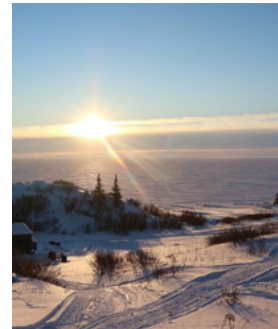


2024 QUAD MEETING REPORT

December 2024



Uvagulli Qiñikkaqput, Uvagulli Itqanaigaksraġigikput.
Our Vision, Our Responsibility.

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Introduction

The Northwest Arctic Leadership Team (NWALT) convened a two-day meeting in Kotzebue, Alaska, bringing together board and assembly members, and key staff from the Maniilaq Association (Maniilaq), NANA Regional Corporation (NANA), Northwest Arctic Borough School District (NWABSD), and the Northwest Arctic Borough (NAB). This collaborative event, known as the Quad meeting, focused on advancing NWALT's mission of reducing duplication of efforts and maximizing resources to address issues affecting the people of the northwest Arctic.

The meeting's theme, **Uvagulli Qiñikkaqput, Uvagulli Itqanaigaksraḡigikput – Our Vision, Our Responsibility**, set the tone for fostering in inter-organizational relationship-building, collaboration, and information sharing. The event also reinforced collective ownership and accountability for shaping the future of our region.

Discussions during the meeting focused on NWALT's five key focus areas. These focus areas define the scope of NWALT's work, and therefore the scope of a five-year regional strategy plan. The purpose of the plan is to provide NWALT with actionable strategies that leverage partnerships and resources to create meaningful change in the areas that are most important to the region.

A total of 87 people participated in the event, including 47 board members, 36 staff, and 4 facilitators. The event cost \$44,300, with an additional \$17,000 estimated for remaining facilitation services bringing the total to \$61,300 - approximately \$13,700 under budget. This figure excludes costs for future community engagement or regional strategy sessions.

The Quad meeting is the first phase in a multi-phased approach to developing and implementing the regional strategy plan. The next phase will involve engaging with additional stakeholders, including Tribes, cities, Elders, youth, and other regional and local entities to further refine the strategy plan.

Focus Areas

Iñupiaq Language and Culture
Healthy Communities and Wellness
Infrastructure and Vital Services
Education and Workforce Development
Economic Development



[Click here to view the Quad Meeting Agenda.](#)

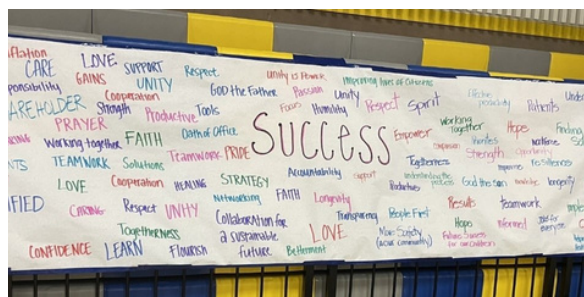
Pre-Meeting Preparation

To prepare for the Quad meeting, the facilitators, Denali Daniels + Associates (DDA), conducted a pre-meeting survey to gauge participants' vision for the region withing the five focus areas. The survey received a nearly 50% response rate, with input from the board, assembly and staff participants.

The responses were categorized into themes and used as discussion points during the second day of the meeting. These responses will continue to guide development and implementation of the strategy plan.

Day One

The first day began with a morning session that included a live poll, a success wall activity, and state-of-the-region presentations from the four NWALT organizations. The afternoon featured a tabletop exercise, small group discussions, an NWALT panel, and a special video message from Congresswoman Mary Peltola. The day concluded with a potluck dinner and a performance by the Northern Lights Dancers.



Live Poll and Success Wall

The live poll and success wall activity helped participants align on the meeting's purpose and desired outcomes. Participants were asked: “Visualize 2029: What’s a word that comes to mind if we are successful five years from now?” Their responses formed a word cloud, highlighting the most frequently mentioned words. Attendees also described their expectations for the meeting in three words, which were displayed on a banner for the duration of the event, emphasizing shared goals and themes.

