

Old Capitol Building
PO Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504-7200

ospi.k12.wa.us



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Chris Reykdal, Superintendent

TO: Washington State Native American Education Advisory Committee (WSNAEAC)
FROM: Destiney Petty, Tribal Language Program Supervisor
DATE: July 15, 2025
RE: Tribal Language Program Report

Tribal Language Program Overview

The Tribal Language Program supported schools across Washington in preserving 16 Tribal languages, with recent efforts boosted by federal COVID-19 funds. As funding shifts back to state sources, the program continues to grow, emphasizing sustainable investment, Indigenous-centered literacy, and strong community collaboration.

FY 2024-25 Summary and FY 2025-26 Outlook

For the 2024-25 school year, the Tribal Language Program provided funding to 25 schools and districts, including 3 State-Tribal Education Compact (STEC) schools, allocating \$934,999 to support 16 distinct Tribal languages across Washington State.

Looking ahead to FY 2025-26, we anticipate serving 26 recipients with \$300,000 in total funding.

ESSER Fund Transition

Higher grant amounts in recent years were made possible through federal ESSER emergency funds provided during COVID-19. ESSER III funds had to be obligated by September 2024, with final expenditures completed by January 2025. FY 2025-26 allocations return to traditional general state funding sources, emphasizing the need to advocate for sustainable, long-term investment in Tribal language preservation.

2025-26 Grant Development

We received 26 Notices of Intent to participate from prospective grantees and have now moved on to developing and publishing the application itself, anticipated to be published in EGMS Early to Mid-August with all applicants receiving personal notification from the Tribal Language supervisor.

Native Literacy and Tribal Language Convening

Our second annual convening took place May 6-9, 2025, at Spokane Tribe Casino and Hotel in Airway Heights, WA, bringing together representatives from Tribal organizations, school districts, higher education institutions, non-profits, state agencies, and advocacy groups. This

was a collaborative effort by the ONE team with the Native Student Success and Tribal Language programs working together to ensure the space was shaped by Tribal community values and grounded in Indigenous pedagogy. The final day included 7 additional members from the First People's Language Culture and Oral Traditions Committee, who shared about the history, context, and intent of the First Peoples certification, emphasizing the importance of Tribal sovereignty in language instruction. Participants contributed to a comprehensive framework and conversation connecting literacy principles with language connections through three key elements:

- **Braiding Knowledge Systems** - Literacy includes Indigenous storytelling, oral tradition, land-based learning, and identity
- **Native Ways of Knowing** - Learning happens in relationship to land, community, and story
- **Weaving Literacy & Language** - Literacy deepens when tied to culture, oral tradition, and identity

Research and lived experience presented affirmed that students who maintain and engage with their heritage language build stronger literacy skills and deeper cultural confidence, promoting self-efficacy and belonging while supporting cognitive development for American Indian/Alaska Native students' academic success.

Program Impact and Conclusion

The program's primary focus areas include supporting Tribes and Tribal language educators, expanding FPLCOT course codes, highlighting best practices, and providing professional learning community opportunities. While supporting 16 distinct Tribal languages, we are experiencing expanded participation and increased interest across recipient communities.

The success of our convening demonstrates the deep commitment across Washington State's educational community to ensuring Tribal languages thrive for future generations.