



NATIVE AMERICAN LIBRARY SERVICES ENHANCEMENT GRANTS

Sample Application NAE-259160-OLS-25

Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$150,000

The Central Council Tlingit And Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska will offer cultural arts classes in Washington state over two years, ensuring that knowledge is passed down to future generations. Many Tlingit and Haida citizens who live outside of Alaska, particularly in Washington and California, have limited access to cultural programs due to financial and geographic barriers. The project will support the preservation of traditional arts, enhance cultural education, and expand access to museum and library collections for over 8,000 tribal citizens. It will provide classes in art forms like weaving and regalia-making while promoting mentorship and the intergenerational transfer of cultural knowledge.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Tribal Profile
- Narrative
- Schedule of completion

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

IMLS Enhancement Grant

Tribal Profile

The Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida) is the largest federally recognized tribe in Alaska, representing approximately 37,000 enrolled tribal citizens. Headquartered in Juneau, Alaska, Tlingit & Haida's traditional territory spans the entire Southeast Alaska panhandle – over 43,000 square miles of island archipelago, glacial basins, and icefields. Approximately 23% of tribal citizens reside in Juneau, while 62% live throughout Southeast Alaska.

As a sovereign nation, Tlingit & Haida upholds a government-to-government relationship with the United States. The Tribe's mission is to “preserve our sovereignty, enhance our economic and cultural resources, and promote self-sufficiency and self-governance for our citizens.” This mission aligns with the Tribe's Constitution, both of which are accessible on the Tribe's website. Tlingit & Haida's origin trace back to the Jurisdictional Act of 1935, which enabled the Tribe to seek recognition for land claims in Federal Court. These efforts ultimately led to a settlement and the establishment of the Tlingit & Haida tribal government

The Tribe's Constitution defines two branches of government. The Tribal Assembly serves as the legislative and governing body, consisting of Delegates elected from 21 member Communities – 18 in Southeast Alaska, along with councils in Anchorage, Seattle, and San Francisco. The Assembly convenes annually in Juneau, while an elected seven-member Executive Council, serving two-year terms, oversees day-to-day governance alongside the President, who acts as the Chief Executive Officer. The second branch, the Tribal Court, functions as the judicial body of the Tribe.

Tlingit & Haida operates multiple departments to provide essential services to its citizens across all member communities. These include Native Lands & Resources Cultural Heritage & Education, 477 Programs (encompassing temporary assistance, child support, and employment & training services), Community & Behavioral Services, Public Safety, and Self-Governance. Additionally, the Tribe Manages various small tribal business and maintains strong operational support through its Human Resources, Finance, Procurement, Grants, and other management divisions.

This project will be led by the Cultural Heritage & Education (CHE) Division, which oversees several programs, including Education, Youth Services, JOM, Employment & Training, Generations Southeast, Head Start, 477 Programs, and Cultural Programs.

Project Justification

The Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida) is a federally recognized tribe with over 38,000 members worldwide. It maintains a government-to-government relationship with the United States and is headquartered in Juneau, Alaska – a remote Southeast Alaskan community accessible only by boat or plane. As a regional tribe, Tlingit & Haida is committed to serving its citizens across the nation, with approximately 8,000 tribal citizens, or 22% residing in Washington State.

Our initiative takes a comprehensive approach to strengthening Indigenous arts and cultural education, creating employment and training opportunities, and enhancing the socioeconomic resilience of our communities. By revitalizing Indigenous arts and cultural education, we aim to break cycles of poverty, foster intergenerational connections between elders and youth, celebrate and preserve cultural identities, and contribute to broader economic recovery and cultural revitalization.

Southeast Alaska remains economically challenged, with limited employment opportunities outside of key hubs like Juneau, Ketchikan, and Sitka. Many families in outlying areas struggle to find sustainable economic opportunities. Tlingit & Haida's mission is to “preserve our sovereignty, enhance our economic and cultural resources, and promote self-sufficiency and self-governance for our citizens.” This mission is carried out through multiple departments that provide a range of socioeconomic services to Alaska Native individuals and communities in Southeast Alaska, Washington, and California.

