



# Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program

Sample Application MN-00-19-0028-19

## Wiyot Tribe

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$55,105
Amount of cost share:	\$15,322

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Abstract
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

Please note that the instructions for preparing applications for the FY2020 Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services grant program differ from those that guided the preparation of FY2019 applications. Be sure to use the instructions in the [FY2020 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

# Abstract

**Lead applicant:** The Wiyot Tribe is the lead applicant, and the project will be administered by the Tribe's Wiyot Language Program under the direction of tribal linguist and Project Director Lynnika Butler. For the digital versions of the Wiyot Conversation Book, we will partner with the non-profit 7000 Languages, who provide free language learning software to indigenous language communities.

**Need/problem/challenge to be addressed, and how it was identified:** The Wiyot language has no remaining fluent speakers. However, there is increasing interest among the Wiyot tribal community in learning Wiyot as part of larger cultural revival efforts. Requests for language content from tribal members have increased nearly eightfold since 2010, and language activities for tribal youth have expanded from sporadic special events to weekly sessions serving 10-20 youth from preschool to high school age. Though there is extensive archival documentation of the language, much of it is difficult to access and/or does not directly address the needs of beginning language learners.

**Major activities and time frame:** The Wiyot Language Program will develop a Wiyot conversation book for structured language learning within and beyond the tribal community. During the first year and a half, we will hold biweekly content planning meetings with Wiyot community members to brainstorm conversation themes, questions and answers, and vocabulary (in English). The Project Director and a Language Specialist will search the Wiyot language primary source material to find words, phrases, and sentences requested by the community. If an exact translation of a proposed sentence, phrase, etc. is attested in the primary source material, it will be used verbatim. When exact translations for desired content are not found, we will use similar constructions found in the primary source material, substituting lexical items as needed, to create appropriate content. The final book will consist of 30-50 short conversations in Wiyot, with English translations.

In the last six months of the project period, we will format the finalized conversation book for print publication; commission local artists to create cover art and page art for the book; record audio to accompany each sentence; and convert the print and audio content to web-based and mobile apps with the help of the non-profit language software company 7000 Languages.

**Project beneficiaries:** The proposed project is primarily intended to benefit Wiyot tribal members, but will be of use to anyone who is interested in learning about Wiyot. The book and digital materials will be available for free to all 651 enrolled tribal members, both on and off the Table Bluff Reservation. The book will serve as a foundation for more structured language classes at the reservation, and for language and cultural presentations that the Tribe is often invited to give at local schools, museums, and events.

**Intended results:** Tribal members will have easy access to Wiyot language content that they can use in their daily lives, with audio to practice pronunciation. A Wiyot conversation book will ensure that the community has a shared foundation for language learning. Additionally, a structured conversation book will allow the creation of a more structured language curriculum and associated materials (flash cards, language games, etc.).

**Measuring success:** Success will be measured with a survey and feedback form in the book and on the Tribe's website, as well as a short survey to be completed at the end of each content planning meeting.

# Proposal Narrative

## PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

**Proposal:** The Wiyot Language Program proposes to develop a Wiyot conversation book for language learning within the tribal community, inspired in part by Georgiana Trull’s *Yurok Language Conversation Book* (web version available at <http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~yurok/web/YLCB.php>). The book will consist of 30-50 one-page conversations reconstructed in Wiyot, using the extensive archival documentation of the language as source material. Web and mobile app versions of the print book, with accompanying audio, will be created to ensure ease of use, portability, and accessibility of the language content created by the project.

### Need and challenges to be addressed:

The Wiyot language has no remaining fluent speakers, but there is increasing interest among the Wiyot tribal community in learning Wiyot. Though there is extensive documentation of the language, much of it is difficult to access and/or does not address the needs of beginning language learners due to grammatical complexity, lack of applicability to daily life, and/or special symbols and conflicting spellings.

The last documented fluent Wiyot speaker, Della Prince, died in 1962 (Teeter, 1964:1), but the language had been in steep decline for some time. By 1922, when the linguist Gladys Reichard visited the area to interview speakers, she estimated that “[t]here were at that time not more than 100 persons living as Wiyot and of those very few knew the language.” (Reichard, 1925:5).

Nevertheless, there is a considerable documentary record of Wiyot, compiled by no fewer than nine researchers working between 1889 and 1959 (see “Supportingdoc1” for a bibliography), who interviewed at least seventeen native speakers. Audio recordings of vocabulary, phrases, and verb paradigms were made with three speakers between 1951 and 1957, and the written primary source material spans thousands of pages containing more than 50,000 Wiyot words and phrases. Of this, over 28,000 words and phrases have already been digitized via a Wiyot language database developed and maintained by the Project Director.

