



Indian Language Preservation Program Report September 2026

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 (MILP) 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 helping to perpetuate language usage. Each tribe has 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) Indian Education Unit works with local tribal communities for updates on deliverables, budgetary reporting, and activities.

Budget:

- In FY2025, each of the grantees received an award of \$187,500.
- In FY2026, each entity was appropriated \$93,750.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

10.75.103 ARM, outlines the MILP Program guidelines, and 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: ARM 10.75.102, defines Indian language fluency, and can be found [here](#). The rule defines fluency, establishes a scale for fluency, and a scale for Indian language fluency progress.

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

PROGRAMS

Blackfeet Tribe

2025: AWARD \$187,500

Deliverables

- Stipends for all Blackfeet and other Consultants in all areas of Culture, both Sign and verbal Language, along with behaviors such as, etiquette and respect.
- Elders will be used as much as possible.
- Capture contact information of most all 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 between all entities involved in preserving and teaching Language. 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, and include story time and puppet time to be implemented into curriculum.
- Language teachings occur in daily conversations, using senses to identify and describe animals. For example, touching a Beaver hide and saying "Ksi stuckey" (Beaver in Blackfeet) and signing the animal while saying it.
- Supplement Salaries for BECC employees working, both instructional, reporting and records management on the Montana Indian Language Program.
- Revisit Historical sites in State of Montana.
- Include Elders and professionals in Native history and record stories and interviews. Presentations upon request.
- Attend Language Summit and present local Projects to share with other Montana Tribes. Participate in Blackfoot Confederacy Activities when they are here at Blackfeet Reservation.
- Implement One on One consultations with Elders.

2026: AWARD \$93,750

Deliverables

- For Blackfeet Early Childhood Center (BECC), will be focused on interviewing elders on legends and storytelling. BECC plans on recording elders as they share their knowledge and experiences with Blackfeet Culture, they will receive a stipend accordingly. This will assist current Bilingual Instructors with updated and expansion of their knowledge.

- Continue to record and interview Elders for their knowledge and stories, capturing the positive history of the Blackfeet, catering to our Elders and Fluent Speakers, and share all ideas and progress on preserving Culture, Language, Stories, Sign Language and history with other surrounding community educational institutes, maintaining the communication between all entities involved in preserving Blackfeet Language and Culture.
- Bilingual Staff will make Sign language books for the classrooms that have non-verbal students, to assist the student with daily communication.
- Music is also a powerful tool and benefit for students in the bilingual classrooms are innumerable, with areas such as child development including fine and gross motor skills, language literacy, social and emotional development along with much more. Music, Nursery Rhymes and lullabies are calming and improves cognitive development and increases motor skills.
- BECC will continue to meet with the Education Committee which includes the public schools, Blackfeet Tribal Business Council and Blackfeet Community College. These meetings will consist of updating each other on Language and Cultural Preservation along with continuing to work towards completion on the Class 7 Certifications. BECC will attend Language Summits and present local Projects to share with other Montana tribes. Continue with the MOU with all other entities included on the Blackfeet Tribe Reservation, such as Blackfeet Community College, Public Schools in Browning, Heart Butte and East Glacier and sharing the knowledge of Blackfeet Language and Culture.

Confederated Salish and Kootenai

2025: AWARD \$187,500

Deliverables

- Using the current Level Three of the Adult Curriculum, the tribe will develop Educational Posters to help teachers stay in immersion and explain topics while teaching. Posters included will be: 1. Black Bear Life Cycle 2. Salmon Life Cycle 3. Tule Lodge 4. Canoe Construction 5. Fishing/Trapping Types 6. Camas Bake 7. Deer Hunting. This will entail consulting and hiring artist to create a number of art pieces for each individual poster, working with Native Teaching Aids to layout the design then produce prints for distributional teaching tools. Through the process SQCC Staff, Elders Advisory Council and Salish Language Apprentices will assist in the development of the text and spelling for accuracy and a cohesive group effort. The development of these posters will be a bonus to the Adult Language Program Curriculum and will double as resources that can be used in early learning all the way to other adult education opportunities.
- Digital Stories: record first language speakers, speaking in Salish reading a series of children's stories. SQCC has numerous short children's stories previously published, but missing a highly requested educational resource, an audio recording to accompany the

book. Digitizing the books while also adding audio of first language speakers. The clarity of first language speakers is critical to record for any project at this time. This important resource is not only highly requested but needed for new learners across the reservation in school systems and in the community. Host presentation (and compensate) first language speakers to record the stories using high quality recording equipment possibly purchased through this same funding source if possible. Work with Native Teaching Aids to launch and make available on KidZone which is a free online tool. This has had great reviews and a lot of use.