A key initiative of the Cultural Heritage & Education (CHE) Department is to expand the Tribe's existing library holdings, increasing access to language, arts, and cultural knowledge. However, many culturally significant resources are difficult to find, out of print, or cost prohibitive. As a result, tribal citizens have limited access to materials that preserve and share Tlingit & Haida knowledge. To address this, we have applied for the Basic Library Grant and plan to use such funding to establish our library within the Longhouse Conference Room, where cultural arts programs will also be held.

Despite ongoing efforts to revitalize Indigenous arts and language, significant barriers persist, including historical trauma, racism, financial constraints, and limited access to resources. Tribal citizens who have relocated, been adopted, or grown up in foster care often lack the same cultural access as those residing in Alaska. In Washington and California, these challenges are compounded by geographic and demographic factors. Despite these obstacles, our limited office funds in these states have been used to offer cultural classes, which consistently reach full capacity. However, requiring class fees to cover cost has placed a financial burden on participants, particularly those who must travel long distances. Since implementing these fees, participation has declined, underscoring the need for additional resources to ensure continued access to these vital programs.

In November 2023, Tlingit & Haida opened a 12,250-square-foot office in Lynnwood, Washington, marking a significant milestone in its commitment to serving tribal citizens.

Washington is home to 8,200 Tlingit & Haida members, and this new office establishes a vital home base.

“This is a Vision come true, and I am truly excited that we finally have a home base in Washington,” said President Peterson. “As I’ve said before, we are committed to removing any barriers that may prevent us from reaching our citizens where they are. Centralizing access to our programs and support services is a crucial first step. This is just the beginning of what we have planned to better meet the needs of our tribal citizens. I envision greater collaboration and partnerships with agencies and organizations as we move forward.”

The Lynnwood office is staffed with over 20 employees, including those in the Cultural Heritage & Education Department. Its establishment, alongside the introduction of cultural classes, directly supports Goal 1, Objective 1.1 – championing lifelong learning and expanding shared knowledge and educational opportunities for all. By offering culturally relevant classes and resources, Tlingit & Haida is closing educational gaps, particularly in communities where economic disparities have limited access to such enriching experiences.

Aligned with Goal 3, Objective 3.2, the Lynnwood office is a strategic step toward removing barriers to cultural and educational resources. This initiative is about more than preserving cultural art forms – it ensures that tribal citizens can connect with their heritage and strengthen their communities in the face of socioeconomic challenges.

Tlingit & Haida has a long-standing history of effective self-governance and service-driven leadership, managing over 80 grants and federal compacts supporting more than 40 programs. While historically focused on Southeast Alaska, Tlingit & Haida has expanded into regions including Anchorage, Sitka, Seattle and San Francisco to ensure tribal citizens receive essential services no matter where they live.

With a strong foundation and a proven track record, Tlingit & Haida remains dedicated to fostering cultural preservation, economic empowerment, and self-determination. In 2014, 2015, and 2017, the Tribe passed resolutions establishing a language program, a language immersion nest, tribal schools with Native language instruction, and the Cultural Heritage & Education Department. Since its creation, CHE has expanded significantly beyond Alaska, with its main hub in Juneau at the Generations Southeast building – a tribally owned, state-authorized institution offering postsecondary academic and vocational education, as well as cultural classes.

CHE staff are deeply committed to reversing language shift and revitalizing Tlingit & Haida cultural arts in alignment with the Tribe’s commitment to sovereignty, cultural resources, and traditional values. Many traditional art forms, such as Ravenstail weaving, Cedar bark weaving, and Spruce root weaving, have faced near extinction. Historically, weaving was a fundamental practice in Southeast Alaska, essential for making clothing, cooking tools, and baskets for gathering food. Ravenstail robes and spruce root hats were key ceremonial regalia, showcasing intricate craftsmanship. While our Master Teacher provides instruction in Ravenstail and Cedar bark weaving, Spruce root – a key material – is not accessible in Washington.