However, the Wiyot language data is of limited use to Wiyot language learners for several reasons. First, Wiyot is a polysynthetic language, meaning that a single word can contain a high number of meaningful units which combine in ways very different from English grammar. Many seemingly simple constructions in English are highly complex in Wiyot, and word-for-word translation is often impossible. The following examples of the verb stem *boutg* ‘to scratch’ in different contexts give an idea of the complexity of Wiyot grammar:

a.	<i>shou</i>	<i>boutgirilhunuvugh</i>			(Reichard 1925:15)	
	<i>shou</i>	<i>boutg</i>	<i>-(w)irilh</i>	<i>*un</i>	<i>-uv</i>	<i>-ugh</i>
	prohibitive	scratch	foot	do with hand	obj.	neg.imperative
	‘don’t scratch his/her foot with your hand’					

b.	<i>wu</i>	<i>bouchguk</i>			(Reichard 1925:38)	
	<i>wu</i>	<i>boutg</i>	<i>-o</i>	<i>-uk</i>		
	that which	scratch	diminutive	infinitive		
	‘to scratch, scratching, itch’					

c.	<i>shou</i>	<i>boutgunuviw</i>			(Reichard 1925:49)
	<i>shou</i>	<i>boutg *un</i>	<i>-uv</i>	<i>-wiw</i>	
	desiderative	scratch do with hands	obj.	reflexive	
	'I wish I could scratch myself'				

Thus, to say something like “I scratched it” in Wiyot requires much more than simply looking up words for “I”, “scratch”, “it”, etc.; and there is as yet no pedagogical resource for Wiyot to clarify such complexities of grammar (though such a resource is certainly a long-term goal of the Wiyot Language Program).

Second, while there is an abundance of “everyday” language—words and phrases that a modern Wiyot person might want to use in his or her everyday life—scattered throughout the Wiyot language source material, it is not organized in any systematic way, and most of the primary source material (with the exceptions of Reichard 1925, Teeter 1964, and Teeter & Nichols 1993) has no indexes or other ways of finding specific types of content. In addition, for every word or phrase that might come in handy in daily life, there are many that are highly complex or specific, or relate to formal traditions such as prayers, storytelling, and dancing; and are therefore not suitable for everyday use or for beginning language learning. For example, the phrase *hinarr hu moulik* ‘our house’, which a beginning language learner might reasonably want to learn, is found on the same page of field notes as *ka gu’bi’ mugh*, *gish hametwalat* ‘you are not appreciative, no matter how much you are pitied’, which is both grammatically complex and unlikely to be useful in daily life (Reichard 1922:497).

While the Wiyot language database can be quickly searched for useful content, it runs on highly specialized software (necessary for capturing many aspects of the language and metadata about primary source material) that is not easily used by a non-specialist. This means that every time a tribal member wants to know how to say a phrase in Wiyot, she or he has to make a request to the Language Program.

Finally, each researcher of the Wiyot language used his or her own spelling convention to represent the sounds of Wiyot. Some researchers were not linguistically trained and/or did not include important phonetic detail in their transcriptions, and were often inconsistent in applying their own spelling conventions (i.e., transcribing the same Wiyot sound multiple ways, or eliding certain sounds entirely). Fortunately, a few scholars’ transcriptions—in particular, those of Harrington, Reichard, and Teeter—are noteworthy for their internal consistency and phonetic accuracy. Nevertheless, no two scholars’ spelling conventions are the same, and none is easily read or typed by non-specialist language learners due to the use of special symbols.

“Supportingdoc2” illustrates this problem with examples of two Wiyot words for “woman” as transcribed by six different researchers. To a lay person, it would not necessarily be clear that some of these transcriptions even represent the same Wiyot word. Language learners cannot be expected to understand what was intended by each scholar’s spelling, much less to evaluate the relative accuracy of a given transcription or to convert from one spelling system to another when studying vocabulary.

The need for an easily accessible Wiyot language resource for beginning learners has become evident from conversation and correspondence with Wiyot tribal members over several years. Requests from tribal members for Wiyot words and phrases have increased over time, from an average of one request every 3-4 months in 2010, to 1.5 per month in 2015, to 3.75 requests per month in 2018. Typical requests include words for plants and animals; greetings; vocabulary for traditional activities such as fish drying; kinship terms; and place names. Many Wiyot parents report that their children come home from language lessons repeating words and phrases such as *gouchk* ‘grandmother’ and *rri’nuk* \_\_\_ ‘my name is \_\_\_’. A Wiyot conversation book will be a resource for tribal members to find such language content, as well as a bridge between language lessons and family life.

