



Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services

Sample Application MN-260607-OMS-26

Native Village of Chenega

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$248,201
Amount of cost share:	\$41,372

The Native Village of Chenega will undergo a planning process for a future Tribal museum that will support an archive, collections storage, and associated programming, while also caring for existing museum collections. Project activities will include engaging with an experienced planning professional to conduct and complete a strategic plan for the revitalization of Chenega's language and cultural knowledge, as well as working with a cultural curator to catalog and rehouse the current collection. The project will result in a concrete vision and direction for responding to the community's desire for a museum that preserves and provides access to Chenega's heritage and cultural resources.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion
- Digital Products Plan

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the current Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

Project Narrative

Aularnirtukut cali – We are Beginning Again Project Strategic Planning for a Tribal Museum and Existing Collections Rehousing and Cataloging

Project Justification

The Native Village of Chenega (NVC) is proposing the *Aularnirtukut cali* project, an effort to spearhead the revitalization of Chenega's cultural knowledge through the cataloging of Chenega's existing museum collections and the planning of a Tribal museum that will support a museum, archive, collections storage space, and associated programming. This three-year effort will result in 1. a strategic plan that defines the *Aularnirtukut cali* vision and lays out implementation strategies for the development and operation of the Tribal museum; 2. a catalog of existing museum and archive collections; and 3. a climate-controlled, organized storage area for existing collections that is outfitted with museum-quality cabinets, shelving, and housing.

NANH Program Goal and Objective

Aularnirtukut cali will build Chenega's capacity to provide museum services to its community by addressing two objectives of the NANH program: Objective 1, the preservation and perpetuation of languages and cultural practices; and Objective 3, the management and care of museum collections and their associated documentation.

First, *Aularnirtukut cali* planning will support Chenega's desire to revitalize language and cultural practices by identifying core museum services such as language and culture workshops and developing concrete strategies for their implementation. Such workshops will bring attention and focus to cultural practices community members are interested in knowing better, such as dance, language, subsistence resource processing and preservation, boat-building, craft and art (beading, carving, weaving, basketry) and more. These workshops combined with the opportunity to see and experience the material culture used by ancestors will facilitate the transmission of knowledge between and among generations, and provide for the revitalization and perpetuation of cultural practices for years to come.

Second, the *Aularnirtukut cali* project will directly support the long-term management and care of Chenega's museum collections through consideration and clarification of goals and strategies for the physical museum space, collections care and management, acquisitions, interpretation and exhibits, treatment and care of repatriated items and other core programming. By improving the cataloging documentation and storage of existing collections, *Aularnirtukut cali* is directly supporting the management, care and preservation for these resources.

Strengthen Tribe's Museum Services

The Chenega community has overcome two devastating events (the 1964 Great Alaska Earthquake Tsunamis and the 1989 Exxon Valdez Oil Spill), both of which greatly impacted the transmission of cultural knowledge and practices among community members and generations, and the preservation and care of tangible components of Chenega's culture. This project will lay the groundwork for the museum's role in revitalizing cultural practices and knowledge impacted

by the trauma, destruction, and diaspora following the 1964 Great Alaska Earthquake Tsunamis and 1989 Exxon Valdez Oil Spill. The strategic plan and collections cataloging/rehousing are critical first steps for the museum, moving it from an afterthought and storage room for donated but largely unprocessed documents, objects, art, regalia, and artifacts, to a service-oriented Tribal museum, providing stewardship, education, and engagement opportunities for and with the Tribe's invaluable tangible and intangible cultural heritage resources.

Specifically, museum services will be strengthened in three measurable ways. First, a strategic plan document will be completed that will guide future museum management and development. Second, at least 50% of the museum's holdings will be cataloged and documented in Past Perfect, a collections management system. Third, at least 50% of the museum's at-risk art, objects, artifacts, documents, and regalia will be rehoused into museum-quality housing, cabinets and shelving within a climate-controlled and monitored space.

Project Need

The primary needs addressed by the project include Tribal Council and community interest in developing dedicated cultural space for storage and exhibit of important cultural items and revitalizing cultural practices by hosting language and culture workshops. Additionally, the project will address the need for direction and consensus for development of the Tribe's museum and museum services, and the need for adequate storage and documentation of the museum's collections. Cataloging information such as basic accession or loan records, descriptions, artist, and associated archaeological site is incomplete (at best) for many items within the collection and completely lacking for others. Resolving the data gaps and inconsistencies in cataloging will assist staff in managing the collection and preparing items for research, interpretation, display and other forms of engagement by Tribal members and the greater public.

