



Peer
Language
Navigators

**A Novel Approach to
Improving Health
Literacy in Immigrant
Communities**



**The
Anchorage
Health
Literacy
Collaborative**

Authors;

- Rhonda M. Johnson, DrPH, MPH, FNP
- Linda Shepard, MSN, RN
- Rain Van Den Berg, MPH
- Chelsea Ward-Waller, MPH Student
- Polly Smith, MEd
- Barry D. Weiss, MD

Did You Know?

ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS

Alaska News Alaska Life Politics Outdoor/Adventure

Education

From Hmong to Sinhalese, over 100 languages are represented in Anchorage schools

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Did You Know?

ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS

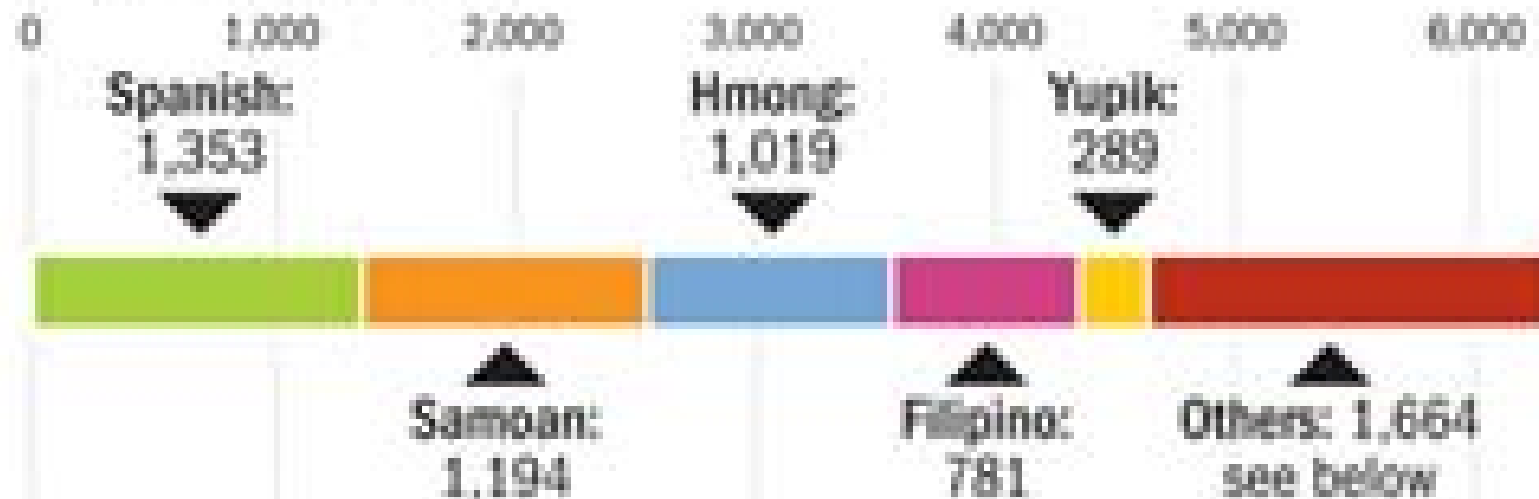
Alaska News

Alaska Life

Politics

This school year, the Anchorage School District has about 6,300 students learning English. Here is the breakdown of the 107 languages either spoken by the students or spoken by their families, according to district data.

