



MONTANA AMERICAN INDIAN LANGUAGE PRESERVATION PROGRAM REPORT

Biennial Report, September 2024

OVERVIEW

As required by [20-9-537](#), MCA, this report includes current program guidelines and a summary of each participating tribal government's activities.

The Montana Indian Language Preservation Program ([20-9-537, MCA](#)) is to support efforts of Montana tribes and partnering school districts to preserve native languages and to meet the state's educational goal of preserving the cultural integrity of American Indians under Article X, section 1(2), of the Montana constitution. During the current biennium, eight tribal nations produced preservation products that help memorialize their languages while at the same time help to perpetuate language usage. Each tribe had a schedule and priority goals and activities for the year. The activities include digitizing language products, recordings of stories and book publishing, online classes, development of interactive language dictionaries and other language learning activities and summer language immersion classes among other priorities. Office of Public Instruction's (OPI) Tribal Relations and Resiliency Unit works with local tribal communities for updates on deliverables, budgetary reporting, and activities.

Budget: The Montana Indian Language Preservation program grant has a biennial budget of \$1,500,000 for all eight federally recognized tribes.

2022-23: Each of the grantees received an award of \$168,750. 15% was allocated for administrative costs.

2023-24: Each of the grantees received an award of \$187,500. The law was amended for 2023, and the administrative fee was removed.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Program: OPI's published rule, 10.75.103 ARM, on the program's guidelines can be found [here](#). The rule details the contract that tribal nations or community entities may enter into with OPI, the role these entities play, eligible use of funds, and the distribution of funds.

Language Fluency: OPI's rule, 10.75.102 ARM, on defining Indian language fluency can be found [here](#). The rule defines fluency, establishes a scale for fluency, and a scale for Indian language fluency progress.

Reporting: OPI's rule, 10.75.105 ARM, on required reporting for the program can be found [here](#). The rule details the reports required to be submitted by the tribal government or entity to the OPI.

PROGRAMS

LITTLE SHELL TRIBE OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS

Little Shell Language Program

2023: Award \$168,750

- Outline and develop a plan to research and teach the Chippewa/Ojibwe Culture.
- Develop Culture Curriculum.
- Locate and obtain one Chippewa/Ojibwe Native American Linguists to work with the Little Shell Language Program.
- Develop a Chippewa/Ojibwe Language Curriculum.
- Purchase I Chippewa/Ojibwe language teaching materials.

2024 Award \$187,500

- Adopt and use a sound and pronunciation chart of the Chippewa-Ojibwe Language that will be used in language classes that are offered throughout the year.
- Develop, produce, share, and field test high school Chippewa-Ojibwe language lesson plans.
- Develop a partnership plan between the Little Shell Tribe through the Language Program and the Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC) to include early learning providers and adult education offerings.
- Provide an opportunity for future Ojibwe language instructors to complete the Ojibwe Language Certification online at TMCC.
- Cover tuition, fees, course materials and provide a stipend for 5 Little Shell tribal members to complete the program and qualify for Class 7 licensure in Montana.

BLACKFEET TRIBE

Blackfeet Early Childhood Center

2023 Award \$168,750

- Provided stipends for consultants, fluent speakers, teachers, and elders in Blackfeet language.
- Record film and create books to incorporate Blackfeet language and sign language into the classrooms.
- Purchase CD duplicator camcorder, software, and other filming and recording supplies.
- Travel to historical sites with elders to film and record the history of the Blackfeet Tribe.

- Attend the language summit and present all projects to other tribes.
- Meet with policy council members, tribal council members, Head Start officials, k-12 school educators, Blackfeet Community College leaders, and elders to share ideas, and review progress and deliverables.
- Incorporate deliverables into prenatal, 0-5 Head Start, k-12 and community college classroom
- Provide a salary supplement for Head Start employees working on the Montana Indian Language Program Grant.

2024 Award \$187,500

- Provide stipends for all Blackfeet and other consultants in areas of culture, sign and verbal language, and behaviors.
- Capture contact information of fluent Blackfeet Language speakers to include them in activities.
- Set up meetings with local schools, committees, and surrounding communities, Blackfeet Business Council, School Boards and all pertinent entities to maintain line of communication and share ideas and progress of deliverables.
- Purchase supplies and services as needed to continue to create books, films and materials to incorporate both Languages into the classrooms.
- Supplement Salaries for Blackfeet Early Childhood Center employees working on the Montana Indian Language Program.
- Revisit historical sites in Montana to record stories and interviews with elders.
- Attend language summit and present local projects to share with other Montana Tribes.