Primary Audience

The primary audience for the project is the Chenega IRA Council and the Chenega Tribal Community. The Chenega IRA Council has expressed a strong desire to preserve and promote Chenega's cultural heritage through a Tribal museum facility that provides the community with access to Chenega artifacts, art, objects, regalia, oral history, photographs, maps, and other items and documents, and offers opportunities for members to learn and build language and culture skills and knowledge. Specifically, *Aularnirtukut cali* will be providing direction and guidance for realizing this goal, which in turn benefits the greater Tribal community including 191 enrolled Tribal members, 220 Chenega Corporation shareholders, and those shareholders' direct descendants.

Ultimate Beneficiaries

The ultimate beneficiaries for this project are members of the Chenega Tribal community and their descendants. Additionally, researchers, students, other Tribal communities, and the greater public will ultimately benefit from a well-preserved and accessible collection.

Collections Description

Though some items have been cataloged for the online museum project, most of Chenega's museum collection is unprocessed. The museum's uncatalogued holdings consist of approximately 600 objects/artifacts and 10 cubic feet of archival documents/maps/photographs. Objects include artifacts collected during archaeological survey at the traditional village of Chenega and elsewhere on Chenega's ancestral lands, sacred items and objects of cultural patrimony repatriated from the Berlin Ethnography Museum in Germany and other institutions, sacred items salvaged by Chenega residents immediately after the 1964 Tsunami, historic objects donated by Chenega Tribal members, contemporary art by Chenega/Alutiiq artists on display or in storage at the Chenega Corporation offices, historic and contemporary regalia, and a large dugout canoe. Archival documents comprise a variety of items including historic photographs and maps, original Tribal (Indian Reorganization Act, IRA) and Corporation (Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, ANCSA) organization records, ANCSA historical and cultural site information, old language and cultural curriculum, and recordings (various media) of Tribal members, oral history interviews, and various school, cultural, and meeting events.

Project Work Plan

Activities

The NVC will use IMLS funding to advance the *Aularnirtukut cali* project through strategic planning, collections rehousing, and collections cataloging. Specifically, the NVC will carry out the following activities:

Component 1: Strategic Plan

NVC will engage indigenous planning professional Michael Fredericks at Salt, LLC to conduct and complete a strategic plan for a Tribal museum. Through the planning process, SALT will facilitate engagement with the IRA Council leadership, Cultural Program staff, Tribal members including youth and elders specifically, Chenega Corporation leadership, and Chenega Corporation shareholders and descendants to develop the vision for the museum, its core programming, and its physical space. The resulting plan will provide direction and guidance for achieving the cultural heritage goals of the Chenega community. The plan will include implementation strategies for achieving the *Aularnirtukut cali* vision and detail the next steps to move the project forward. The plan will also identify the minimum square footage needed to achieve the community's vision, and a cost analysis for developing said square footage.

The strategic plan will be completed in two phases as follows. During Phase 1, the consultant planner and cultural program staff will gather information by holding a series of visioning workshops with Tribal community members. Three workshops are currently planned; one each in Chenega and Anchorage for Tribal community members, and then one for IRA Council and Chenega Corporation Board of Directors members.

Planners and cultural program staff will also solicit information informally through listening sessions at Tribal gatherings, and by offering the option for direct discussions with cultural program staff. Out of these meetings and engagement opportunities, and in consultation with the IRA Council, planners and cultural staff will identify representatives to form the *Aularnitukut cali* advisory committee, who will represent the community's interest through a direct relationship with the planning team over the life of the project.

Based on the information gathered during visioning sessions and conversations with project staff, the project team will begin Phase 2. SALT will develop a strategic plan with a proposed building program (V1) and present the plan to the IRA Council for feedback. Using this feedback, SALT will then develop annual operations and building construction/renovation costs (V2) and present the cost information to the IRA Council. Once these steps have occurred, SALT will prepare a final report outlining all work completed during the visioning workshops and the IRA Council building program presentations. The final report will identify recommended next steps and a proposed project timeline based on feedback from the IRA Council, museum staff, and advisory committee. SALT will present the final report findings to the IRA Council.

