

# ASPEN LEADERSHIP GROUP

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**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**THE ALASKA CENTER**  
**THE ALASKA CENTER EDUCATION FUND**  
**Anchorage, Alaska**



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with The Alaska Center and The Alaska Center Education Fund in the search for an Executive Director.

The Executive Director will utilize a collaborative and strategic approach to manage a talented team of staff, partner with dedicated Board members, collaborate with community partners, and engage policy makers in building a movement of engaged Alaskans who support a sustainable environment, healthy communities, and a strong democracy.

The Alaska Center and The Alaska Center Education Fund work together toward a vision of a thriving, just, and sustainable Alaska, deeply rooted in a love for the State—endeavoring to form coalitions with diverse and underrepresented organizations. Alaskans are engaged and empowered to protect and conserve the natural resources that support their unique quality of life for current and future generations.

**The Alaska Center**, a 501(c)(4), works tirelessly to engage, empower, and elect Alaskans to stand up for clean air and water, healthy communities, and a strong democracy. The Center is active in protecting wild salmon, advancing and advocating for clean energy and climate action, and supporting diverse leaders who champion the Center’s values at every level of government.

**The Alaska Center Education Fund**, a 501(c)(3), works to ensure Alaskans are knowledgeable and have a voice in the decisions impacting their future by educating and engaging people of all ages to support clean air and water, healthy communities, and to become empowered stewards. Youth are introduced to the outdoors and are offered education about the natural world through Trailside Discovery Camp. Hundreds of teens are taught how to be effective advocates through the Alaska Youth for Environmental Action program. Alaskans are informed and activated through education and direct advocacy around common-sense voter reforms. Through these efforts, the Alaska Center Education Fund is making a powerful impact on preserving a healthy democracy and conserving Alaska’s natural resources.

Together, The Alaska Center and The Alaska Center Education Fund are building an engaged movement of Alaskans—the State’s best asset for combating climate change and preserving environmental integrity. The Center and Fund have an incredible team committed to justice and equity within their organizations and throughout their work. They have strong partnerships throughout the movement for social and environmental change in Alaska—working to make their home the best place to live. The future depends upon the health of the resources that sustain Alaska’s diverse cultures, livelihoods, and families. Together, The Center and Fund ensure that everyone can enjoy Alaska’s tremendous natural resources and grow and cultivate leaders who champion values supporting a vibrant future for generations to come.

## REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Executive Director will report jointly to the Board of Directors of The Alaska Center, chaired by Sally Rue and the Board of Directors of The Alaska Center Education Fund, chaired by Griffin Plush. The Executive Director oversees a staff of twenty including six direct reports.

## FROM THE CHAIRS

*From its founding 51 years ago as the Alaska Center for the Environment by a small group of determined and dedicated Anchorage residents (most notably our “five founding mothers” who kept the doors open during its early years by each serving as a volunteer director one day a week, babysitting each other’s children, and leaving detailed notes for the next day’s volunteer), The Alaska Center (AKC) and the Education Fund (AKCEF) have shown remarkable persistence, resilience, and adaptability. As a Board, we are committed to the holistic and collaborative mission that recognizes the connectedness of clean water and air, healthy and thriving communities, healthy and sustainable salmon, clean energy, racial, social and environmental justice, climate change, and engaged citizens active in a strong and vibrant democracy where all voices are heard. Our work empowers the next generation, with Trailside Discovery Camp and Alaska Youth for Environmental Action. By investing in young people and supporting youth-led community organizing, we give them a role in shaping the movements of today and tomorrow.*

*Our work's strength lies in connecting global issues to local actions and policy to concrete solution, because it creates space for positive action and hope. As we squarely face challenges of historic proportions to our ecosystems, our social fabric, and our democracy, AKC/AKCEF has seized opportunities for concrete solutions that foster engagement and progress. In the face of COVID and the prospect of shutting down Trailside Discovery Camp altogether, AKCEF was able to pivot to devise a safe and effective way to continue and even expand during COVID, meeting the urgent need of families for high quality childcare and education.*

*As we advocate for urgent climate action by policymakers, we are also fully engaged in fostering grassroots action through our community based Solarize programs and through supporting clean energy advocates in local public utility Board elections. As we support a healthy democracy through increased voter access policies (e.g., a successful statewide initiative established universal voter registration), we also engage in the on-the-groundwork of building voter engagement through grassroots organizing (our collaborative Mobilization Center, voter education and empowerment in low-participation districts, voter education on Alaska’s new ranked choice voting system). This is creating and maintaining organizational infrastructure and doing the day-to-day work between elections that helps us be successful.*

*Working closely with and uplifting partner organizations is key to our collective success in building a thriving, just, and sustainable future. Acknowledging historical and ongoing harms in Alaska is part of our journey.*

