

**Building Capacity for Alaska History Day  
Faculty Initiative Fund 2024 Mini Project  
UAF: 182302-61148  
Final Report  
February 20, 2025**

Thank you to the University of Alaska Statewide Academic Committee for supporting the Building Capacity for Alaska History Day mini project for FY2024. As the National History Day Alaska affiliate sponsored by the Alaska Historical Society, Alaska History Day's program significantly benefited from receiving a 2024 Faculty Initiative Fund Award.

**Budget Details:**

Expenses were as follows:

- \$500 – Webinar Expenses for holding an Introduction to National History Day Zoom webinar.
- Remainder of funds for a part-time, temporary coordinator position for the program.<sup>1</sup>

**Project Activities:**

This funding allowed the creation of a temporary, part-time coordinator position for the program, which served students throughout the state in both large and small communities. It enabled the growth of the state contest, filling a gap left by the discontinuation of regional competitions in recent years.

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<sup>1</sup> This amount was requested multiple times from the fiscal officer, but not provided.

One hundred sixty-one students entered eighty-four projects in the Alaska History Day state contest, held April 6- 12, 2024. This number is double the number of participants in 2023, due to the increased capacity permitted by this award, allowing the coordinator to remove registration caps. Fifty judges from across the United States reviewed projects. The top two projects in each division/category were invited to advance to the National History Day contest. Forty-nine students initially qualified for the national contest.

Thirty-nine students from Alaska registered for the national contest. Delta Junction students earned Second Place in the Junior Group Performance Category for their project, “The Hello Girls: Turning Points in War Communication and Women’s Equality.” Two Anchorage students ranked in the top 10 and reached the finals round for their Senior Group Documentary “The End of an Empire.” Students were additionally featured in two separate showcases, for exhibits and performance.

The Faculty Initiative Fund facilitated programming to build capacity for Alaska History Day, including an Introduction to National History Day Zoom webinar for educators, conducted by Lynne O'Hara, NHD's Deputy Director for Educational Programs. Seventeen people registered for the session, which introduced participants to the program and provided them with materials and information about it and its presence in Alaska.

The coordinator organized a seven-session webinar series titled “Discovering Alaska’s Archives,” in which archives and museum professionals provided introductions to their institutions’ collections and online resources, showing attendees how to navigate and search for primary sources. This series was geared for educators and was attended by members of the public interested in historical research. Forty people registered for one or more of the series’ sessions, with most registering for multiple dates. Sessions were recorded. This series expanded Alaska History Day’s reach to new audiences at the University and beyond.

This series included the following sessions and presenters:

- Alaska and Polar Regions Collections & Archives – Books, Manuscripts, and Photos  
- Rachel Cohen and Fawn Carter
- Alaska’s Digital Archives - Arlene Schmuland
- Alaska Film Archives and UAF Oral History Program - Angela Schmidt and Leslie McCartney
- Alaska’s Historical Newspaper Resources: Chronicling America and Alaska Digital Newspaper Program – Christopher Russell (Alaska State Archives)
- Alaska State Archives – Karen Gray
- UAA/APU Consortium Library Archives – Arlene Schmuland
- Museum Objects as Primary Sources – Angela Linn (UA Museum of the North)

**Additional Outreach:**

- Facilitated introduction between Anchorage School District Social Studies Coordinator and UAA/APU archives for purposes of professional development session planning.
- Facilitated collaboration between UA and South Anchorage High School’s Civic Leadership Program (CLP)
- Initiated ongoing collaboration and partnerships with Alaska Historical Society and Cook Inlet Historical Society
- Informally polled archival staff on availability for virtual and in-person field trips and research consults with students.

**Successes:**

- Increased connections between campuses and organizations
- Recruited judges from UA campuses and programs
- Raised awareness of the program on the UAF campus
- Increased profile of the program among members of the public interested in historical research through the

**Challenges and Lessons Learned**

The funding and programming facilitated by the FIF Award reinforced the need for a permanent, year-round funding for a History Day coordinator. Due to constraints caused by the coordinator's PhD program and receipt of a 'Troth Yeddha' Research Assistantship/Fellowship, the entirety of the award was not used as planned. This fact reinforced the need for institutionalization of the Alaska History Day program, supported by consistent funding and dedicated staffing. Additionally, in carrying out the aims of this initiative, challenges were encountered in communication and receipt of information from fiscal officers.

Continued program health will not continue without long-term stable funding, permitting not only program continuity, but also allowing growth through building and maintaining networks across Alaska's historical and educational communities.