CHIPPEWA CREE TRIBE

2023 Award \$168,750

- Stone Child College will update the Cree Language Nest curriculum. They will print and distribute 300 curriculum books to the local schools and community members.
- Stone Child College will partner with local schools to host the 2nd Annual Anishiaabe-Neiyo Education Conference. The 3-day conference will immerse local teachers and community members on Chippewa and Cree language, culture, and history.
- Provide professional development activities including, but not limited to, training, education, and partnership building to increase the Ojibwe/Neyio Language on the reservation.

2024 Award \$187,500

- Build and maintain partnerships with, but not limited to, the Chippewa Cree Tribe (CCT), CCT Department of Indian Education, Box Elder School District, CCT TANF Department, and the SAMSON NATION/MASKWACISE Education Commission.

- The Ojibwe/Neyio Language will be taught through curriculum enhancement/development, courses and activities (in-person and online/virtual), language programs, and the development of a Rosetta Stone App.
- Work with the Box Elder School District Class 7 Language Educators along with Ojibwe Instructors.
- Provide professional development activities such as training, education, and partnership building to increase the Ojibwe/Neyio Language on the Reservation.

CONFEDERATED SALISH & KOOTENAI TRIBES

Selis Qlispe Culture Committee

2023 Award \$168,750

- Develop a prototype/concept of a bilingual placename sign for the South Fork of the Jocko primitive area entrance. The sign will be in both Salish and English and will have historical information of the area.
- Develop two new Salish Language The signs will be a language inspirational poster that include a quote from an elder and a physical descriptions poster that will include a visual representation.
- Create three Salish Language games. The first two games will be a Go Fish Game and a Go Cook game. The third game will be a Salish Language board game. We will work with Native Teaching Aids to help in the development of these games.
- Develop three new activities for the Online Salish Language Kids Zone with the help of Native Teaching Aids. The program works on smartboards, computers and Mobile Devices. Provide the Kid Zone a Preschool Package (Alphabet, Numbers and Colors activities), which will bring language activities and games to a younger age group.
- Print materials to distribute to our schools and communities for free.
- Bring elders, teachers and language apprentices to the 2023 Celebrating Salish Language Conference in Spokane, Washington. The annual Celebrating Salish Conference brings together speakers and learners of all Interior Salish languages in the Inland Northwest: Kalispel, Spokane, Colville-Okanagan, Coeur d'Alene, Wenatchee-Columbian, and Montana Salish. The goal for this conference is to promote new speakers of our native language, collaborate with our neighboring tribal communities, and build ongoing relationships with one another. The Celebrating Salish Conference is the largest language gathering of native speakers in the entire northwest.
- Present and showcase and gather feedback on the MILP projects from Elders and community members.

2024 Award \$187,500

- Educational Posters will be developed to help teachers stay immersed and explain topics while teaching. These posters will serve as resources that can be used in early learning all the way to adult education opportunities.

- Digital Stories will record first language speakers, speaking in Salish reading a series of children's stories. Books will be digitized while also adding audio of first language speakers.
- The Selis-Qlispe Elders Advisory Council will serve as advisors on all project activities. SQCC staff will review all projects for accuracy and consistency. Salish Language Apprentices will participate throughout the process.
- Equipment and technology will be updated to keep apprentices and teachers connected online. It will also allow for and creating recordings of fluent speakers.
- Materials will be created and printed and then provided to schools and communities for free.
- Funds will be used to bring elders, teachers and language apprentices to the 2024 Celebrating Salish Language Conference in Spokane, Washington. The goal for this conference is to promote new speakers, collaborate with neighboring tribal communities, and build ongoing relationships. The Celebrating Salish Conference is the largest language gathering of native speakers in the entire northwest.
- SQCC will provide a formal presentation to CSKT Tribal Council, the Selis-Qlispe Elders Advisory Council including local Salish Language partners showcasing the project accomplishments, while sharing the developments and progress language revitalization and preservation efforts.