In 2020, as part of a digitization project, Tlingit & Haida conducted an assessment to prioritize an Indigenous Language archive initiative. Staff actively participated in the Alaska Native Language Summit (2019), the Voices of Our Ancestors Language Summit (2018), and meetings with key organizations involved in Indigenous language revitalization, including The Haayk Foundation and Xántsii Náay (the Xaad Kíl language immersion nest team). The Tribe also maintains an ongoing collaboration with the University of Alaska Southeast's Alaska Native Languages and Studies Program.

Through these efforts, Tlingit & Haida continues to uphold its mission of preserving cultural heritage, supporting education, and fostering economic and social resilience for its tribal citizens – ensuring that cultural knowledge, language, and traditions are carried forward for future generations.

Project Work Plan

This initiative aligns with **Goal 3: Advance Collections Stewardship and Access**, particularly **Objective 3.2**, which emphasizes expanding access to museum and library collections for tribal citizens in Lynnwood, Washington. Additionally, it supports **Goal 1: Champion Lifelong Learning**, under **Objective 1.1**, by fostering the development of cultural classes, events, teaching tools, and educational resources. Through this approach, we aim to enhance access to cultural and educational opportunities while creating meaningful learning experiences for our tribal community.

Tlingit & Haida respectfully requests a **\$150,000 grant** from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Enhancement Grant to support cultural classes for tribal citizens during the grant period from **September 1, 2025, to August 31, 2027**. This project aligns with **Title 20, Section 9141** of the United States Code, strengthening access to the Tribe's library and language learning resources while advancing cultural education and preservation efforts.

Since the opening of the Lynnwood office in Washington in November 2023, a limited number of cultural classes have been offered to tribal citizens. These classes have been invaluable, fostering connections to cultural heritage that are essential for mental well-being, physical health, and social cohesion. Many tribal members residing in Washington are descendants of those removed from Alaska or separated from their biological families. The impact of these has been profound, with participants expressing overwhelming appreciation. However, due to limited funding – previously supported by ARPA funds – the Tribe is actively seeking additional grants and fundraising opportunities to sustain and expand these programs. Demand for these classes remains high, with each session quickly reaching capacity.

Vicki Soboleff, Cultural Heritage Manager for Tlingit & Haida's Lynnwood, WA office, will lead the project, ensuring its successful implementation. She has extensive experience in finance, grants management, and cultural education. From 2019 to 2023, she served as Grants Coordinator for the Tulalip Tribes, managing over \$25 million in funding. Before that, she spent 13 years at Sealaska Corporation and chairs the Sealaska Heritage Institute Board of Trustees.

Vicki is an accomplished artist, mentor, and educator. In 1995, she founded the youth dance group Lda Kut Naax Yatx'l (All Nations' Children in Lingit) in Juneau, which continues under her guidance. After moving to Washington in 2017, she formed another youth dance group, Xaat'áay 'Wáadluwaan Gaagáay (All Nations' Children in Xaad Kíl). The group is no longer active but youth contacted through this effort are still in contact and take classes at the Lynnwood office.

Her cultural education began under esteemed mentors, learning Haida basketry, moccasin making, and beadwork. She studied with Master Weaver Selina Peratrovich, traditional artists Julia Fawcett and Beatrice Starkweather, and her Haida grandmother, Vesta Johnson. She also completed courses in Haida and Tlingit weaving and language studies.

In recognition of her contributions, Vicki received the 2016 State of Alaska Governor's Award in the Arts and the 2019 President's Everyday Hero Award from Tlingit & Haida. She is Haida Yak'Laanas (Raven/Double Fin Killerwhale) of the Brown Bear House and Tlingit (adopted) Kiks.adi (Raven/Frog) of the Tinna Hit (Copper Shield House and Gaagaan Hit (Sun House). Her Haida names are Hiilunjaat and Tl'aakahlwaas, and her Tlingit names are Shx'aasti and Kuk'ak.