**Beneficiaries:** Anyone interested in the Wiyot language will benefit from this project. A Wiyot conversation book and digital resources will reach the several dozen families who live at Table Bluff Reservation, as well as hundreds of tribal members who live elsewhere. The book will also serve as an introduction to Wiyot language in local schools, most of which are situated in Wiyot ancestral territory, and which often invite the Wiyot Tribe to give presentations to their students. Finally, digital versions of the book will be freely available to the public.

**Strengthening museum services:** Though the Wiyot Tribe does not have a museum, the Cultural Center at Table Bluff periodically exhibits Wiyot art and artifacts such as fish nets and net weights, traditional food preparation and processing implements (mortars and pestles, cooking baskets and basket plates, etc.), other basketry, and dance regalia. It is likely that many of the terms for such items will be included in the Wiyot conversation book, and copies of the book will be available to visitors to the Cultural Center.

Additionally, the Clarke Museum in Eureka, which is open six days a week and averages 20,000 visitors a year, has a dedicated Native American wing, Nealis Hall, which “focuses on the culture of the Wiyot (whose ancestral territory we are on), Yurok, Karuk and Hupa Tribes” (from <http://www.clarkemuseum.org/nealis-hall.html>). Past Wiyot exhibits have included Wiyot language content, and the Museum’s director, Ben Brown, has confirmed that a Wiyot conversation book would be a welcome addition to Nealis Hall.

**Addressing NANHMS grant program goals:** By organizing Wiyot language content into simple conversations and making it widely available in multiple formats, the proposed project will aid the Wiyot Tribe in its ongoing efforts to revive Wiyot language and culture, fulfilling the NANH’s stated goal to “to provide opportunities to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge through strengthened activities in areas such as exhibitions, **educational services and programming**, professional development, and collections stewardship” [emphasis added]. Print and digital versions of the book will be used as the basis for Wiyot language classes and activities within the Wiyot Tribe; and for educational outreach to local schools, organizations, and events.

## PROJECT WORK PLAN

### Activities:

- 1. Content planning meetings.* Interested Wiyot tribal community members will meet biweekly with the Project Director and Language Specialist during the first eighteen months to propose conversation themes and topics, sample questions and answers, and vocabulary that they would like to be included in the book. The final book will contain 30-50 one-page conversations in Wiyot.
- 2. Language research:* Following each meeting, the Project Director and the Language Specialist will search the Wiyot language primary source material to find words, phrases, and sentences requested by the community. If an exact translation of the desired content is found, it will be used verbatim, citing the Wiyot speaker who gave it (when known) and the researcher who documented it. For example, if community members propose a dialogue about sharing a meal, and suggest a sentence such as “Let’s eat,” a search of the primary source documents returns the following sentence, which can be used verbatim:

*Shounarr vi`wit!*                      “Let’s eat it!” (Speaker: Della Prince; Researcher: Karl Teeter)

When exact translations for desired content are not found, we will use similar constructions found in the primary source material to create appropriate phrases or sentences. For example, for the same proposed mealtime conversation, if community members suggest the sentence “Pass the salt”, a search of the primary source materials shows that no such sentence was recorded in Wiyot. However, the following sentences are found in Reichard’s (1922) field notes (all given by Wiyot speaker Elsie Barto):

- d. *Hou'l da'wa'l.*           ‘Give me water.’  
 e. *Valhuk dawal.*           ‘Give me salmon.’  
 f. *Duwal viwi'.*           ‘Give me food.’

We know from additional annotation in the field notes that *da'wa'l* ~ *dawal* ~ *duwal* (varying pronunciations of the same word) means ‘give me (food)’; and that *pak* means ‘salt’ (*pak* is also documented in several other sources). Thus, we can confidently construct the following sentence:

- g. *Pak dawal. / Dawal pak.*   ‘Give me salt.’

All such constructed examples will be noted with a symbol such as †, which will be explained in an introduction. See “Supportingdoc3” for a sample conversation created using the steps described above.

3. *Text editing and correction:* Provisional Wiyot language translations found or constructed in Activity 2 will be reviewed for accuracy (grammatical, lexical, and spelling) by the Project Director by cross-checking multiple source materials, especially the published grammatical descriptions of Wiyot (Reichard 1925 and Teeter 1964).

4. *Book formatting:* The Project Director and Language Specialist will begin formatting the book as soon as provisional content has been created, in order to keep conversations to a one-page limit and to minimize last-minute pre-publication formatting. Formatting will be finalized by June 2021 in order to allow time for printing.