CROW TRIBE

Little Big Horn College

2023 Award \$168,750

- The Project Director will identify and invite 10 fluent Crow speakers to gather for two weeks with two linguists to record longer and more complex phrases in Crow for a new Crow Phrase Dictionary. These phrases could include idioms, sayings, jokes, and tongue-twisters. This gathering will also allow for the recording of example sentences for inclusion in the next edition of the Crow Dictionary. Speakers will meet in small conversation groups to speak naturally in Crow on a variety of chosen topics and will note phrases of interest that appear in their conversations. With the linguists, speakers will define these phrases and make audio recordings of each. Lastly, linguists and speakers will work together to record audio pronunciations of example sentences for Crow words in the current dictionary.
- The Linguist, Linguistic Assistant, and Database Technician will work together to create a clear and robust audio and linguistic database to be added to the Crow Online Dictionary website. This collection of knowledge will be enormously valuable to Crow learners, who can hear how words are used within context by first-language speakers and can listen and repeat pronunciations to make their own speech more natural.
- A Layout Design Artist and Graphic Artist will collaborate to format and organize the dictionary entries in a print format. This book will be printed and distributed to community members, including the speakers who assisted with the project and students and teachers at Little Big Horn College and throughout Montana.

2024 Award \$187,500

- Gather plants used in Apsaalooke culture and prepare them by pressing them for preservation. Prepare slides with plants, Apsaalooke name, use of the plants in culture educational purposes.
- Provide deliverables to local schools.

FORT BELKNAP INDIAN COMMUNITY

Fort Belknap Language Preservation Program

2023 Award \$168,750

- Take the existing Kids Zone developed for the Salish Community and work with the Fort Belknap Language Preservation Program to transfer this into the Aaniiih and Nakota. The intention of the Kids Zone is to provide an online portal of activities for youth ages preschool to middle school of varying language levels. Each game in the Kids Zone consists of vocabulary and phrases, audio, and images that engages and entertains the players while reinforcing vocabulary recognition. The online Kids Zone program will consist of eight different game types with 12 different categories including home, school, animals, colors, math, family, etc.
- Provide honorariums for instructors to offer weekly language classes in Aaniiih and Nakoda.
- Develop roadway signage for historical areas of the Aaniiih and Nakoda people of landmarks and battle sites.
Provide language curricula for media and preservation of audio, visual, and technical projects including language, culture, history of Aaniiih and Nakoda Tribes.

2024 Award \$187,500

- Create a book and digitize it using verbs and its modes, using transitive and intransitive orders broken down with prefixes and suffixes.
- Develop lessons of Tribes Kinship, songs and the roles that our Tribes (Gros Ventre "Whiteclay and Assiniboine "Nakoda") had and what importance it held.
- Native Games and how math and geometry, social studies, and physical education are all involved (4 Units). Taught in schools and culture camps.

FORT PECK ASSINIBOINE & SIOUX TRIBES

Fort Peck Language & Culture Department

2023 Award \$168,750

- Expand K-12 Educational Posters
- Develop lesson plans for an Ethnobotany Guide
- Host 2023 Summer Youth (Dakota and Nakoda) Language & Culture Program
- Develop language curriculum for local school classrooms

2024 Award \$187,500

- Provide Dakota and Nakoda weekly language classes and language and culture services as requested by the schools on the Fort Peck Reservation.
- Hold a community event once a month.

NORTHERN CHEYENNE TRIBE

Chief Dull Knife College-

2023 Award \$168,750

- Create a Language Immersion Program. Visit other Tribal Programs to learn how to successfully implement an immersion program.
- Record 30 first language speakers. Only a small fraction of Cheyenne first language speakers remain and their stories and history are very important for preservation efforts.
- Establish a Clearing House for access to language materials that will be available for community use.
- Promote the use of Cheyenne Language signage in all cultural activities.
- Continue to encourage and invite tribal members to an informal Cheyenne Language Discussion with first language speakers at the Chief Dull Knife Language and Culture Department.
- We will establish an agreement to provide Cheyenne Language Teaching.
- Finance and host an annual Cheyenne Language Camp at the Chief Dull Knife College.

2024 Award \$187,500

- Collaborate to help teach the Cheyenne language and cultural activities with the Northern Cheyenne Head Start community and parents.
- Provide Cheyenne language and culture activities: to all the school age parents to build multigenerational transference of the Cheyenne Language.
- Offer a variety and series of Cheyenne Language Classes to the adult community learners with the goal of establishing a continuation of language effort to create intergenerational transmission of the Cheyenne Language.
- Utilize community-based language expertise and Cheyenne know-how of teaching and presenting opportunities for sharing and listening to the Cheyenne Language.
- Host an annual Cheyenne Language Camp and hire 5 Language Culture Instructional Staff, one cook and a cook helper. The purpose of the contracts will be to provide Cheyenne Language Culture education.

This report was prepared by:

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