Component 2: Collections Relhousing and Cataloging

NVC will purchase museum-quality shelving, cabinets, and storage materials to reshelv and rehouse artifacts, art, documents, maps, photographs, and other items currently held in the collection. Storage materials will include blueboard and tools to construct archival-quality boxes, cushioning and protective materials such as tissue paper, foam, and photograph sleeves, and document folders and boxes, to ensure items within the collection are properly cared for and protected. NVC will also purchase a climate monitoring datalogger and pest monitoring traps to measure and monitor temperature, relative humidity, and possible pests in the collections room. Collecting this baseline data will provide for greater understanding, allowing for targeted control and management of the climate in the collections room.

The CRDG Cultural Curator will then begin to process the portions of the collection deemed most at-risk, constructing storage boxes as needed and moving the items into the new housing. As items are rehoused, the Cultural Curator will create a catalog entry in Past Perfect for each item. The Past Perfect catalog entries will comprise, at a minimum, an item description, item condition, two photographs, and associated accession, site, people, and contact information. The Cultural Curator will transfer any previous inventory/catalog data from existing documentation into the Past Perfect catalog record for each item. Many items within the collections lack written provenance and accession information, the Cultural Curator will investigate this information through communication with IRA Council members, Tribal elders and community members, and Chenega Corporation leadership and staff.

Risks to project

As with any community-involved planning effort, lack of community interest in participating is always a risk, particularly when participation requires effort on the part of the participant. To mitigate this risk, *Aularnitukut cali* will make participation as effortless as possible. First, the project will hold community meetings in both Anchorage and Chenega; second, meetings will be streamed over zoom so participants can participate digitally; and lastly other opportunities for

engagement through surveys, direct communication, and information/listening sessions at Tribal gatherings will be offered. Additionally, the community meetings and other opportunities for engagement will be publicized through a variety of outreach efforts, including the IRA Council and Chenega Corporation social media pages, newsletters, physical message boards in Chenega, and reminders at Tribal gatherings.

There is also some risk to the collections housing and cataloging component of the project, namely that cultural staff will encounter items for which provenance cannot be identified, or for which methods for rehousing are unclear and beyond the expertise of the Cultural Curator. The Cultural Curator and Cultural Program Manager have been building their relationship with curatorial staff at the Alutiiq Museum by working together on Chenega's Online Museum project (funded by an IMLS NANH 2025 award). Additionally, the cultural staff have been consulting with a conservator at the National Park Service on preservation and conservation methods for the collections' dugout canoe. To mitigate the risk of running into provenance dead-ends, or items needing specialized housing, the cultural curator will draw upon these relationships and seek the advice of Alutiiq Museum curatorial staff and the National Park Service Conservator.

Key Staff that will plan/implement/manage project

Tracie Krauthoefer, CRDG Project Manager will manage the *Aularnitukut cali* project under the direction of CRDG Senior Vice President Josie Hickel. Consultant Michael Fredericks of SALT, LLC will lead the strategic planning component and complete the plan reports. Communication with Tribal leaders will be key to the project's success, thus Tribal Administrator Amy DeBruhl will coordinate communication with the IRA Council throughout the life of the project, while Josie Hickel will coordinate communication with the Chenega Corporation Board of Directors. CRDG Cultural Curator Amber Totemoff will complete the collections cataloging and rehousing component under the direction of Krauthoefer. CRDG Grants Manager Caroline Danko will manage the grant and oversee compliance with grant requirements.

Resources Needed

To support the *Aularnitukut cali* project, NVC respectfully requests \$248,200.70 in funding, including funding for the strategic planning consultant (SALT), project management consultant (CRDG), travel costs for the annual IMLS-required grantee meetings, and funding for the new cabinets, shelving and rehousing materials.

