# Montana Indian Language Program (MILP)

To date, we have coordinated outreach efforts towards each Tribal recipient by phone and email. Introductory conversations began in November 2021. With the addition of our new Language and Culture Specialist in January, 2022, Matt Bell, we have increased outreach, organization, and availability. We held our first MILP Language Leaders discussion over Zoom on February 10, 2022.

Our team will finalize monthly meeting schedules with all recipients from our Tribal Nations and work to come together as often as possible to share the good work from each program, build relationships, support, and collaborations going forward. Our team has been working with the Montana Historical Society Research Center to organize efforts and better understand the archival material and how to improve access to the materials if the Tribal Nations so choose. Contact info:

406-444-2681 or mhsarchives@mt.gov.

The ultimate goal being to share out the amazing work to the students from Head start to High school. Through our Tribal Consultation work within our unit, we will respectfully seek guidance from the Tribe going forward to highlight these powerful efforts as they see fit..



Tapiste' kwuqe's čmšqnmi

#### likaakimaat!



#### **MILP Requirements**

The schedule of payments (3 total) for the \$89,062.50 award is as follows:

- Initial Drawdown/Payment-up to \$35,000 shall be available upon contract execution in conjunction with the receipt of the required forms.
- Mid-contract Payment— up to \$45,156.25 shall be available for drawdown in conjunction with the receipt of the required forms.
- 3) Final Payment-\$8,906.25 (remaining 10% of grant) or the remaining amount of the total contract shall be available for draw upon completion of deliverables detailed in contract.

**Payment Schedules & Deliverables** 

2020

- 1) January 1, 2020 (Initial)
- 2) May 2020 (Mid-Contract)
- 3) Dec. 14, 2020(Deliverables)

2021

- 1) July 1, 2021 (Initial)
- 2) Dec. 2021 (Mid-Contract)
- 3) May 15, 2022 (Deliverables)

We are working with the Tribal contacts and learning from their expertise while offering support if needed. We are also coordinating with the Historical Society on deliverables and potential access to the amazing work being done.

# Office of Public Instruction: Tribal Relations and Resiliency

### Montana Indian Language Initiatives

March 2022 Update

The Tribal Relations and Resiliency Unit staff at the Office of Public Instruction are organizing and administering Montana Indian Language and Culture initiatives by:

- Developing a centralized digital hub to to improve access and support for Indian Language and Culture materials for students, educators, and community members in our school districts across the state.
- Administering the Montana Indian Language
   Program (MILP) after its transfer from the
   Department of Commerce.
- Directing the application and funding for the Indian Language Immersion Program (ILIP), which is currently implemented in two schools. We seek to expand ILIP to other districts across the state.
- Updating and expanding the Class 7 American Indian Language and Culture Specialist certification, which has been a historic licensure effort for our state since 1995
- Establishing the American Indian Language and Culture webpage to educate and promote the language and cultural efforts while highlighting the historical resolve of our Tribes and State around indigenous language and culture. The webpage will improve the online presence and share information on language apps, resources, events, while showcasing the efforts of those in the field.

opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Indian-Education/Language-and-Culture



cialist Licensure—

Conversations with our Indian Education staff, Executive team, **Cultural Elders and Tribal Leaders** have brought forth a direction emphasizing the needs and expansion of this historic licensure in our state including: Consulting tribes in every effort-recognizing the distinct and unique cultural heritage of our Tribal Nations; . Upholding and honoring the Tribes authority to establish their Class 7 licensure as a lifetime or a yearly certification process; Updating MOUs and improving access to Continuing Ed Unit (CEU) credits. Hosting discussions around the inclusion of cultural and historical knowledge keepers as educational specialists alongside the established language instructors centered in the traditional equivalency of science, math, health, and other landbased educational efforts from those tribally certified to share.