*We love serving on these Boards with dedicated people with a breadth of lived experience, and with a vibrant and energized staff that brings a wealth of perspectives. We strive to create a safe and inclusive organization with honest communications based on trust and respect.*

–Sally Rue and Griffin Plush, Chairs

## **THE ALASKA CENTER AND THE ALASKA CENTER EDUCATION FUND'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

The Alaska Center and The Alaska Center Education Fund acknowledge Indigenous Alaskans as original stewards and caretakers of the land they call home. The conservation movement and the origin of the organizations are rooted in a colonial history. In the decades after Statehood, Alaskans recognized the need for safeguards from resource extraction, however a historic narrative around 'public lands' is in direct conflict with true history: Alaska is on unceded Indigenous territory. The organizations recognize historical trauma, they support calls for reconciliation and healing, and they have built a culture of accountability so they can continue to learn from their mistakes. As a first step in moving forward as true partners to Alaska Native communities, The Center and Fund commit themselves to decolonization.

The Alaska Center and The Alaska Center Education Fund work to build power for community self-determination. They amplify solutions identified by the communities most directly impacted by issues they engage on. They support communities on the frontlines of resource extraction, climate change, and environmental threats and organizations that work within them when asked. They shift power and leadership to these communities.

The Alaska Center and The Alaska Center Education Fund acknowledge the disparity of privilege between Alaskan communities, and understand a robust democracy requires full participation of Alaskans of all languages, geographies, abilities, and identities. They elevate the voices of young people, women, people of color, and recent immigrants who make up the new Alaskan majority. Their work broadens access to civic engagement and advocacy.

When elected leaders represent their communities and more diverse perspectives are included at the decision-making table, the Center and Fund can harness the power of the collective to arrive at more equitable decisions. They are committed to advocating for and protecting access to Alaska's lands and waters through outdoor education. They seek to raise the next generation of Alaskan stewards with an understanding and value of the State of Alaska. Everyone deserves access to—and the opportunity to—develop a personal connection to Alaska's wildlife, plants, lands, and waters.

As staff, Board, and volunteers, The Alaska Center and The Alaska Center Education Fund reflect and strive to represent the communities they serve. Their work is more effective and equitable when they encourage leadership from within underrepresented communities and ensure that their employment, Board, and volunteer opportunities as well as their fiscal relationships are inclusive and accessible to all.

### **PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Executive Director will

- champion the vision and the mission of The Alaska Center and The Alaska Center Education Fund internally and externally;
- establish, cultivate, and grow relationships with foundations, major donors, and supporters to sustain their work financially;
- manage a team of senior staff in directing the development and implementation of annual goals, budgets, campaigns and programs as well as communications, operations, and fundraising plans;
- work closely with both Boards to develop strategic plans, assess progress, and address gaps and needs annually, while supporting Board goals and development;

- ensure continuous education, growth, and action toward building more inclusive and equitable organizations across policies, programs, and personnel by working with leaders of other organizations in developing collaborative campaigns and initiatives;
- engage and influence policy makers at all levels of government;
- work with finance staff and Board members to ensure the organizations are in good financial compliance and follow best practices for financial sustainability; and
- manage, support, cultivate, and retain a team of diverse, talented staff and volunteers by providing career coaching, growth, and leadership pathways.

## **LEADERSHIP**

The Alaska Center and The Alaska Center Education Fund have thriving and engaged Boards, each with six members. The Boards meet together once a month. Joint committees actively collaborate with staff and support the Executive Director. Board membership is as diverse as Alaska, with a mix of men and women, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ representation, and a range of young Alaskans, mid-career professionals, and retired community leaders.

### **Sally Rue**

#### **Chair, The Alaska Center**

Sally Rue joined the Alaska Center Board in 2018. She has 40 years of experience in Alaska in natural resources planning and policy, community development, youth engagement, and Alaska public education. She worked two stints in the Alaska Governor’s Office (1977 to 1982 and 1995 to 2002), as special assistant for natural resources, and finally as chief of staff to Lt. Governor Fran Ulmer. From 2003 to 2014, she served as director of the Alaska Initiative for Community Engagement, a statewide initiative at the Association of Alaska School Boards to engage adults, organizations, communities, and young people in actively supporting youth success.

Sally has been an active volunteer in public schools, served on the Juneau School Board for two terms and on the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development. She volunteered with Big Brothers/Big Sisters as a Big Sister, and as a Board member for Alaska Geographic from 2006 to 2015.

She has a BA in Urban Studies from the U. of Pennsylvania and a Masters in Regional Planning from the U. of Massachusetts. She and her husband Frank live in Juneau and spend as much time as they can enjoying Alaska’s wild lands and waters.