Progress Tracking

Project Director Hickel will oversee Project Manager Krauthoefer in tracking and assessing the progress of the *Aularnitukut cali* project. First, the number of people participating in the planning process will be tracked, and comments and input will be itemized in a comment spreadsheet. The minimum target for success will be engagement with at least 25 people, resulting in at least 25 comments. Second, the completion of the two draft reports (V1 and V2) and final report will evidence success of the project's strategic planning component. Third, Krauthoefer will run reports monthly during the cataloging and rehousing portion of the project to track the number of items catalogued into Past Perfect. She will also do spot searches of catalogued items to track and assess the quality of catalog entries. Finally, Cultural Curator Totemoff will track object

rehousing as part of the Past Perfect cataloging component and run monthly reports to quantify the number of items rehoused. Project Manager Krauthoefer will monitor the rehousing progress through regular (biweekly) inspections of the collections storage space. Rehousing and cataloging of at least 300 objects and 5 cubic feet of documents/maps/photographs/recording will evidence successful completion of the rehousing/cataloging component of the project.

Project Results

Intended Results and Connection to Needs

The goal of the *Aularnitukut cali* project is to respond to IRA Council and Tribal community desires for a Tribal museum that preserves Chenega's heritage and helps revitalize Chenega's language and cultural practices by offering opportunities to engage with Chenega's tangible and intangible cultural resources, and to provide education and cultural knowledge and skills growth. With the strategic plan, the project will result in a concrete vision and direction for the realization of this goal. Additionally, the project lays the groundwork for the preservation of existing collections, transforming a storage room full of unprocessed documents, artifacts, art, regalia, and other items into a processed museum collection that is cataloged, accessible, and housed in appropriate materials within a monitored preservation environment. Because of the state of the collections' storage, these cultural resources have been largely unavailable to community members, the IRA Council, staff and researchers.

Growth in Knowledge

The *Aularnitukut cali* project will support knowledge growth in two primary ways. First, through the strategic planning component, the project will increase the Tribal community's knowledge of the museum collections and programming opportunities, as well as the IRA Council and cultural program's understanding of community priorities for museum space, exhibits, and services. Second, through the rehousing and cataloging component, the project will increase the cultural program staff's knowledge of the existing collections, and build their skills in accession, preservation and management of tangible cultural heritage items. By increasing staff knowledge of the collections, staff will be better able to serve the IRA Council and Tribal community and respond to researcher requests for information regarding Chenega's cultural heritage.

Products and Access for Primary Audience

The *Aularnitukut cali* project will result in four primary products. First, the V1 draft report resulting from community engagement will be prepared by the planning consultant and presented to the IRA Council for review and comment. Second, a V2 draft report, based on IRA Council comments on the V1 report and including the addition of a building program with estimated construction and annual operations costs, will be prepared and again provided to the IRA Council for review and comment. Third, a final report detailing the strategic plan results and building program direction and details will be completed by the planning consultant and provided to the IRA Council for implementation. Chapters of the final report may be made available to the Tribal community, depending on IRA Council determination of appropriateness. Finally, Past Perfect catalog entries for at least 300 items within the existing museum collection will be completed by the cultural

curator and information about the items will be available to Tribal community upon inquiry request. Though not a part of this project, items cataloged may then be made available to the Tribal community and public at large through the Tribe's online museum (IMLS NANH Museums 2025 award).

Sustainability

The *Aularnitukut cali* project plan is the result of years of discussions and desires voiced by the IRA Council and Tribal community to honor and invest in the revitalization of Chenega's culture. Traumas experienced by the Chenega people following the 1964 earthquake and tsunami and the 1989 Exxon Valdez Oil Spill have impacted the continuity of cultural knowledge transmission and the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural resources. Through the strategic planning effort and collections care and cataloging, *Aularnitukut cali* will contribute long-term to the realization of cultural revitalization goals.

The direction and implementation recommendations provided in the final planning report will provide a road map to guide future efforts to complete and manage the Tribe's museum, while the new shelving, cabinets, climate/pest monitoring equipment, and rehousing materials will help ensure sustainable, long-term curation and storage of the Tribe's existing collections. Though additional resources will be needed in the future to construct and operate the museum, and finish cataloging and rehousing of existing collections, the investment in these first steps will provide momentum, guidance, and enhanced collections knowledge and experience, ultimately building Chenega's capacity to deliver and sustain a quality Tribal museum responsive to IRA Council and Tribal community needs and interests.

Care/Condition/Management/Access to collections/records

In the short-term, *Aularnitukut cali* will vastly enhance the care, condition, and management of Chenega's collections. Collections currently stored on rickety shelving and in materials that place their condition and preservation at risk will be moved into shelving, cabinetry and housing that meet preservation standards and best practices. Additionally, moving collections into new shelving and cabinetry will greatly improve organization, providing much-improved access to individual items. Installing climate-monitoring equipment will further improve the collections storage space by allowing the Cultural Curator to document baseline environmental conditions and adjust environmental controls as appropriate. Cataloging the collections will allow for greater understanding of and access to cultural items, setting the stage for research into, education about, and eventual exhibition of Chenega's cultural heritage collections.