- 1) Establish and strengthen cultural arts programs through Tlingit & Haida's Lynnwood, Washington office.
 - a. Secure qualified consultants/instructors, necessary materials, and teaching resources to facilitate at least 3 cultural arts classes per year for two years.
 - b. Develop a structured, consistent class schedule to offer a diverse range of traditional art forms.
 - c. Implement a system to evaluate and track program success and long-term benefits for tribal citizens through pre- and post-surveys, as well as attendance tracking.
- 2) Enhance the preservation of cultural arts and increase access to mentor teachers for tribal citizens in Washington.
 - a. Actively seek and accept donations of materials, resources, and in-kind or contractual support from key stakeholders and community partners.
 - b. Identify and support mentor teachers to cultivate tribal citizens who can pass on cultural arts knowledge.
 - c. Provide time and resources for mentor teachers to develop expertise in specific art forms, ensuring the continuation and preservation of traditional arts.
- 3) Equip tribal citizens and community members with the tools and resources necessary for cultural arts revitalization.
 - a. Establish a dedicated cultural workspace with the necessary tools, materials, and instructors to support learning and practice.
 - b. Strengthen cultural knowledge among the more than 8,000 Tlingit & Haida tribal citizens residing in Washington.
 - c. Facilitate the intergenerational transfer of traditional art forms, ensuring their preservation as they have been passed down throughout history.

In alignment with Goal 1 and Objective 1.1, our project incorporates a comprehensive educational program that includes classes, events, and the creation of teaching tools and

resources. The Cultural Heritage & Education Department is leading this initiative, utilizing the new library space in our Lynnwood office to host essential cultural classes. Through this effort, we aim to develop and implement educational services that are specifically tailored to the needs and interests of our community members, ensuring accessibility and meaningful impact.

To achieve Objective 3.2, we plan to use funds – whether from the IMLS Basic Grant, if awarded, or internal sources – to significantly enhance access to museum and library collections for our tribal citizens in Lynnwood, Washington. This effort includes curating a diverse collection that reflects the rich heritage of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples while leveraging technology to make these resources more widely available. Our approach involves digital archiving of critical resources, many of which are out of print or difficult to find, ensuring their preservation for future generations and expanding accessibility regardless of geographic location.

Tlingit & Haida will establish and enhance cultural heritage arts programs accessible to both tribal citizens and community members. The Cultural Heritage Manager for Lynnwood, Washington, will oversee the coordination and planning of all cultural heritage arts classes throughout the two-year project. This role includes identifying and contracting qualified artists to teach the classes, each of which will vary in duration and required materials. Depending on the project, classes may range from two days to a month.

By the end of the 24-month period, a total of ten cultural arts classes will be held at the Lynnwood, Washington longhouse for tribal citizens. These classes will focus on various traditional art forms, including weaving with different materials, crafting regalia or at.oow, learning basic form line design techniques, and making earrings for song and dance. The specific mediums offered will depend on the availability of expert consultants, whom the Cultural Heritage Manager will identify and contract to lead the classes.

Tlingit & Haida will implement a comprehensive communications plan to support the Lynnwood, Washington Cultural Arts project. As a regional tribe with citizens spread across Alaska, Washington, and beyond, this initiative will provide outreach to more than 8,000 tribal citizens in Washington – representing 22% of Tlingit & Haida’s total 37,000 citizens – ensuring targeted engagement within the state.

The communications strategy will leverage multiple platforms to maximize outreach and engagement. This includes updates through the Tlingit & Haida website (www.ccthita.org) and active social media channels including Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter), which collectively reach tens of thousands of followers. Additionally, outreach will be conducted through Tlingit & Haida quarterly newsletter, available both online and via mail or email to tribal citizens.