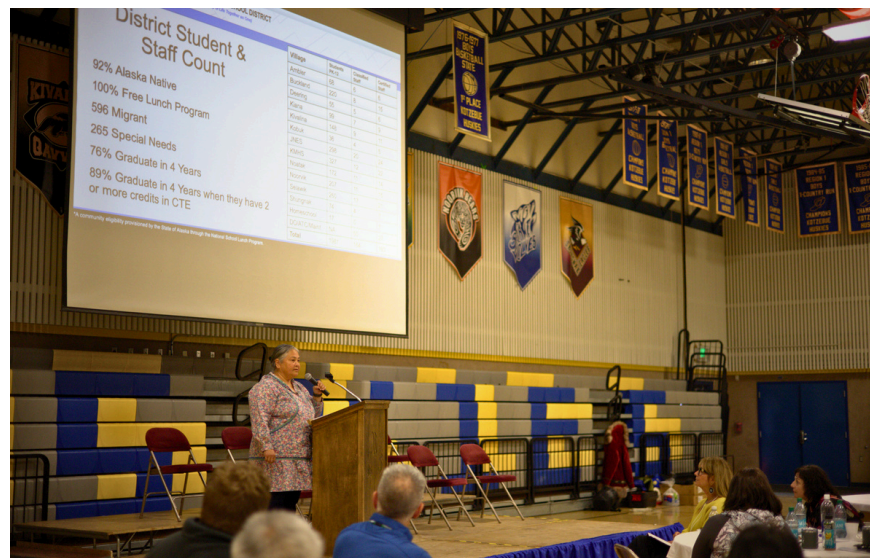
State of the Region Reports

Each NWALT organization provided a report on its current activities, achievements, and areas for improvement. This context-setting exercise was critical for establishing a foundation for strategic planning. Attendees' questions were recorded for follow-up and are included in *Appendix A*. Additionally, facilitator Annie Thomas-Landrum shared a personal story about managing large-scale change and overcoming burnout, encouraging participants to prioritize health and well-being.

Small Group Discussion and NWALT Panel

Participants were assigned to new tables to encourage networking and collaboration. The facilitator asked the participants to discuss the following question at their tables, *"After hearing the state of the region and organizations' priorities, and when you think about strategic planning, what stands out to you?"* Each table recorded their answers and reported to the full group (*Appendix B*).

The NWALT panel allowed leaders to address specific questions about their organizations and priorities, fostering dialogue about ongoing efforts and potential partnerships. Due to time constraints and the volume of questions, every question was written down on a sticky note and recorded for organizations to address at a later time.

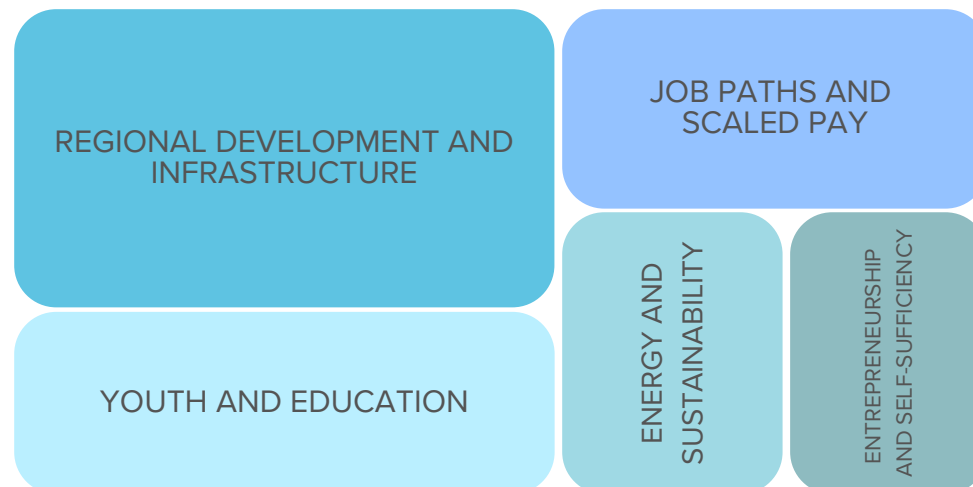


Day Two

Day two focused on three key activities: focus area stations, organization caucuses, and a review of focus area results. Special video messages from U.S. Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan and closing remarks from NWALT capped the event.

