In June 2013, Dr. Jordan Lewis (Aleut) started his new position as an Assistant Professor with the UW School of Social Work and IWRI. Until recently, Jordan was a Postdoctoral/Senior Research Fellow at the UW School of Medicine on a National Institute of Mental Health-funded postdoctoral training program. His research focuses on exploring the lived experiences of Alaska Native elders to develop support programs for Alaska Natives struggling with alcohol dependence. His goal is to find new strategies to address the significant health burden of problem drinking among Alaska Native older adults.

Jordan received his doctoral degree in Cross-Cultural Community Psychology from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, where he did research with Alaska Native elders in Bristol Bay (southwest Alaska) to establish an Alaska Native model of successful aging. His research interests also include rural community mental health, Indigenous gerontology, and cross-cultural health and long-term care.

“I am excited and honored to join the IWRI family to continue my research in collaboration with our Native Elders and tribal communities,” Jordan stated. “I am a strong believer in IWRI’s mission and am excited to work with the IWRI faculty and staff to develop innovative, culture-centered interdisciplinary, collaborative social and behavioral research. I look forward to sharing my experiences working with tribal communities in Alaska and plan to continue collaborating with these and other Native communities. This research will build on the lived experiences and lessons of our Native Elders to develop culturally-grounded programs and services that promote healthy living among all age groups.”

“Learning about the cultural groups in the Seattle area will inform my work and provide me with more insight on the successful programs and services in reservation communities,” he continued. “In Alaska, we are experiencing an out-migration of Alaska Natives from rural communities to the larger cities, which brings with it the need for more urban-based services specifically for Native peoples. I plan to introduce myself to the tribal communities in the Seattle area and learn about their tribal programs and services. I hope to learn from their experiences in order to assist urban communities in Alaska in developing tribally-run programs and services.”

On a personal note, Jordan is also excited to be in Seattle: “After living in Fairbanks for seven years, there was an adjustment to living in a city again. It was a big change, but it is nice being here because I can easily visit my immediate family, all of whom live in Cannon Beach and Portland, Oregon (when they are not commercial fishing in Bristol Bay during the summer months). Here in Seattle, I enjoy trying new restaurants and coffee shops, and exploring new neighborhoods. And, I am still only one flight away from Anchorage or Fairbanks, where I enjoy being outdoors, hiking, picking berries, and experiencing the extreme temperatures.”