



# **Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program**

**Sample Application MN-00-14-0006-14**

## **Chilkat Indian Village**

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$47,900
Amount of cost share:	\$45,102

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Abstract
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

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Chilkat Indian Village ~ Installing the Whale House Exhibit

The Chilkat Indian Village (CIV) of Klukwan is a federally recognized Indian Tribal Government. Partners for the proposed project include the Alaska State Museum (ASM) and the nonprofit Jilkaat Kwaan Heritage Center.

The Native village of Klukwan in southeast Alaska is the home of the world famous *at.oow* (clan treasures) of the Whale House of the Gaanaxtédi, currently stored in an unheated clan house. There is concern among elders and clan leaders because Chilkat Tlingit artifacts are stored in the village in conditions that leave them vulnerable to deterioration. The Jilkaat Kwaan Cultural Heritage Center (JKCHC) is currently under construction with a May 2015 goal of completion. This 12,000 square foot structure will be equipped with the security, fire suppression, and environmental control systems necessary for safe storage and display of *at.oow*.

Installing the Whale House exhibit in the new Heritage Center while providing important training for tribal members is the focus of this proposal. The Project Director and tribal member team mentored by Alaska State Museums professionals will recreate, in the newly constructed Heritage Center, the traditional layout of the Whale House interior using original objects. The team will work with specialty craftsmen to create the supports and mounting systems. ASM staff will oversee the installation while training tribal members in best practices. Interpretive signage, with content developed by clan members, will be designed and installed with the assistance of an exhibit consultant. A private community ceremony will be held to celebrate the renewed presence of these revered pieces in an authentic longhouse. A public grand opening of the exhibit will be held. All activities will respect Tlingit protocols. IMLS funded project activities will be completed within one year of grant receipt.

The Project Director will work with two Collections Technicians, Exhibit Consultant, Specialty Craftsman, ASM mentors, CIV Grants Administrators and Bookkeeper, and tribal trainees. Staff from ASM will offer tribal members hands-on training in exhibit development, design, and installation.

The Whale House's four house posts (the Strong Man, the Sea Monster, the Woodworm Girl, and the Raven), the Rainwall Screen, and the Woodworm Dish, all magnificent pieces of Northwest Coast art, will be installed in the new Heritage Center. Signage will inform visitors about the objects on display. Tribal members will gain new skills related to professional collection handling, interpretation, and exhibit installation, professional development in museum skills important to successful operation of the Heritage Center. Clan members will feel that traditions were honored, and will gain trust in the process being implemented to develop exhibits and care for *at.oow* in the JKCHC. Relationships with project partners will mature. Project information will be shared.

Tribal members, clan members, and all who come to see the exhibit in the Heritage Center will benefit from viewing these treasures. Researchers, educators, artists and world-wide visitors will gain appreciation for the depth and complexity of Tlingit society, our art forms, and how art is integrated into the daily lives of our people. The project will provide a model for tribes seeking to exhibit their sacred and treasured objects.

Project risks include transport of this collection to the Heritage Center, creation of appropriate mounts to support and protect the pieces, and safe installation. Expert professionals will monitor and oversee these processes, providing training to tribal members as they are implemented.

The public benefit of this project is immense. The Whale House exhibit will provide access to art treasures that have heretofore not been available to the public. This internationally significant Tlingit collection displayed in its place of origin will allow the Chilkat Tlingits to share our history and our practices. These magnificent works will not only be preserved but will be actively used as inspiration, connection to artistic and cultural roots, authentic design, and sources of information.

The Project Director will monitor all activities. Using the outcome based evaluation logic model as a guide, staff will gather and analyze data, summarize outcomes, and share lessons learned and project results with others.

## PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

**Project description:** The Chilkat Indian Village (CIV) of Klukwan is a federally recognized Indian Tribal Government. (Doc#1) Klukwan is an ancient Native village on the banks of the Chilkat River in southeast Alaska. A long-term goal reaffirmed in our ongoing strategic planning processes is to perpetuate traditional knowledge to preserve and revitalize the cultural and historic heritage of the Chilkat Tlingits. A primary strategy to achieve this is to operate the Jilkaat Kwaan Cultural Heritage Center (JKCHC), in partnership with the Jilkaat Kwaan Heritage Center nonprofit (JKHC). (Docs 13, 14) Two components of the JKCHC are complete and operating – Traditional Knowledge Camp and Hospitality House. The third component, the Heritage Center, is currently under construction with a May 2015 goal of completion. It is a 12,000 square foot structure that will be equipped with the security, fire suppression, and environmental control systems necessary for safe storage and display of the many priceless *at.oow* (clan treasures) in the village and those stored in other museums.

Klukwan is the home of the world famous Whale House of the Gaanaxtéidi. (Doc#15, 18) Dr. Aldona Jonaitis, Director, University of Alaska Museum of the North wrote: *“Probably the best known assemblage of not only Tlingit but all Northwest Coast indigenous art is in the Gaanaxtéidi Whale House, the interior of which was photographed in 1895 by Winter and Pond. Looming at the rear of the house, separating the chief’s quarters from those of the rest of the house’s residents, is a 16x11 foot painted screen that represents a treasured crest. Its bright painting, exquisitely detailed surface, and perfect formline design render it a masterpiece by any set of criteria. But what adds to its aesthetic importance are the associated carvings, four nine foot high house posts that detail important episodes in this clan’s history. Each post is a masterwork, with subtle three dimensional carving of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic beings interlinked by hands, tongues, beaks. The Whale House artworks are not only the finest example of Northwest Coast art, but also, an assemblage of painting and carving that assumes a rightful position alongside world masterpieces, equal in artistry to any masterpiece of Western art.”*

Installing the Whale House exhibit in the new Heritage Center while providing important training for tribal members is the focus of this proposal. The project builds on a history of community-wide planning and exhibit development funded in part by IMLS grants for collection documentation and assessment, exhibit content interpretation using a community-based process, and storage, and on a National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund grant to hand-hew planks, posts, and foundation boards for this authentic replica clan longhouse. In June 2013, the Whale House Clan entered into a loan agreement with the Jilkaat Kwaan Heritage Center (JKHC) to display the Whale House’s four house posts (the Strong Man, the Sea Monster, the Woodworm Girl, and the Raven) the Rainwall Screen and the Woodworm Dish, all magnificent pieces of Northwest Coast art with national significance. (Doc#4, 17) This show of trust in and support for the Center are products of years of thoughtful discussions that honor Tlingit ways.

Architects and planners used a sketch done by George T. Emmons, an anthropologist who visited Klukwan in the 1800’s, as the basis for the Whale House exhibit layout (Doc#16). Under the guidance of the Project Director and clan leader, a team of tribal members mentored by Alaska State Museum (ASM) professionals will recreate, in the newly constructed Heritage Center, the traditional layout of the Whale House interior using the original objects. With the help of IMLS grant funds, the team will create the mounting systems and implement the installation process required to display the objects adhering to current best practices of museum conservation and exhibition standards. Working with ASM conservation and exhibition staff, local specialty craftsmen, project staff and clan members will design, manufacture, and install steel mounting systems for the historic carvings. Completed mounts secured to the structure of the building will provide supports, allowing the house posts and Rainwall screen to be presented in their traditional positions of function. Interpretive signage, with content developed by clan members, will be installed to assist visitors in their understanding of the importance of the objects on display and the lifeways that created them. Before the exhibit is open for public view, there will be a private community ceremony with the Gaanaxtéidi clan to celebrate the renewed presence of these revered *at.oow* in an authentic longhouse. Finally, there will be a grand opening of the exhibit for the general public, thanks to the generosity of the Gaanaxtéidi clan in sharing these priceless, historic, and beautiful crest pieces.

