

NEWS RELEASE
GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK
STATE OF MONTANA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor Bullock Announces Tribal Language Preservation Efforts

Helena – Imagine browsing through your smartphone's "App Store" and being able to download a talking dictionary that includes phrases such as "Shoo daa chii?" ("How are you?" in Apsáalooke) or "Ginnehayen" ("Thank you" in Aa Nii).

Well, thanks to the start of a comprehensive effort to preserve Indian languages in Montana, you may soon be able to do just that.

Governor Steve Bullock, Department of Commerce Director Meg O'Leary and Director of Indian Affairs Jason Smith today announced the award of \$2 million in funds to Montana's tribal governments for language preservation efforts through the Montana Indian Language Preservation Pilot Program (MILP³).

"The cultural heritage and history of the tribal nations began the story of Montana. We're committed to protecting the American Indian culture and languages that are vital to the identity of tribal nations and our state," said Governor Bullock. "This program ensures that the languages spoken by the First Montanans are preserved for future generations."

MILP³ was created to support the efforts of Montana tribes to preserve Indian languages in the form of spoken, written word, or sign language and to assist in the preservation and curricular goals of Montana's Indian Education for All Program. Montana tribal languages, as well as tribal languages across the globe, are in a time of crisis with the loss of fluent native speakers, writers, and signers and the assimilation into mainstream society.

The pilot program was approved in coordination with House Bill 2 during the 2013 legislative session and signed into law by Governor Bullock on May 5, 2013, after the idea was first introduced by Sen. Jonathan Windy Boy. The program is being administered by the Montana Department of Commerce through the State Tribal and Economic Development (STED) Commission. Local program advisory boards for each tribal government met, reviewed, and determined which language preservation projects to pursue over the course of the next year. The pilot project fund of \$2 million has been split

equitably between all of the tribal governments (\$250,000 each) for projects approved through the local program advisory boards and the STED Commission.

The MILP³ projects are as varied as the tribes and the language families they represent. A common theme throughout the projects is a connection between generations, language mastery in the family unit, thresholds of language fluency for teachers, an increased awareness and exposure of indigenous ways of knowing and being, and utilizing technology to teach native languages.

The Montana Indian Language Preservation Pilot Program projects include:

- **Blackfoot Tribe:** Develop a sound book featuring elders, an interactive Blackfoot language website and “Teach the Teacher” training materials; create a 40 lesson e-book plan to include a bilingual Blackfoot/English vocabulary list; train K-6 Browning school teachers in basic Blackfoot language and create a K-6 Blackfoot language development curriculum; create 12 Blackfoot road signs for each community on the reservation; record a Blackfoot children’s storybook covering names of animals, places, people, and good behavior practices; promote Blackfoot language fluency through local daily (radio) and weekly (television) productions; host an elder and youth language immersion camp and record sessions between the elders and youth; and record elders’ perspectives on Blackfoot language retention and revitalization.
- **Chippewa Cree Tribe:** Research the Cree language and develop a Cree language dictionary and computer applications; pilot a family-centered Cree language fluency strategy.
- **Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes:** The Kootenai Language Curriculum Project will develop 45 lessons in Level I Basic Kootenai with a storybook and CD as well as a survey of Kootenai language fluency levels. The Salish Language Program will include an intensive one-year language instruction program for four adult learners in Salish and Pend d’Oreille dialects, will initiate the development of the Salish-Pend d’Oreille Language Commission, and will update the Class 7 Indian Language Certification teacher assessment.
- **Crow Tribe:** Survey Crow/Apsáalooke language fluency on the reservation and create a map of historical sites and correlating stories; hold a youth language immersion camp; develop and record an elder and youth storytelling circle; develop conversational Crow technology applications; and develop an Apsáalooke language website.
- **Fort Belknap Indian Community:** Develop an annotated bibliography of Aa Nii and Nakoda language resources; establish standards for Class 7 Indian Language Specialists; research and establish a talking Aa Nii and Nakoda dictionary; develop sign language based on Aa Nii and Nakoda elder interviews; and create a video of community language classes for home distribution.
- **Fort Peck Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes:** Develop Nakona and Dakota language booklets, vocabulary dictionaries and language curricula for elementary, junior high, and high school; and record Nakona and Dakota history from elders and community members.

- **Little Shell Chippewa Tribe:** Research and compile language influences and history of the Little Shell language families (Michif, Chippewa or Ojibwa, and Cree) into collection for the Little Shell Tribal Language Archives at the Little Shell Cultural Center; develop Little Shell language curriculum; conduct cultural filming of conversational Little Shell languages; and partner with the Turtle Mountain Community College to offer Ojibewa language classes via satellite.
- **Northern Cheyenne Tribe:** Create and publish Northern Cheyenne curricula and literature, language classes, dictionary and reference material, recordings, storytelling and other language preservation activities.

Tribal governments and their local program advisory boards will have until September 15, 2014 to complete their language preservation projects, at which time they will submit tangible products produced with the language preservation funds to the Montana Historical Society for archival purposes. Throughout the project period, the local program advisory boards will report project progress and expenditures to the State-Tribal Relations Interim Committee.

For more information about the Montana Indian Language Preservation Pilot Program, contact Montana Department of Commerce program staff at (406) 841-2775.

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