Focus Area Stations

Participants rotated through five stations corresponding to the focus areas. Facilitators and subject-matter experts guided discussions, capturing participants' responses to questions such as “Where do you want to be five years from now?” and “Who needs to be involved?” Responses were prioritized using sticker dots, with results detailed in *Appendix C*, along with worksheets in *Appendix D*.



Themes from the Economic Development station weighted by the quantity of priorities, solutions, and ideas shared. For the full list of results, see Appendix C.



Organization Caucuses and Closing Ceremony

Each organization held private caucuses to review the gathered input, identify priorities, and plan for community engagement. Recommendations were shared with the group, reinforcing NWALT's commitment to collaboration.

Closing remarks emphasized the importance of collective responsibility, gratitude for participants' efforts, and hope for the region's future. Marie Greene and Nellie Sheldon concluded the event with a prayer and the song *Aarigaa*.



What's Next?

In Phase II, the Northwest Arctic Leadership Team and the facilitators will create a draft strategy plan using the information gathered from the Quad meeting. Beginning in early 2025, they will present the draft plan to community leaders, elders, and youth to gather their perspectives, concerns, and support. This data will be integrated into the draft plan. A final strategy plan with clear, actionable strategies, timelines, and leads will be completed by Summer 2025.

Acknowledgements

The Northwest Arctic Leadership Team would like to acknowledge the following groups and entities for their contributions to the planning and execution of the Quad Meeting. Their tireless dedication resulted in a successful event that was safe, conducive to collaboration and innovative thinking, and met the objectives of the Quad Meeting.

- The Planning Team for ensuring each organizations' voices were represented throughout the planning process, solutions and ideas were creative while still grounded in reason, and for exemplary teamwork and leadership.
- The Subcommittees for executing the numerous tasks, cooking dishes for the potluck, designing graphics, writing and editing materials, and keeping the participants comfortable, fed, and taken care of.
- The numerous staff that helped coordinate flights, hotel rooms, ground transportation, and other logistics for the dozens of board and assembly members and staff that traveled to Kotzebue for the Quad Meeting.
- The Kotzebue Middle High School students, faculty, and staff, and the Northwest Arctic Borough School District administration and facilities team, for allowing us to host the Quad Meeting in their gymnasium, making sure the space was comfortable, and maintaining the necessary standards to mitigate disruptions to keep the meeting productive.
- The Northern Lights Dancers for performing at the potluck dinner, protecting and sharing our dances and songs, and fostering pride in our culture as Iñupiat.
- The Kotzebue Middle High School Student Council for helping with the set up and take down of the meeting and potluck spaces.
- Barbara Atoruk and Linda Lee for translating the theme from English to Iñupiaq.

Quyanaq, thank you.

Appendices

Appendices A-E are linked below. These documents are the aggregated and unedited responses, results, and material.

- A. [Questions from the NWALT Panel](#)
- B. [Responses from the Small Group Discussion](#)
- C. [Responses from the Focus Area Stations](#)
- D. [Responses from the Focus Area Stations Worksheets](#)
- E. [State of the Region Presentations](#)



NWALT, a partnership among Maniilaq Association, NANA Regional Corporation, the Northwest Arctic Borough and the Northwest Arctic Borough School District, will maximize resources and reduce duplication of efforts to address issues affecting the people of northwest Alaska, while honoring and perpetuating our Iñupiat cultural heritage.