**Project need:** A Bureau of Indian Affairs school and a Presbyterian Church were both constructed in Klukwan in 1902. The presence of these institutions had a profound effect on the community as newcomers made it clear that our languages, cultural arts, and practices were not acceptable. Laws against potlatches and other Tlingit customs were passed forcing Tlingits to abandon tribal ways. Elders, tribal and clan leaders are concerned that Chilkat Tlingit artifacts currently stored in clan houses and homes are vulnerable to fire or deterioration and at risk of being lost, as the Village has no facility to adequately store, display, and protect them. (Doc#8) These pieces have historical and spiritual meaning for us; they tell our history. Finding a way to protect these treasures while honoring our culture is vital to our people. Our village is struggling to stop the exodus of tribal members. Culturally appropriate employment is needed for tribal members to remain in or to return to Klukwan. The JKCHC project will create such employment opportunities while preserving and sharing our culture.

**Project benefits:** The exhibit, when installed, will allow the Chilkat Tlingits to share our history and our practices with tribal members, researchers, and world-wide visitors. These magnificent works will not only be preserved but will be actively used as inspiration, connection to artistic and cultural roots, authentic design, and sources of information. The Whale House exhibit area, available for clan ceremonial use, will keep these pieces connected with our vibrant, living culture as well as our history. The project also provides culturally appropriate professional development for tribal members. Project staff and volunteers will work closely with ASM professionals learning collection handling, conservation, interpretation, and exhibit installation best practices. These skills will be employed as other exhibits are prepared and installed at the Heritage Center.

*“Many of the masterpieces of painting and sculpture, once an integral part of the life of the people, have left the villages and now, if still in existence, are held in museums and private collections throughout the world. The screens and carved posts in the Klukwan houses stand among the great artistic accomplishments of the world. The fact that so many of them remain in Klukwan after over a century of loss to collectors and museums is a tribute to the sense of ownership by the people of the village.”* - Bill Holm, Professor emeritus, Art History and Anthropology, University of Washington; Curator emeritus, Northwest Coast Art, Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture

**Project results:** The Whale House exhibit will provide access to art treasures that have heretofore not been available to the public. This internationally significant Tlingit collection displayed in its place of origin will provide entrance to our unique ethnic landscape. Using the Whale House as an example, we will educate the community and public on the intricacies of Tlingit laws and protocols as they pertain to clans. Viewers will gain appreciation for the depth and complexity of Tlingit society, our art forms, and how art is integrated into the daily lives of our people historically and in the present. Native artists are creating a powerful international movement of traditional, new, and fusion styles. Access to exceptional older works of art is critical. The exhibit, with its interpretive labeling, will support this artistic renewal. This project embodies our vision for transformation of our community. Integrating traditional arts and culture with museum and cultural tourism creates opportunity for sustainable economic development linked with preservation of Native lifestyle. Tribal members will have new skills related to professional techniques for collection handling, interpretation, and exhibit installation. Clan members will feel that traditions related to the Whale House were honored, and will gain trust in the process being implemented to develop exhibits and care for *at.ooow* in the JKCHC. Relationships with project partners will mature. The project will provide a model for tribes seeking to exhibit their sacred and treasured objects.

**Strengthening museum services:** This project builds on work accomplished and in process for the development of the JKCHC. Beginning in 2008, a series of community meetings facilitated by ASM professionals were held. The *Operations Model* document generated includes information on preservation of collections, and an important system for access to artifacts approved by clan and community leaders and tribal members. (Doc#14). Collections Technicians worked with professionals to document family and clan collections. Community-based interpretive content planning sessions related to Whale House and Chilkat weaving exhibits were held. Tribally owned art pieces prioritized by the Council were documented and inventoried. Currently, the JKCHC *Guidelines for Handling and Storing Objects* is being developed. Tribal members will continue to learn museum skills.

## PROJECT WORK PLAN

**Specific activities:** Project work includes: 1. Creating a longhouse exhibit: The Project Team (Director, Technicians) will work with the Exhibit Consultant, ASM professionals, craftsmen, and *Gaanaxtéidi* clan and tribal members to design and manufacture supports and mounts to display and protect pieces and reinforce their longevity, move and install the *at.oow*. ASM experts will oversee and guide the process. A style book will be developed and interpretive signage created with sensitivity to the clan's planned ceremonial use of the Whale House exhibit area.