To foster meaningful participation and feedback, the plan will incorporate various engagement methods such as publications, surveys, and opportunities for written or in-person comments. It will also include in-person and virtual meetings to assess, evaluate, and respond to the interests and needs of the target audience throughout the project period.

Project Results

The Cultural Heritage Manager in Lynnwood, Washington, observed an increase in attendance after introducing a class fee ranging from \$50 to \$150. These limited classes, offered in collaboration with Goldbelt Heritage and Tlingit & Haida, were initially funded through ARPA, but those funds have now been depleted.

We have established a Cultural Arts program in Washington that helps tribal citizens explore traditional art forms that may be new to them. This initiative has enabled them to create family regalia, at.oow, and unique art pieces.

Despite funding challenges, master artists from the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian communities are eager to teach these art forms. However, Indigenous artists working with Tlingit & Haida have noted the difficulty in securing support for hosting classes. Now, with dedicated office space for language and cultural revitalization and a Cultural Heritage Manager in the region, we have an accessible and available venue for these classes.

In alignment with our commitment to preserving cultural vitality, we have engaged in extensive community consultations – similar to our language revitalization efforts – to assess the needs and interests of our citizens in cultural arts. The Tlingit & Haida Executive Council meets monthly, with a Washington representative reporting that President Richard “Chalyee Eesh” Peterson has tasked all staff with teaching tribal citizens where they are. This effort led to the establishment of the Lynnwood office.

Through the Community Navigators program, community meetings, and village member input at the Assembly, we have identified a strong demand for programs that teach traditional art forms and foster intergenerational learning. This project aligns with the IMLS Agency-Level Goals outlined in its Strategic Plan, particularly in expanding public access to knowledge and networks, developing tools and training for language learning, and ensuring the stewardship of cultural heritage.

Our approach to cultural arts education will be dynamic and inclusive, offering a variety of programs tailored to different age groups and skill levels. From traditional weaving and carving workshops to contemporary Indigenous art classes, we aim to create a communal learning environment where knowledge is shared and celebrated. Led by master artists and volunteers, these sessions will emphasize hands-on learning and intergenerational dialogue to preserve and evolve Indigenous artistic traditions.

With over 8,000 tribal citizens residing in Washington, the Central Council Tlingit & Haida’s Lynnwood offices serve as a vital center for cultural preservation and education. Within these offices, the Longhouse is poised to become a thriving hub for cultural enrichment with the support of an enhancement grant. This space will host a range of activities, including classes, training sessions, song and dance gathering, and special events – all designed to strengthen connections to traditional arts and practices.

Tlingit & Haida deeply believes in the power of cultural heritage to heal and unite. Our newly proposed cultural arts classes – such as Ravenstail weaving, cedar bark weaving, dance tunic

making, vest making, and button robe making – will span 2-3 weeks and led by master artists. These classes will not only teach technical skills but also instill a deeper respect for nature and sustainable practices rooted in tribal traditions. Participants will engage in mindful harvesting of materials like cedar bark and learn to express spiritual gratitude for natural resources, fostering a holistic understanding of their ancestral heritage.

Art is an integral part of Tlingit & Haida culture, yet many traditional practices are at risk of being lost. The revitalization of endangered art forms, such as Ravenstail weaving – once crafted from mountain goat hair and now often replaced with wool – is a key focus of this initiative. Leading this effort is Vicki Soboleff, Cultural Heritage Manager at the Lynnwood site and a skilled weaver. In addition to teaching weaving techniques, she helps tribal citizens – especially those adopted out or relocated from Alaska – reconnect with their heritage, strengthening cultural identity and promoting healing.

Mastering these traditional arts allows tribal citizens to create regalia for ceremonies, song and dance, or even commercial purposes, ensuring that cultural practices remain an active part of daily life. Traditionally, once created, regalia became clan property, known as *at.oow*, symbolizing both cultural heritage and collective identity.