5. *Artwork:* Between January and June 2021, cover art and page art will be created. We will commission a local native artist (ideally Lyn Risling) to create a language-inspired work of art that will be used as the book’s cover image. Ms. Risling has previously designed a mural for the Wiyot Tribe, as well as the cover and page art for the book *A is for Acorn: A California Indian ABC* by Analisa Tripp; see “Supportingdoc4” for examples of her work. Ms. Risling has tentatively committed to collaborating on the proposed project. Page art (such as basketry-inspired borders, etc.) will be solicited from one or more Wiyot tribal members.

6. *Audio recording, editing, and linking:* Any example sentences drawn from the archival audio corpus will be accompanied by a link to the original audio clip. For the majority of the content of the book (since there is far more written documentation than recorded audio of the Wiyot language), new audio will be recorded. Audio recording will be undertaken once the content of the book has been finalized, in the last six months of the project. Wiyot community members (including children and youth) will be recruited to record the audio.

We will use the same technique employed for the Wiyot Storybook Project (which was funded by IMLS grant no. MN-00-14-0004-14, and on which the Project Director served as the Wiyot Language consultant): longer words and phrases will be divided into more easily pronounceable 2-3 syllable segments, and community members will practice repeating them with pronunciation coaching from the Project Director and after listening to archival Wiyot audio recordings. The Project Director and/or Language Specialist will then use Audacity software to stitch shorter audio segments into complete words, phrases, and sentences.

In order to link the print book to online audio, a QR code will be generated for each conversation page, which when scanned with a smartphone app will link users to the appropriate page with clickable audio links on the Wiyot Tribe’s website. For a preview of how this will work, see the examples in “Supportingdoc5”.

7. *Web editing:* A digital version of the book, with identical text and audio links, will be hosted on the Wiyot Tribe’s website. This online content will be uploaded near the end of the project period by the Language Specialist, with training and supervision by the Project Director.

8. *App development*: In addition to print and web versions of the book, we will convert the contents of the book into a mobile app as well. For this work, we will partner with the non-profit language software company 7000 Languages, who provide free language learning apps for minority and indigenous languages (see the letter of support provided as “Supportingdoc6”). The content of the app will be identical to the print and web versions of the book, complete with audio, but will provide a portable, digital version of the book which can be downloaded for free and used as needed without an internet connection.

**Project maturity**: The proposed project is based on a foundation created by nearly ten years of work on the part of the Project Director, with additional contributions by tribal members Joycelyn Teague (tribal elder, former Language Program volunteer, and granddaughter of Wiyot speaker Della Prince); Samantha Haney (former Language Assistant who input primary source data into the Wiyot language database); and Pilar James (former Language Assistant who created a 100-word mini-dictionary of Wiyot in 2016, and descendant of Wiyot speaker Jerry James). After years of research and analysis, we have high confidence in our ability to carry out the proposed work.

**Risks and mitigation**: The primary risk for the proposed project is loss of data. To avoid this, all content (primarily text and audio) will be backed up to an external hard drive, the Wiyot Tribe’s internal server, and Google Drive on a weekly basis.

**Project planning, implementation, and management**: The Project Director will oversee all aspects of the proposed project. The Language Specialist will assist with implementation, particularly in holding meetings, researching language content, and uploading finalized content to the Tribe’s website.

**Evaluation and progress measurement**: Project progress will be measured in terms of the number of conversations created (of a planned total of 30-50); audio files recorded; and completion of individual tasks such as artwork. Evaluation during the project period will be in the form of a survey (the IMLS “Promote Lifelong Learning” survey, with additional language-specific questions) which participants will be asked to complete at the end of each content planning meeting. A modified version of the survey will be included in the print and online versions of the final book to collect user feedback and to plan for future projects.

**Sharing project results**: The final book will be distributed for free to all enrolled Wiyot Tribal members, as well as members of the broader community and/or other tribes with ties to Wiyot (such as Bear River and Trinidad Rancherias). The online and mobile app versions of the book will be available to the public for free. We also anticipate sharing our project’s progress and results at conferences and workshops such as the Live Your Language Alliance (a local native language advocacy group) and ATALM.

## PROJECT RESULTS

The proposed project will result in a print book, web content, and mobile app with text and linked audio for learning 30-50 basic conversations in Wiyot. This is a much-needed step forward for Wiyot language revival, as it will be the first publication specifically aimed at Wiyot learners (as opposed to scholarly publications for linguists). We anticipate that project participants and all users of the resulting book and digital resources will have a substantially **increased understanding** of the Wiyot language (Performance Measure Statement 1); **increased interest** in learning/learning about Wiyot (Performance Measure Statement 2); and, for users who study the materials regularly, an ability to **apply what they learn** about Wiyot by practicing simple conversations with other members of the community (Performance Measure Statement 3).