2. Staff training: Staff mentoring by museum experts and consultants will provide theoretical and practical experience in exhibit design, mount fabrication, and formal installation of exhibits. Hands-on professional development opportunities include working with ASM's staff to prepare the *at.oow* for the exhibit (minimal cleaning/ assessment) and with the Preparator to fabricate mounts that will protect *at.oow*. The Team will also work with the Exhibit Consultant learning best practices for interpretive content and graphic design development.

3. Evaluating and sharing project outcomes: Evaluation activities will follow the Outcome Based Evaluation model designed for the project and will be the responsibility of the project staff. Project information will be disseminated to tribal leaders, members, funders, the museum world, and the public at large.

**Project management:** Consultant: Project Director: Lani Hotch, *Saantaas'* – Eagle Clan, will be responsible for planning, implementing and managing the project. She is the Director of the Jilkaat *Kwaan* Heritage Center and owner of Cultural and Community Development Services. Lani facilitated the interpretive content planning meetings with the Whale House clan and drafted the Whale House and Chilkat weaving interpretive plans. She has years of experience working on CIV projects including the IMLS-funded library and museum projects. (Doc#5) The Director will meet regularly with the project staff, clan members, consultant, and tribal staff to assure that grant activities are progressing according to plan. She will work closely with the ASM staff.

### Work plan with timeline:

**Goal 1: To create a clan longhouse exhibit, using Whale House *at.oow*, for the viewer to gain appreciation for the depth and complexity of Tlingit society, our art forms, and how art is integrated into our people's daily lives historically and in the present.**

Objective 1: Develop interpretive content to reflect the intent of the exhibit

1. Finalize contract with Exhibit Consultant; Tribal Council; Oct
2. Meet with Exhibit Consultant on site to discuss interpretive content plan, message priorities; Project Team; Nov
3. Develop style book; Exhibit Consultant/Project Team; Nov/Dec
4. Draft text, identify images to use on signs, and review; Exhibit Consultant/Project Team, clan; Dec/Feb

Objective 2: Design and produce interpretive signage

1. Design interpretive signs – submit to tribe for approval; Exhibit Consultant/Project Team/Clan; Feb/March
2. Secure quotes for and order interpretive signs; Exhibit Consultant/Project Team; March
3. Review color proofs; give approval for final production; ship to site; Exhibit Consultant/Project Team; April

Objective 3: Design and manufacture appropriate supports that present the works in positions of function

1. Review conservation reports and recommendations for *at.oow*; Project Team/ASM staff; Nov
2. Create detailed design for the supports; ASM staff; Dec/Jan
3. Negotiate with craftsman to create gross mounts; discuss designs and timeline; Project Team/ASM; Jan/Feb
4. Approve quote through established process; Tribal Council; Feb
5. Manufacture mounts from shop drawings and ship to Klukwan; Specialty craftsman; March/April

Objective 4: Uncrate and move Whale House *at.oow* to Heritage Center and install exhibit

1. Work with ASM professionals to uncrate and move *at.oow* according to Tlingit protocols – allow a minimum of two weeks for acclimatization after move before installation; Clan members/Project Team/ASM staff; May
2. Work with ASM professionals to assess, do minimal cleaning; Clan members, Project Team; May
3. Install collection support and interpretive sign mounts prior to moving *at.oow*; Preparator/craftsman; April
4. Fabricate specialty mounts on site; ASM staff, Clan members, Project Team; May

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5. Install *at.oow*; Install interpretive signs; ASM staff, Clan members, Project Team; May

6. Host community ceremony with *Gaanaxtéidi* according to Tlingit protocols; Project Director/Clan; May

7. Hold Grand Opening ceremony – Village and JKHC – June

**Goal 2: Build tribal members' capacity and specialty craftsman skills to create the technical infrastructure in the Village to continue to design and install exhibits.**

**Objective 1:** Train project staff and interested tribal members to develop their capabilities in exhibit design, development, interpretation, and installation. Provide opportunities to meet other museum professionals.