- 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- updating technology to keep our apprentices and teachers connected online and through other means. Upgrading equipment to be included. A smart board for teaching and creating, digital recording equipment for recording fluent speakers, bluetooth speakers and microphones as well as accompanying adapters, cords, stands and storage.
- Printing Materials- Part of the funds in this grant will go towards printing of the current deliverable materials to print some past materials that have already been created. Now the tribe can print more materials and get them to schools and communities for free. This will be a benefit for everyone learning and for the schools who will not have to use their funds for these specific materials. Additional sets of materials for potential new teachers coming aboard.
- Conference- bring elders, teachers and language apprentices to the 2024 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 Selis Qlispe in Montana. 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.
- Showcase- At the final stage, 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 of our language revitalization and preservation efforts. This will give us the opportunity to gain valuable feedback to assist us in future projects.

2026: AWARD \$93,750

Deliverables

- Thornton Media (<https://www.ndnlanguage.com/>) will update the previously created Salish Qlispe language app (<https://salish-qlispe.netlify.app/#/>) to be available to the public. Native Teaching Aids (<https://nativeteachingaids.com/>) will update websites, databases, and educational resources (<https://salishlanguagegames.com/>). Updating our technology to keep apprentices and teachers connected online and through other means. Upgrading equipment to be included. Part of the funds in this grant will go towards printing of the materials.
- Host a reservation-wide strategic planning session to consist of three days to be facilitated by the Indigenous Collaboration, PBC. The tribe has worked with them in 2016 and will provide a strategic language plan for the reservation language efforts. Bring elders, teachers and language apprentices to the 2026 Celebrating Salish Language Conference in Spokane, Washington.
- Upon approval of the Application, engage with CSKT Tribal Council and the Selis-Qlispe Elders Advisory Council. 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. At the final stage, 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 of language revitalization and preservation efforts

Chippewa-Cree Tribes

2025: AWARD \$187,500

Deliverables

- CCCPRD will 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. Will finalize (1) MOU with abovementioned partners.
- The Ojibwe/Neyio Language will be taught through, but not limited to, curriculum enhancement/development, courses and activities (in-person and online/virtual), language programs, and the development of a Rosetta Stone App. As the MOU states, "the parties will work diligently on a weekly basis during scheduled Ojibwe Neyio Language Acquisition classes which will be designed to meetings to discuss opportunities to

promote its concerned effort to increase Ojibwe and Nei-yahw language, culture, history, and life."

- Will continue to work with the Box Elder School District Class 7 Language Educators, along with Ojibwe Instructors. Deliverable: Build Partnerships, Provide curriculum, courses, and activities
- CCCPRD will partner with the CCT Department of Indian Education, Box Elder School District, CCT TANF Department, SAMSON NATION/MASKWACISE EDUCATION COMMISSION, and the Chippewa Cree Trib

2026: AWARD \$93,750

Deliverables

- CCCPRD will continue the Ojibwe Project started in the FY24/25 MILP work plan. MILP will create a MOU/MOA with CCT TANF program to select clients and students from the Box Elder School district, Rocky Boy School District and Stone Child College. This partnership will be documented with a MOU
- The Ojibwe/Neyio Language will continue to be taught through curriculum enhancement/development courses and activities (in-person and online/virtual), language programs, and the development of a Rosetta Stone App. As the MOU states, "The parties will work diligently during scheduled Ojibwe Neyio Language acquisition classes which will be designed to meetings to discuss opportunities to promote its concerned effort to increase Ojibwe and Nei-yahw language, culture, history and life"
- Deliverable: Build Partnerships, Provide Curriculum, courses and activities.
- Activity/Deliverable 2:
- Create a cultural website, Chippewa Cree History through photos, videos, social media and podcasts. MILP will digitalize VHS Elder interviews and a Historical timeline. activities include, but are not limited to, training, education and partnership building:
 - Family tree w/ kinship terms
 - Local plant identification with terms in language (video)
 - Language Bowl jeopardy style
 - Landmark identification in the language
 - Signage with art and in the language
 - Elder/youth apprentices
 - Story telling
 - Photovoice

Fort Belknap

2025: AWARD \$187,500

Deliverables

- The Fort Belknap Indian Community (FBIC) will be the initial oversight and disperse of funds appropriated by the State of Montana to complete activities and produce tangible goods as set forth in the application. These activities/tangible goods include Create a Book and digitizing it.
- Lessons developed 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.
- FBIC with (Coordinator - Liason) Ray Cichosz and Harlem Public Schools (Teachers John Stiffarm - Whiteclay and Thomas Molina Nakoda)