Contacts: Matthew Bell, Lang. & Culture Specialist. mathew.bell@mt.gov (406) 431-6626 Donnie Wetzel, Jr. TRR Director. dwetzel2@mt.gov (406) 444-4527

# Indian Language Immersion Project (ILIP)

Browning School District has been allocated funds in the amount of \$57,850.01. BPS has identified 117 student participants of ILIP,6 immersion teachers, and 4 Blackfeet Native American Speakers & teachers that incorporate the Blackfeet Language within their classrooms 50% of the time during the day, covering all subjects. They are working on a writing system in the Blackfeet Language. The immersion program spans from K-6th grade. Schools where the immersion program is housed include: KW/Vina, Browning Elementary, Napi Elementary, and Browning Middle School.

Crow Agency School District has been allocated funds in the amount of \$39,119.99 and has identified 101 student participants. There are two dual immersion Pre-School classes and 1 dual immersion class per grade level ranging from K-5. The life of the classroom (such as the teacher visiting with students) is in the Apsaalooke language. All classrooms in the school have a traveling teacher who utilizes a Conversational teaching model along with the Plains Sign Language, and Physical Response Technique. Approximately 50% of the Crow tribe is fluent and bilingual, yet most of this demographic are over the age of 40. They are working to revitalize and wake up their language and have established partnerships with other Crow Reservation Schools, Little Big Horn College and the Crow Tribal Government and the Crow Language Consortium.

I Ky Pah Ko Chi

#### Nestseve'tsenehnehetame!



"Our language is the epi-center of our worldview. It is our cultural values and lifeways."

**Conrad Fisher, Northern Cheyenne** 





Dazhiikan!

Kyaakibinh!





Diah-Gasha!

### Hagíkdeš

"Language is the carrier of culture, you can't have one without the other," Ramey Growing Thunder



### **Timeline and Progress**

**2021:** Rep. Sharon Stewart Peregoy, D-Crow Agency, Rep. Jonathan Windy Boy, D-Box Elder, and Rep. David Bedey, R-Hamilton, worked together to craft a plan to restore the funding and move the program under the Office of Public Instruction instead of the state Department of Commerce.

2015: Indian Language and Immersion Program (ILIP) is established to support efforts of Montana tribes to preserve and perpetuate Indian languages in the form of spoken, written, sung, or signed language and to assist in the preservation and curricular goals of Indian education for all pursuant to Article X, section 1 of the Montana constitution.

**2015**: The Cultural Integrity Act (SB 272): Passed into Montana state law. This act strengthens the commitment of Montana's goal to preserving American Indian cultural integrity as stated in Article X, Section 1 of the Montana Constitution.

**2013**: Montana Indian Language Preservation: On May 6th, MILP was signed into law. The outcome of SB 342 by State Senator Jonathan Windy Boy was established in 2013 and maintained in the Department of Commerce.

1995: Class 7: The tribes testified that only each tribe has the knowledge and resources to address its own language and cultural situation and that diverse language teaching approaches were desirable. With a unanimous vote the Montana Class 7 American Indian Language and Cultural Specialist Certification passed through the Board of Education.

#### ELDER AND CULTURAL WISDOM COUNCIL

This council was developed in 2021 for traditional consultation. When we embark on a new journey, we consult our Elders and Cultural Wisdom holders. The youth want to run, but the Elders know the path. We seek this direction for Youth by emphasizing self identity, language, and traditional wellness supports as an option. Self-identity is prevention. Elders will help us design an approach for our team and for youth as we include their educational and relational teachings going forward.

"The Language is in our heart, it is up to us to bring it out," The Late Tom Escarcega Sr.

"Today we are at a critical moment with the Séliš & Qlispé languages. Creating new fluent speakers is our highest priority but we can't accomplish this with MILP money. What we can do and why we are thankful for the MILP funds, is we can provide support to ongoing and future programs that will be taking place and create resources, curriculum and support materials that will give a huge benefit to our Séliš & Qlispé Language learners and teachers." Chaney Bell.

#### TRIBAL COLLEGES

Across the state, our Tribal
Colleges are emphasizing
language and cultural teachings as their #1 priority. From
language webinars hosting
600+ attendees teaching language and telling our stories
to Indigenous Graduate programs set to indigenize the
educational experience and
careers. Some of the most
amazing work centered on
creating fluent language
speakers first to be able to

teach later. Practicing and learning the language everyday as coursework.