1. Work with Exhibit Consultant to learn skills for creating and designing interpretive content; Project staff/Clan and tribal members as appropriate; Ongoing

2. Work with ASM staff mentors to learn skills for exhibit design, conservation, mount fabrication; Project staff/interested clan and tribal members as appropriate; Ongoing

3. Hands-on training with ASM staff in Klukwan; ASM staff visits Klukwan for uncrating, moving *at.oow*, conservation, and installation work, and mentoring; Project Team; May

4. Attend grantee meeting; Project Director; As scheduled by IMLS

**Goal 3: Evaluate project and share project outcomes**

**Objective 1:** Monitor and assess activities of project

1. Using the outcome based evaluation logic model (Doc#10), develop questionnaires to gather data to assess outcomes, maintain list of participating tribal members, and collect evaluation data; Staff; Ongoing

**Objective 2:** Report evaluation findings to IMLS, Tribal Council, clans, and others as appropriate

1. Analyze the quantitative and qualitative data collected and summarize lessons learned; Staff; Sept

**Objective 3:** Share project results with others as appropriate

1. Write article for Museums Alaska newsletter, post updates on website and Facebook, and present project information at a state or national conference. Director; Ongoing

**Resources, personnel, time and budget, résumés, commitment letters, schedule, are attached.**

**Staff:** Collections Technicians (part-time positions): Chun Williamson; Jones Hotch. As members of the Eagle and Raven Clans, these project team members ensure a balanced approach to the Whale House collection installation project. They bring knowledge and skills learned through previous work and training to the project.

**Consultants:** Sarah Asper-Smith, Exhibit Consultant, (Doc#6) will provide expertise, guidance and training in the development of interpretive materials. Specialty craftsmen used by the Alaska State Museum will be engaged to construct supports and mounts based on a set of plans created by the ASM's Deputy Director.

**Mentors:** These museum experts will serve as mentors for the project. (Doc#2, Résumés)

- Bob Banghart, ASM Deputy Director. Bob has worked on design and installation of exhibits throughout Alaska. He brings an in-depth understanding of the technicalities of design, mount building, and installation.

- Scott Carrlee, ASM Curator of Museum Services. Scott is a trained conservator and will bring diverse expertise to the project. He works with many villages as they strive to preserve their cultural artifacts.

- Steve Henrikson, ASM Curator of Collections. He has a long-term relationship with the Village and participated in the documentation process and conservation assessments of the Whale House *at.oow* in 2011.

**CIV:** Grants Administration: Brian Willard, Acting Tribal Administrator and John Brower, Consultant/Mentor will work together to administer this project. Brian has overseen numerous grants. John served as Tribal Administrator for 10 years and managed many successful grant projects. Project Bookkeeper: Beverly Klanott has 15 years' experience as CIV's bookkeeper. She has completed numerous financial management classes. Office space, general office supplies, internet and phone. CIV will use 477 professional development funds to help pay wages.

**Others:** The JKHC nonprofit will provide \$26,152 to help fund: travel expenses, a portion of the Project

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Director's and specialty craftsman's fees, and some mount supplies. The Wolf House B & B and the Hotch family will provide lodging at a reduced rate or for free, an inkind contribution value of \$1,480. (Doc#3, 7)

**Gaanaxtéidi:** The clan entered into a Loan Agreement with the JKHC (nonprofit) to allow the house posts, Rainwall screen, and Woodworm dish to be displayed in the Center for at least 15 years. These articles are priceless. The clan is also committing up to \$7,000 to hold a *ku.eex* to honor and thank Eagle Clan members who move the pieces to the Heritage Center. Tlingit tradition requires that the Eagle clan members be paid for their service with cash, gifts, and a celebration. All costs for this must be borne by the members of the Whale House clan.

**Tracking progress:** Staff will review the project work plan on a regular basis. The Director will monitor the project work plan and the timeline to keep the project on track. Problems will be identified and adjustments made if needed. Should any significant issues arise, a revised plan of action will be developed and Tribal Council approval sought. Project team will establish frequency of meetings and methods of communications.

**Sharing results:** Publicizing the process of exhibit planning and installation within the village is essential. Staff will provide publicity using flyers, word of mouth, and regular updates to the CIV's website, Klukwan and JKHC Facebook pages. The project team will give presentations at the annual JKHC fundraising event, semi-annual community meetings, and submit a proposal to present at a conference such as the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums. An article will be submitted to the *Network*, the *Museums Alaska* newsletter.

