



Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services

Sample Application MN-245236-OMS-20
"Preserving Words"

Koniag, Inc.

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$84,791
Amount of cost share:	\$13,798

The project description can be viewed in the IMLS Awarded Grants Search:

<https://www.ims.gov/grants/awarded/mn-245236-oms-20>

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

Please note that the instructions for preparing applications for the FY2021 Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services grant program differ from those that guided the preparation of FY2020 applications. Be sure to use the instructions in the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program to which you are applying.

NARRATIVE

Need: Every Sunday KMXT Public Radio broadcasts the Alutiiq Word of the Week (AWOW), filling Kodiak airways with the sounds of Native language. Produced by the Alutiiq Museum (AMAR), this short program (ca. 4 minutes) features the voices of Elders speaking in their first language. Their words are paired with English translations and a short cultural lesson read by a young adult. A recent example featured “*Keneq—Fire, Keneq kuarnarpet—We can build a fire,*” with a discussion of traditional fire starting techniques, the types of wood used in campfires, and spiritual views of fire (Attachment 2). Each lesson is carefully researched, filled with community knowledge, and infused with Alutiiq values—humor, sharing, thrift, respect. The lessons are also seasonally relevant. Listeners learn about fishing in August or gift giving in December.

This program is one of AMAR’s oldest and most popular—produced since 1997. Over the years, AWOW resources have grown to include individual lesson graphics, an email broadcast, website and social media posts, an iTunes podcast, and a compilation of past lessons on the museum’s website. This growth and endurance reflect our community’s hunger for accurate, accessible cultural information, especially language resources. Preserving and sharing Alutiiq speech remains a central goal of the heritage movement.

Like many indigenous languages, Alutiiq was heavily suppressed by colonialism. The introduction of western languages, schools, economic practices, and governance rapidly reduced the use and transmission of the language. When AMAR opened in 1995, Alutiiq was not spoken in public and there were less than a hundred fluent, first language speakers. Originally created to share cultural information, AWOW became part of the much larger, ongoing Alutiiq language movement. In this context, the program helps to bring Alutiiq sounds to a broad public audience, supports language documentation and learning, and returns Alutiiq traditions to community awareness. In 2000, AWOW was one of three AMAR programs honored with the National Medal for Museum and Library Service. In 2003, the program’s Alutiiq contributors received an Honoring Alaska’s Indigenous Languages Award from the Alaska Native Knowledge Network at the University of Alaska.

Despite its success, AWOW now faces major challenges. There are just 20 living, first language, Kodiak Alutiiq speakers and they are all elderly. AWOW relies on six active speakers. They help AMAR develop lesson content and record the Alutiiq language portions. There is limited time to capture their voices for additional content. Additionally, AMAR Chief Curator Amy Steffian, who has written and managed the program since its inception, is nearing retirement. A new staff member must be trained to lead the program. Also, AWOW recordings and files are incomplete and poorly stored. AMAR developed many of the lessons before the program was fully digital. To distribute this valuable content in the future, the museum must develop accompanying graphics and podcasts. Moreover, older program files are scattered across AMAR’s computers and website. They need to be centrally archived to preserve program content and ensure its long-term availability. This includes updating an online lesson compilation currently hosted in outdated software. This compilation, which received 8970 uses in 2018, needs to be moved to a more stable, long-term platform.

The *Preserving Words* project will address all of these needs while supporting local strategic plans and the goal of this IMLS grant program. First, the project is listed as an action step in AMAR’s institutional plan (Attachment 3). The plan calls for AMAR to “Preserve and standardize Alutiiq Word of the Week,” as a step in providing high quality, innovative programming. Similarly, *Preserving Words* supports the island-wide strategic language plan. Updated in 2019 by the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Language Committee, this plan establishes direction for the Alutiiq language movement. It includes (1) increasing language outreach and access to learning resources, and (2) institutionalizing the Alutiiq language movement by preserving and promoting access to program materials (Attachment 4). The plan’s strategic actions task the museum with maintaining language resources (Attachment 5). AWOW is one of these resources. Finally, by strengthening AMAR’s ability to preserve and share unique cultural information gathered over two decades, *Preserving Words* supports the NANH program goal. It sustains tribal cultural knowledge.