Tlingit & Haida has a strong history of collaboration with the Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI) on cultural revitalization initiatives. Recently, we partnered with SHI to place interns from the Haa Yoo X'atángi Deiyí: Our Language Pathway scholarship program into our language immersion nest. This partnership has opened doors for addressing access protocols, data needs, and key concerns related to language-learning resources for the Southeast Alaska Indigenous Language Digital Archive.

Additionally, cultural arts initiatives will be integrated with library projects. Many significant tribal artifacts are housed in museums nationwide, providing valuable study opportunities for master artists. Institutions such as the Juneau Public Library, the Alaska State Museum, and the University of Alaska Southeast hold important pieces, and Tlingit & Haida staff have built relationships with these institutions to secure relevant digital content for the Southeast Alaska Indigenous Language Digital Archive. Informal outreach with the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe Goldbelt Heritage Foundation has shown interest in resource-sharing, provided cultural sensitivity and access protocols are upheld.

This proposal seeks funding to transform the Longhouse into a dynamic cultural education center complete with a small library dedicated to traditional art forms. More importantly, it will ensure the preservation and continuation of invaluable artistic traditions. Through this initiative, Tlingit & Haida aims to educate, heal, and strengthen the community – honoring the past while building a resilient future.

To maximize outreach and participation, our staff will work with Tlingit & Haida's communications team to promote classes and ensure full enrollment. Simultaneously, we will collaborate with the Grants & Resources team to secure funding for the long-term sustainability of cultural arts programs. While many existing grants prioritize Washington-based tribes, additional funding opportunities may become available after three years of program

establishment in the region. Ensuring sustainable funding remains a key priority, and the IMLS enhancement grant would provide critical support to formalize and expand these programs.

Our envisioned outcomes align with Goal 1, particularly Objective 1.1, which focuses on enhancing educational engagement within our community. We anticipate increased participation in cultural classes, broader access to educational resources through library collections, and positive feedback on newly developed teaching tools and materials. These results will demonstrate our commitment to improving educational opportunities tailored to the needs of our tribal citizens and community members.

By the end of the grant period, we expect significant progress in bridging gaps in cultural knowledge and resource accessibility for our tribal citizens in Washington. Success will be reflected in increased participation in cultural classes and events, as well as greater engagement with online resources and digital archives. These efforts directly support the preservation of our languages and arts, strengthening cultural identity and community bonds.

The primary goal of the Lynnwood Cultural Arts Project is to expand access to cultural learning opportunities. A key anticipated outcome is the formal establishment of a Cultural Heritage department offering regular classes, similar to those available in Alaska. Our President and Executive Council believe that all tribal citizens should have equal access to programs and services, regardless of location. This initiative will directly benefit Washington-based tribal citizens and their extended families while laying the groundwork for future funding opportunities and partnerships.

Participants will gain a deeper understanding of Haa Shagoon – our way of life and culture – and experience overall well-being improvements as they reconnect with their heritage. Progress toward these goals will be measured through surveys, performance indicators, and data analysis to assess the project's impact.

MILESTONES	Year 1 (2025-2026)			
	Q1 2025	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	Q4 2026
Cultural Classes				
Beginning Formline Design		X	X	X
Ravenstail Weaving	X	X	X	X
Cedar Weaving	X	X	X	X
Media Campaign				
Tracking engagement and interaction with region	X	X	X	X
Develop & launch regularly qrtly communications (newsletter)	X	X	X	X
Capacity Building & Training				
Hiring Contractual Artists	X	X		

MILESTONES	Year 2 (2026-2027)			
	Q1 2026	Q2 2027	Q3 2027	Q4 2027
Cultural Classes				
Chilkat Weaving		X		X
Button Robe making	X		X	
Dentalia Earring making	X	X	X	X
Vest Making	X	X	X	X
Media Campaign				
Tracking engagement and interaction with region	X	X	X	X
Develop & launch regularly qrtly communications (newsletter)	X	X	X	X
Capacity Building & Training				
Hiring Contractual Artists	X	X	X	X