## **PROJECT RESULTS**

**Expected changes** in knowledge, skills, behaviors and/or attitudes: (Doc#10)

**Outcome 1:** Community members will gain skills/knowledge about a) handling and transporting *at.oow* b) interpretive labeling c) exhibit installation. Target: At least 12 tribal/community members.

**Outcome 2:** Gaanaxtéidi clan members will report that the installation of Whale House collection has improved the safety of their *at.oow*. Target: At least 12 clan members.

**Outcome 3:** Eagle and Gaanaxtéidi clan members will report clan balance was honored in the transportation of the Whale House *at.oow*, and that they gained trust in the process being implemented to install exhibits in the JKCHC in a way that cares for *at.oow* and honors traditional protocols. Up to 23 Eagles and Gaanaxtéidi.

**Outcome 4:** Visitors will report they gained knowledge of Tlingit society, art, and lifeways. 100 surveyed visitors.

**Outcome 5:** CIV will increase interactions and enhance existing relationships/collaborations with entities and individuals engaged in museum related activities. Target: 1 museum, 1 nonprofit, 4 professionals.

**Care of objects:** Whale House *at.oow* will be protected from dust, rodents, etc. vastly improving their safety.

**Tangible products:** The replica longhouse and Whale House collection will be safely installed. Interpretive exhibit labeling will be created and installed. A style book for the Heritage Center exhibits will be in place.

**Measuring success:** Project staff will review the Outcome Based Evaluation (OBE) Logic Model (Doc#10) at the start of the project. Each component will be evaluated using indicators, targets and evaluation tools. Questionnaires will be developed and distributed to gather feedback on the targets established for: 1) the Gaanaxtéidi, Eagle, and other clans – once exhibit is installed; 2) Tribal Council, JKHC Board – at project end; and 3) other participating tribal members– at project end. Phone interviews with project mentors will solicit input. Information gathered will be tabulated and analyzed. Findings will be reported to Tribal Council, IMLS, and partner agencies. Visitors to the Center will be offered a survey to complete regarding their experience.

**Sustaining the project:** Skills gained in collection handling, transportation, interpretation, and installation practices will be used in operating the JKCHC. Professional development will build self confidence in tribal members. Trust built through the course of the project as museum practices respect traditional protocols will induce other tribal members to agree to place their *at.oow* in the Center.

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	2014-2015	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
<b>Project Team General Activities</b>													
Meet to plan and implement project	Regular and special meetings for project team will be scheduled												
Communicate with partners	Clarify roles -- ongoing communications												
Communicate with tribal members & Council	Proj Plan, contract & plan approvals, grand opening												OBE
<b>Training Opportunities</b>													
Mentoring and guidance from partners	Best practices, interpretation, exhibit design, conservation, installation.												
Project staff hands-on training	Interpretation			Exhibit supports			Moving, conservation, installation						
<b>Activities</b>													
Contract with Exhibit Consultant													
Develop interpretive content, identify images													
Develop style book			Council approval										
Design interpretive signs; text, images						Council approval							
Review sign proofs, manufacture, ship													
Review conservation reports on <i>at.oow</i>													
Create detailed design for supports													
Negotiate with craftsman to fabricate supports					Council approval of designs, costs								
Manufacture supports and sign supports													
Uncrate and move <i>at.oow</i>													
ASM staff to Village for on-site mentoring	Exhibit planning		Design supports				Move/installation						
Installation of exhibit, fabrication of specialty mounts													
Community Ceremony and Grand Opening													
Create publicity materials for project	Web, FB, media articles, flyers						Invitations for opening						
Enter location data and info into PastPerfect										After move			
Report at semi-annual community meetings													
Attend IMLS meeting - when scheduled						When scheduled							
OBE - per Logic Model	Ongoing -- tool development, data collection, analyze, report												
Write and submit reports as required	Interim (if required) and final narrative and financial												
Update website, Facebook, as appropriate	Ongoing communications and information sharing												
Submit session proposal for conference	At time of ATALM or Alaska Museums Assoc. call for proposals												