In the long-term, by strategically planning for future museum space, collections acquisitions, management and exhibit, and other core programming, *Aularnitukut cali* will enhance and guide the cultural revitalization and continuity for the Chenega community for generations to come.

Institute of Museum and Library Services
Native Village of Chenega - Aularnirtukut cali – We are Beginning Again Project

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Digital Products Plan

Type

Four digital products are anticipated to be completed during the Strategic Planning component of *Aularnitukut cali*. First, a table of comments received and number of community members participating in the visioning workshops, and then two draft versions of the plan report document, followed by a final version of the plan report document. Additionally, audio and video recordings, along with still photographs, may be taken during community visioning sessions. These digital products are itemized by file type in the table on the following page.

During rehousing and cataloging, approximately 300 object catalog records will be entered into Past Perfect, a collections management system, along with photograph and archive catalog records for approximately five cubic feet of unprocessed archival documents. Catalog records will include at a minimum description information, at least two digital photographs, keywords/search terms, and a condition assessment. Concurrently, associated accession, people, site, and contact records will be entered into Past Perfect. The Cultural Curator will generate a final report of items cataloged to evidence completion of this component of the project. The report will include Item ID, Item Name, Item Creator, Item Title, and Item Description and will be generated in the file type noted in the table on the following page.

Availability and Access

Products developed for the Strategic Planning component will be the intellectual property of the IRA Council and will not be made available to the public. They are meant to guide museum operations and future development and are likely to contain sensitive cultural and financial information. Access to these products will be limited to the IRA Council and project team. Similarly, any audio recordings, video recordings, or still photographs, taken during community visioning sessions may contain sensitive information and will be the intellectual property of the IRA Council. They will be for reference use only by the project team for completing the comment summary and draft and final plan reports, and access will be limited to the IRA Council and project team. Long-term preservation and access to these products is discussed in the sustainability section following.

Records for items cataloged into Past Perfect during the project will be reviewed at the time of cataloging for consistency with the IRA Council's policies and procedures for its online museum (currently in process). If criteria for inclusion in the online museum are met, applicable portions of record entries will be made publicly available through the IRA Council's online museum portal. Past Perfect generated report products are likely to contain sensitive collections information and will be provided to the IRA Council but will not be released to the public.

Sustainability

The accessible file formats of the digital content and products produced as a result of this project will be uploaded to the IRA Council's restricted SharePoint site and retained per the IRA Council's records retention schedule. Records from this project, including digital and printed versions of each product's accessible file format (itemized below) will be accessioned into the museum's archive collection as part of the permanent record for the *Aularnitukut cali* project, facilitating permanent preservation and accessible reference material for future museum staff, the IRA Council, and the Tribal community. Access restrictions for specific records contained within the *Aularnitukut cali* archive (such as those with sensitive cultural or financial information) will be identified at the time of accessioning.

Digital Content and Products to be Produced, by File Format

Title	Master File Format	Accessible File Format
Past Perfect Catalog Records	Entries within Past Perfect Software	Past Perfect generated PDF Report
Past Perfect Accession Records	Entries within Past Perfect Software	Past Perfect generated PDF Report
Past Perfect People Records	Entries within Past Perfect Software	Past Perfect generated PDF Report
Past Perfect Site Records	Entries within Past Perfect Software	Past Perfect generated PDF Report
Past Perfect Contract Records	Entries within Past Perfect Software	Past Perfect generated PDF Report
List of Collection Items Cataloged	PDF, CSV	PDF
Total Counts for Items Cataloged	CSV	PDF
Community Engagement Comment Summary	CSV	PDF
Draft Plan V1 for Strategic Plan	PDF	PDF
Draft Plan V2 for Strategic Plan	PDF	PDF
Final Report for Strategic Plan	PDF	PDF
Audio Recordings of Visioning Workshops	WAV	MP4
Video Recordings of Visioning Workshops	MP4	MP4
Still Photographs of Visioning Workshops	TIFF	JPG