2026: AWARD \$93,750

Deliverables

- Work with other Organizations (Maps), Education Institutes (College of Colorado, AANIIH and Nakoda College) Departments (Tiwahe) and or Consultants to create a housing place for all Language and Cultural curriculum and projects that are created, added or enhanced by the Language Department and Hays/Lodgepole, Harlem and Dodson schools for Archive purposes.
- Everyday language terms and usage will be taught throughout cycle.
 - Songs/ Elective Class Book
 - Stories/Children/Adult books
 - Society groups/ History Book
- All transcribed from English to AANIIH & Nakoda into Book form.
 - Community Classes (recorded and Open to the Public (In person or VIA social media Live) that will be captured and be able to review at learners' discretion.
- Language and Cultural Specialist for AANIIH and Nakoda Languages will be the transcribers and interpreters for the English to Tribes Languages. They will also teach the history and traditional societies of the Tribes. Two Classes per week will be taught for the Public and media gathered will be used to complete deliverables.
- FT Belknap Indian Community (Language Department) - MAPS Program
- FT Belknap Indian Community (Language Department) - Hays, Harlem and Dodson Schools
- FT Belknap Indian Community (Language Department) - AANIIH and Nakoda College
- Ft Belknap Language Department will work with the above-mentioned programs and institutions to Create/and or add to curriculum that has been made or will be in Both Languages of AANIIH and Nakoda. Story books will be created and produced for Schools to utilize.

Fort Peck Tribe

2025: AWARD \$187,500

Deliverables

- Dakota and Nakoda weekly language classes and language and culture services as requested by the schools on the Fort Peck Reservation.
- Community event once a month. Language and Culture Dept. Will manage and drive MILP grant for Fort Peck Tribes.

2026: AWARD \$93,750

Deliverables

- Dakota and Nakoda language classes are held each week in the Poplar Language classroom at the Wolf Point Community Hall.
- Monthly Community Day camps offer a variety of activities, including language activities, cultural events, and community support with language and cultural services.
- 2026 Summer Youth Immersion Program for Dakota and Nakoda youth.

Little Big Horn College

2025: AWARD \$187,500

Deliverables

- 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.

2026: AWARD \$93,750

Deliverables

- The language and culture committee/groups involved in the development of this proposal include dual language immersion teachers from Crow Agency Public Schools, Pretty Eagle Catholic School and Little Big Horn Teachers, collaboration and discussion during the 2025 Crow Summer Institute, with regard to field and lab based experiential Crow language learning. (b) The language immersion teachers' training during the Crow Summer Institute will expand the draft Teachers Manual for the field/lab based learning activities - prior project; the Apsaalooke Bird and Plant field guides; operationalizing these into classroom use for walking tours for bird watching and plant ID and gathering, preparation and use of plants in the school lab. (c) The Crow Summer Institute will have

approximately twenty-five dual immersion language classroom teachers and teacher aides, all of whom are fluent and literate in the Crow language; and the expertise of the LBHC Crow language faculty for language documentation.

- Component 1 is professional development through the two-week seminar at Little Big Horn College, to focus on field and lab learning about birds and plants.
- The Crow Reservation schools (public and private) will have fourteen Crow language immersion classrooms; the Little Big Horn College has a series of three Crow language class, and require two - Crow language 1 and II for graduation.
- The annual Crow Summer Institute is a collaboration of LBHC with the Hardin Schools, the St. Labre Schools of Pretty Eagle and St. Charles and Lodge Grass School, for materials development and language immersion teachers training. This collaboration is now in its twelfth year. The materials provided to all partners are: the Crow Dictionary (print and online), the children's dictionary, a series of 15 picture books, three language learning textbooks, a series of twelve classroom posters, Ammiilaau - an online classroom resource for learning conversations in fifty-seven lesson, including culture, history (family, clan, seasons, powwow, regalia).
- Project Component 1 will support the training of and collaboration with Crow language immersion teachers from the Crow Agency Public Schools and the Pretty Eagle Catholic School for the development and implementation of the Field and Lab learning experiences. This will be achieved by convening the Crow Summer Institute, a two-week summer seminar at Little Big Horn College. The field and lab learning will expand student learning, pre-Kindergarten through fourth grade, on bird and plant identification, location, habitat and Crow cultural and historic information; and on plants, the identification, location, gathering, preparation and uses of chosen edible and medicinal plants. A series of field/lab events will be organized to include the use of kits with appropriate tools and materials, the teachers' manuals with step by step procedures for field and lab learning experiences.
- Project Component 2-a will support the implementation of the designed field and lab learning experiences in the classrooms and related field locations in the Little Big Horn and Big Horn River valleys. This will entail the pairs of Crow language dual immersion classrooms, participation in field trips, a total of 14 events (2 classrooms per event). These events will have a Field/Lab Learning Coordinator. Each language immersion teacher will have an honorarium for their additional time and effort in participation in the field/lab events. An Example of field/lab learning will be a Fall season walking tour of the Crow Fair grounds north end to ID and gather chokecherries, wild grapes, buffalo berries, rosehips and willow bark.
- Project Component 2-b will support a 2 credit Crow Studies seminar titled "Cultural Uses of Wood in the Apsaalooke Lodge/Tipi". Two LBHC faculty members will plan and implement a field and lab learning experience for ten LBHC students. A partnership will be made with the U.S. Forest Service to acquire permits to harvest lodge pole pines near