### **Griffin Plush**

#### **Chair, The Alaska Center Education Fund**

Griffin first joined the Alaska Center Education Fund in 2015. From Seward, he spent his childhood on the trails of Exit Glacier and the waters of Resurrection Bay with family, where he later worked for eight seasons as a naturalist and park ranger in Kenai Fjords National Park. Inspired by activists with the Resurrection Bay Conservation Society, Griffin attended his first AYEA Civics and Conservation Summit at 15, where he found a passion for activism as a tool to build communities and protect their clean air and water. Throughout high school, he organized Seward’s chapter of AYEA and worked with other young people across the state to lead AYEA’s statewide campaigns on local foods, Pebble Mine, and climate change. He was one of the fifteen young plaintiffs demanding the State of Alaska acknowledge and address climate change in Alaska’s climate trust lawsuit, Sagoonick v. Alaska.

Griffin graduated from the University of Alaska Southeast in 2019. His studies focused on the history of Alaska and the social aspects of resource management. During college, he served in the first cohort of the U.S. Arctic Youth Ambassadors where he learned about and advocated for the health of Alaska's Arctic communities, economies, and cultures. Recently, he worked several sessions in the Alaska Capitol; the same building where he first found his voice as an AYEA teen. He brings his experience as a coastal Alaskan, naturalist, and youth activist to the Board.

Griffin is honored to serve as president of The Alaska Center Education Fund's Board while we work towards a thriving, just, and sustainable Alaska for future generations.

**Gavin Dixon**  
**Treasurer and Secretary**

Gavin's time with the organization has its roots as a member of Alaska Youth for Environmental Action, where he worked on air quality campaigns and fundraising efforts to support the recovery of the community of Banda Aceh after a devastating Tsunami.

Gavin has worked for over ten years fighting the impacts of climate change and developing renewable energy and energy efficiency projects for rural Alaska Native communities. Most recently his time has been spent as a Project Manager overseeing the relocation of the Yup'ik community of Newtok, which must move to a new location due to the accelerating impacts of climate change.

In his free time, you can find him sharing his passions for biking, skiing, paddling and running with friends and loved ones through the unique and irreplaceable wilderness of Alaska.

### **PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS**

The Alaska Center and The Alaska Center Education Fund seek an Executive Director with

- a commitment to the missions of The Alaska Center and The Alaska Center Education Fund;
- an ability to effectively communicate the organizations' missions to partners, supporters, volunteers, and diverse communities;
- high level strategic thinking and planning skills;
- an ability to envision and convey the strategic future of both organizations to staff, Board, partners, and community members as well as an ability to cultivate strong relationships with individuals and organizations that support the organizations' work, including volunteers, donors, funders, and public office holders;
- solid organizational abilities, including planning, program development, task facilitation skills, and the ability to lead and coach senior staff, manage high performing teams, and effectively delegate;
- a history of successfully generating revenue, improving financial results, and managing budgets in excess of \$500,000;
- excellent verbal and written communication skills, including public speaking experience;
- an innovative approach, resourcefulness, and constant curiosity;
- familiarity with the environmental and social change movements in Alaska and the political, economic, and social contexts that influence this work;
- an understanding of 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations, relationships, and legal compliance;
- an interest in youth engagement programs and practices;
- a commitment to strengthening racial justice, equity, and inclusion throughout the organization and within its programs and campaigns;
- a true passion for building relationships and community, and a desire to work with Alaskans from diverse backgrounds; and
- experience and skill in working with a Board of Directors.

## SALARY AND BENEFITS

The salary range for this position is \$100,000 to \$112,000 annually based on experience. The Alaska Center and The Alaska Center Education Fund offer a comprehensive package of benefits including medical, dental, and vision insurance; generous paid time off; 13 paid holidays and three additional days of personal renewal leave, paid parental leave of up to six weeks and partially paid leave for a sabbatical after five years with the organization.

## LOCATION

The Alaska Center and The Alaska Center Foundation are located in Anchorage, Alaska.

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the missions of The Alaska Center and The Alaska Center Education Fund as well as the responsibilities and qualifications presented in the prospectus.*** Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

The Alaska Center and The Alaska Center Education Fund are committed to not only supporting but centering Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, working-class and low-income people, women, LGBTQIA2+ people, and those experiencing disabilities in addressing the many issues that impact us. People with these identities or who are members of other marginalized communities are strongly encouraged to apply.

*To apply for this position, visit:*

[Executive Director, The Alaska Center and The Alaska Center Education Fund.](#)

*To nominate a candidate, please contact Gregory Leet:*

[gregoryleet@aspenleadershipgroup.com.](mailto:gregoryleet@aspenleadershipgroup.com)

*All inquiries will be held in confidence.*