Benefit: Conservatively, the Alutiiq Word of the Week reaches 2500 people a week through free radio, print, and digital sources (Attachment 6). This wide, purposeful sharing of Kodiak’s first culture and language is

a tremendous benefit to many audiences, one AMAR seeks to sustain. First, hundreds of tribal members—from rural communities to cities far from the Alutiiq homeland—can hear or connect to the feature. They have ready access to Elder speakers and accurate cultural content. Patrons tell AMAR again and again that AWOW lessons are a source of connection, pride, and education (Attachment 7). Museum tracking supports their words. The program drives more traffic to AMAR’s website than any other and it is widely shared via social media and email. Sustaining AWOW will allow these benefits to continue and to reach younger generations.

Preserving Words will also benefit AMAR’s entire audience. A 2019 survey of 516 patrons showed that people love AMAR’s digital resources and are especially drawn to self-directed activities like borrowing an educational box, reading a publication, or accessing online content. Such resources are a comfortable way for anyone to learn about the Alutiiq world, in their own time and space. However, AMAR evaluation also shows that despite an interest in local history some people hesitate to visit a Native museum. They fear feeling shamed by historical atrocities or for not knowing about Native heritage. Self-directed resources like AWOW can remove barriers to participation. They invite learning, dismantle stereotypes, and encourage further engagement in comfortable ways. By ensuring that all audiences continue to have AWOW access, this project will sustain a powerful resource for strengthening cultural understanding.

Strengthening Museum Services: The *Preserving Words* project is expressly designed to sustain the successful AWOW program. By developing additional lesson content, archiving content from the entire twenty-two year program, and training a new staff manager, this project ensures AMAR can share AWOW lessons indefinitely. The project strengthens AMAR’s ability to deliver a core program and promotes its longevity.

Work Plan

Activities, Schedule, and Staffing: Koniag, Inc. will provide AMAR with IMLS funding for a two-year project. Founded in 1995, AMAR is a nationally-accredited museum that preserves and shares Alutiiq traditions through collections care and public education. AMAR’s modern facility and staff of 11 serve about 7,000 visitors annually. Thousands more benefit from programs and resources that reach far into schools and communities. AMAR has an excellent record of grant management and project completion. In 24 years of operation, it has managed many private and agency grants, including IMLS awards. As Koniag does not have a grant manager, AMAR Assistant Director Rose Wilson will track expenditures and complete reporting. Her work will be supported by project overhead. This model continues to work well for Koniag–AMAR partnerships.

Preserving Words will begin in July of 2020 under the direction of Chief Curator Amy Steffian. She developed this proposal and will manage its implementation under the general direction of Executive Director April Counciller. Counciller’s oversight will be supported by project overhead. As a first step, Steffian will distribute a press release announcing the project (Attachment 8). Year 1 will be devoted to creating a final set of new AWOW lessons with Alutiiq Elders. In recent years, AMAR produced ca. 13 new lessons a year and recycled older content to fill 52 weekly installments. This allowed AMAR to continue producing the labor intensive program and slowly update older audio and graphic files. However, it limited the number of Elder recordings. To address this issue, AMAR will create 52 completely new lessons in Year 1 to be shared in Year 2.

This process will begin by inviting the public to suggest lesson topics through a social media campaign (six posts asking users to “Tell Us!”), and consulting with the volunteer Qik committee at a scheduled meeting (Attachment 9). Then, Steffian will create a PowerPoint combining public, Qik Committee, and staff lesson ideas, each with a suggested photo from the museum’s holdings. These will be presented to Elders at AMAR’s regular, weekly meetings. The Elders’ will select words, review photos, write sentences, and share cultural knowledge (Attachment 10). Curatorial Specialist and advanced language learner Dehrich Chya will manage this process. With a master list of 52 lessons production will begin (Attachment 11). Chya will schedule individual meetings with Elders Nick Alokli and Sophie Shepherd to record words and sentences. He will also record the narrative part of each new lesson and identify and re-record any poor quality audio recordings in older lessons (ca. 40 words and sentences). Next, he will edit all the audio in existing Sound Studio software and build the

podcasts. He will use Alutiiq music from an AMAR recording and add an acknowledgement of IMLS. Steffian will write 52 short lessons and Exhibit Coordinator Alex Painter will use an existing template to develop a graphic for each. This is familiar work. This team completed this process successfully for the current season of AWOW. The final step in Year 1 will be the development of resources to share the new lesson. Steffian will use this process to train Chya to build and schedule email broadcasts, website posts, and social media posts. Chya will also deliver a year's worth of content to the radio station and newspaper. The 24th season of AWOW will debut on Sunday, July 4th, 2021. Lesson air will throughout the entire second year of *Preserving Words*, till late June 2022. The new season will be promoted in a spring 2021 article in the museum's newsletter (Attachment 8).