Red Lodge MT in the Custer National Forest. The faculty members and students will meet in Crow language class, to overview the task, learn vocabulary and wood harvesting ID and harvesting procedures. They will then travel to the traditional lodge pole pine harvesting sites near Red Lodge MT and harvest two sets of poles (21 poles/tipi). The instruction will cover harvesting locations, methods, preparation (trimming, peeling and curing), pitching, the origin of the tipi from Yellow Leggings and the name and meaning of each pole. The faculty and students will harvest chokecherry wood in the Little Big Horn River valley for tipi stakes (30/tipi) and pins (12/tipi), and learn the cutting, trimming and sharpening methods. The students will learn to identify Ash for summer shade building and willows for temporary shelter building. This field/lab learning experience will serve as a proto-type for a semi-annual Crow Studies seminar at LBHC.

Chief Dull Knife College

2025 Award \$187,500

Deliverables

- Chief Dull Knife College will collaborate to teach help the Cheyenne language and cultural activities with the Northern Cheyenne Head Start community and parents. Chief Dull Knife College will also provide Cheyenne language and culture activities: to all the school age parents to build multigenerational transference of the Cheyenne Language. The College will 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, and utilize community based language expertise and Cheyenne know-how of teaching and presenting opportunities for sharing and listening to the Cheyenne Language.

2026: AWARD \$93,750

Deliverables

- Chief Dull Knife College hosts an annual Cheyenne Language Camp and will hire, by contract, 5 Language Culture Instructional Staff, one cook and a cook helper. The Contracts will be short-term for two-weeks. June 19-29, 2024. The purpose of the contracts will be to provide Cheyenne Language Culture education. Each Contract will be for 1500 per week for two weeks.
- The Northern Cheyenne Tribal Government and Chief Dull Knife College have a resolution that has designated Chief Dull Knife College to provide the lead in teaching language and culture per resolution and to receive and administer funding for this project. The authorized representative will be the college president. The

Northern Cheyenne Tribal President is the authorized representative for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe.

- Chief Dull Knife College Language and Culture Department is comprised of 2 Cheyenne Language Instructors, one of which uses Linguist teaching. The College has an elder and will hire two language interns to assist in carrying out language documentation and translations objectives. Chief Dull Knife College courses include Cheyenne language 1,2,3,4 and other Cheyenne studies. The language and culture specialists assist in teaching language and doing language related work for CDKC. Chief Dull Knife College supports ongoing teacher professional development opportunities for certification testing, renewal and to attend relevant trainings to maintain teaching credential. Chief Dull Knife Colleges Authorized representative is an employee of the college. Chief Dull Knife College through the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Government is designated to conduct Teacher Certification testing and to assist with preserving and maintaining the Cheyenne language through tribal resolution and Memorandum of agreement.
- Activity/Deliverable 1: engage Cheyenne language speakers to assist in recording 15 conversations.
- Per activity 1: translate and transcribe into written form the 15 Cheyenne language conversations.

Little Shell Tribe

2025: AWARD \$187,500

Deliverables

- Adopt and use a sound and pronunciation chart of the Chippewa-Ojibwe Language that will be used by all learners of the language 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 in learning to speak the Chippewa Ojibwe language. In partnership with TMCC, which focuses on college level Ojibwe language coursework for adults, the Little Shell Tribe plans to provide an opportunity for future Ojibwe language instructors to complete the Ojibwe Language Certification online for two semesters at TMCC. With funds from the MILP grant, the Little Shell tribe will 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.

2026: AWARD \$93,750

Deliverables

- Expanded Language Cultural Nights for all ages of Tribal Members and other. Technology purchased (iPads) will help guide the Cultural Nights to be held in-person, bi-monthly, as well as via Zoom, giving all members, local and remote, the opportunity to participate. Language Speakers will lead the evenings lessons and activities, which will be centered around the Little Shell Language App's various lessons. The Language Lessons, will also include corresponding language and educational activities with science and arts and crafts materials and lessons.
- Development and distribution on Pre-K - Elementary age, Language Lesson coloring books and other language lesson materials.
- Partnership with Turtle Mountain Community College as well as Title VII Great Falls, Montana Indian Education Department.