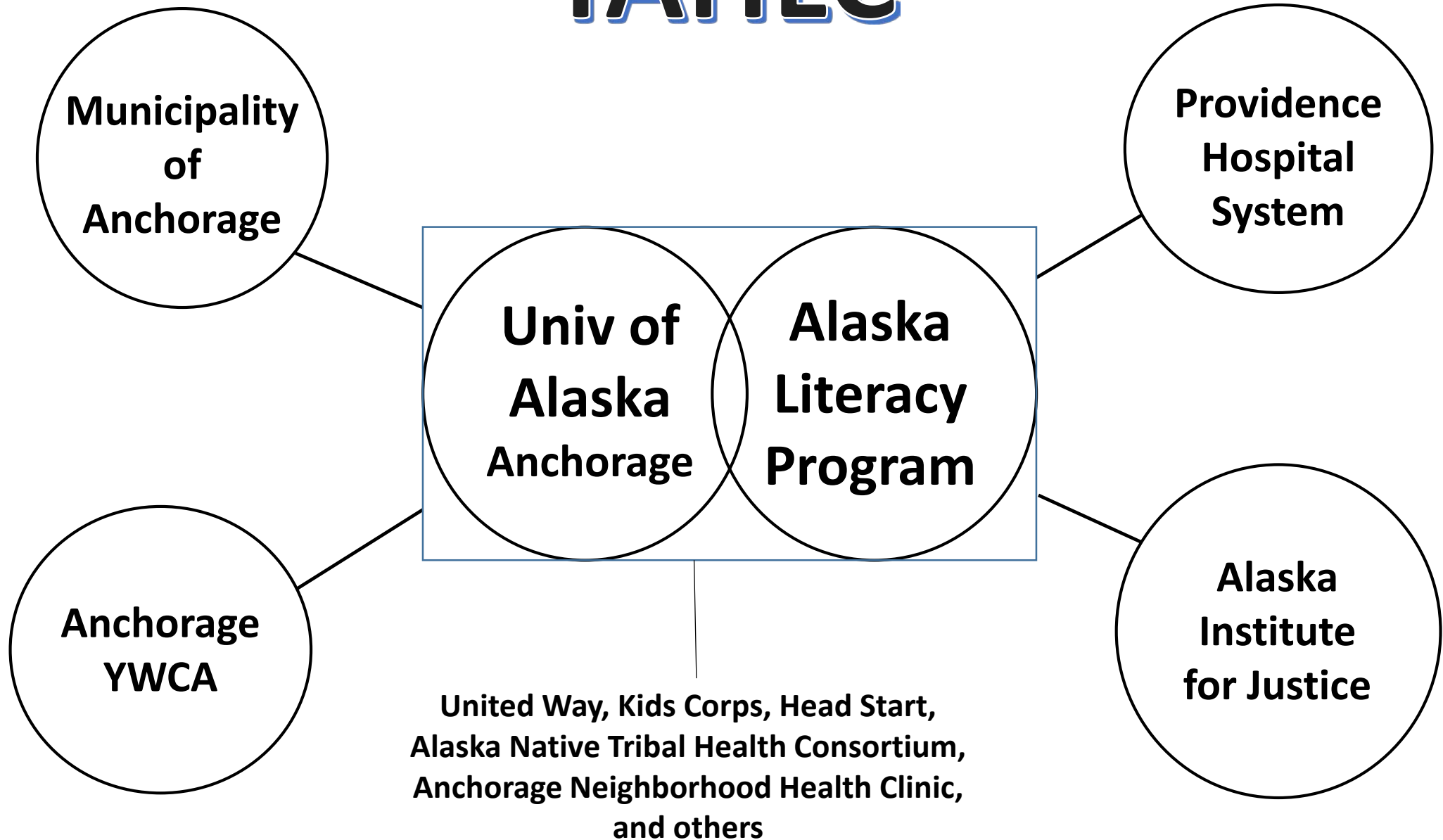
Top five languages



Languages Spoken by Children in the Anchorage Public School System (2018)

Spanish 1,644	German 25	Kosraean 8	Dena'ina	Mongolian
Hmong 1,362	French 20	Punjabi 8	Dutch	Navajo
Samoan 955	Urdu 19	Cup'ik 7	Fijian	Norwegian
Filipino 942	Khmer 16	Kiswahili 7	Finnish	Owan
Korean 193	Polish 15	Bulgarian 6	Georgian	Pashto
Nuer 154	Triqui 15	Romanian 6	Greek	Patois
Yup'ik 148	Palau 14	Afrikaans	Hawaiian	Persian
Lao 135	Wolof 14	Aleut	Hebrew	Pidgin
Somali 115	Bengali 12	Armenian	Hungarian	Pohnpeian
Russian 94	Dinka 12	Athabascan	Ibo	Serbo Croatian
Arabic 73	Mandarin 10	Bosnian	Icelandic	Siberian Yupik
Albanian 66	Cambodian 9	Burmese	Indonesian	Sinhalese
Tongan 65	Kinyarwanda 9	Cantonese	Italian	Slovak
Chinese 50	Mandinka 9	Chamorro	Kachin	Swedish
Vietnamese 50	Portuguese 9	Guam	Lithuanian	Tamil
Thai 47	Trukese 9	Cherokee	Macedonian	Telugu
Japanese 41	Turkish 9	Chichewa	Malayalam	Tibetan
Inupiaq 33	Ukrainian 9	Creole	Mano	Tlingit
Nepali 31	Amharic 8	Czech	Marathi	Twi
Mien 30	Hindi 8	Danish	Marshallese	Yapese
			Mbu	Zuni

TAHLC



Peer Language Navigators (PLNs)

- **Adult students in Alaska Literacy Program (ALP)**
- **From a variety of immigrant and refugee groups**
- **Passion to learn and help their communities**
- **Strong acquisition of English skills**

Peer Language Navigators (PLNs)

- **Phase 1**
 - Taught how to find reliable health info (eg, Medline Plus)
 - Taught how to avoid bogus health info
- **Phase 2**
 - PLNs disseminate info to their respective communities
 - PLNs also teach other students at ALP
- **Phase 3**
 - Become involved with community/city programs
 - Develop health education materials for the communities

Program Evaluation

Cohort	# PLNS	PLN Language
2013 – 2014	4	Amharic/Arabic; Spanish; Nepali, Wolof
2014 – 2015	4	Samoan; Russian; Korean; Arabic/Dinka
2015 – 2016	5	Spanish; Somali; Arabic; Hmong; Spanish
2016 – 2017	5	Spanish; Arabic; Neur; Korean; Nepali
2017 – 2018	5	Palau; Samoan; French; Swahili; Spanish
2018 – 2019	8	Spanish; Arabic; Dinka; Neur; French

Program Evaluation

REM: Ripple Effects Mapping

<https://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/190639>

- **Sharing stories about encounters**
- **Discovering unexpected outcomes**

Program Evaluation

Effects on Communities

- **PLNs provide health information directly to hundreds (300+) of individuals per year**
- **PLNs encourage health screening, vaccines, and f/u care for chronic health problems**
- **PLNs participate in health fairs, providing information as “cultural experts”**

Program Evaluation

Effects on PLNs

- Ability to obtain, develop, share health info
- Strong relationships with their communities
- Become respected experts – “go-to” people
- Mentoring other PLNs

Lessons Learned

- **Avoid over-commitment of PLNs**
- **Provide compensation for PLNs**
- **Have flexibility on PLNs' areas of interest**
- **Involve partner organizations**

Support

Grants

- **National Library of Medicine**
- **Leonard Doak Memorial Scholarship**
- **Providence Health System**

In-Kind Support

- **Partner Organizations**