cook Inlet Housing Authority
- Foraker Group
- Alaska Legal Services Corporation
- Alaska Courts System
- Renewable Energy Alaska Project
- Cook Inletkeeper
- Susitna River Coalition
- NAACP, Anchorage Chapter
- Alaska Black Caucus
- ACLU of Alaska

-
- Planned Parenthood Votes
 - Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
 - YWCA of Alaska
 - Refugee Assistance and Immigrant Services (RAIS)
 - Doyon Foundation
 - Alaska Literacy Program
 - Alaska Children's Trust
 - ANTHC
 - DHSS
 - Stand up AK
 - NANA
 - Out North
 - Tanana Chiefs Conference
-

Our Funding

Our work is sustained by our generous community of donors like you and grant funding. AKPIRG had a successful year, with awards for many of our issue areas and projects. Through funding, we have been able to grow to address new needs and better strengthen existing AKPIRG projects.

Through contributions and grants, we have amplified the work and uplifted voices joined together to address the issues we aim to resolve. Some of these projects included Language Access, Redistricting, Ratepayer Advocacy, Just Transition, Broadband, COVID-19, Civic Engagement and Voting, General Operating Support, and more.

We are thankful for the support from the following organizations:

- Sociological Initiatives Foundation
- Alaska Department of Health
- Municipality of Anchorage & United Way
- Tortuga Foundation
- Alaska Conservation Foundation
- Solidaire Network
- Alaska Community Foundation's Ruud-Mjos Fund
- Movement Voter Project
- Americans for Financial Reform Education Fund
- Native Movement & the Alaska Just Transition Collective
- Western, Rural and Plains States (WRAPS) Project
- Rural Democracy Initiative
- Alaskans for Better Elections

THANK YOU!

As an advocacy organization working towards changing harmful systems, we can achieve so much more with the support of many hands and minds and our community members like you. As Alaskans, we all continue to make the progress and changes necessary for the future we all hope to see. Thank you for joining us. We are so grateful you also believe in AKPIRG's work and what positive change can happen when we all work together. From the AKPIRG staff and board, we are so thankful for your dedication to equity and accountability.