In project Year 2, AMAR will focus on preserving and sharing AWOW. Steffian will develop a master list of program lessons (ca. 624) and compile related files in a central folder on the museum's online server. This will include documentation of past promotions, awards, evaluation, grants, etc. At the same time, Painter will create missing graphics (ca. 468, see Table 2) and Chya will record missing narration to create a complete a full set of files for all 624 lessons (ca. 300, see Table 2). From these files, Lancaster will create an archive for the museum's permanent collection. She will register the collection in CollectiveAccess, organize and describe the files with a finding aid, and catalog the lesson specific files alphabetically (Attachment 12). For example, the first lesson would be AM888.1—with audio file AM888:001a, graphic AM888:001b, podcast AM888:001c, text file AM888:001d. These files will be stored in the museum's CollectiveAccess database, on a master hard drive in the secure collections room, and in the collections storage area of AMAR's online file server.

To share the complete set of lesson files, AMAR will hire Whirl-i-gig, the developer of CollectiveAccess, to create a module linking its database with its website (Attachment 13). Here patrons will find an engaging, interactive presentation. Each lesson will feature its full text and graphic with links to play word and sentence audio file and the full podcast. Moreover, the database will be searchable in Alutiiq and English. Type in a word and the lessons with that word will be appear. The online presentation will closely mirror that currently found on AMAR's website (Attachment 2), but with a complete set of program files hosted in a lasting format. During development Qik committee members will test the module at one of their regular meetings (Attachment 9) and Chya will record their suggestions to share with Steffian, Lancaster, and Whirl-i-gig to finalize the presentation. As a final step, Whirl-i-gig will provide Lancaster with a brief training on module management.

By the end of this project there will be enough content for 12 full years of the program. As a final step, Steffian and Chya will develop a master plan for sharing the lessons and create written program management procedures. This will allow Chya, or any future museum employee, to oversee the program. This process will include selecting, building, and scheduling 52 lessons for distribution in the coming year—season 25 of the program. Chya will complete this work with support from Steffian.

Resources: To implement *Preserving Words*, Koniag request grant support from IMLS for a two-year project. Our central need is funding for AMAR staff time and benefits. The museum supports its staff through a combination of grants, contracts, and donations. AMAR will give the time of its Director but cannot undertake this project without other staff support. We are also requesting funds to hire database consultants Whirl-i-gig and to support IMLS required travel. Smaller portions of our request include honoraria for Elder Alutiiq speakers and a hard drive for collection storage. As Koniag does not have a grant manager, we ask for the allowable 10% overhead to assist AMAR with project administration. Importantly, Kodiak College has pledged the use of its recording booth as an in-kind contribution (Attachment 13), and KMXT Public Radio and the Kodiak Daily Mirror agree to continue distributing lessons (Attachments 14 and 15).

Tracking: As this project is largely dependent on staff time, Steffian will set monthly work goals and track staff progress through weekly meetings and time logs. This will include timesheets for Elder consultants completed by museum staff. AMAR uses an electronic timesheet in Zoho Books that allows staff to charge hours to specific projects and supervisors to view project hours and expenses. Additionally, the master list of new lessons developed in Year 1 will provide a complete summary of the files needed and a way to track their completion. The museum currently uses this tool, an Excel spreadsheet (Attachment 10), to track each yearly

set of AWOW files. Similarly, AMAR will develop a master lesson list, for all AWOW lesson files, to be used in compiling files for the program archive. Finally, existing software will track lesson use. AMAR's Zoho app suite tracks social media and email broadcasts use and its Google Analytics account tracks website use.

Maturity Level: *Preserving Words* is a mature program. It builds on AMAR's substantial experience publishing weekly cultural lessons, as well as its existing relationships with Alutiiq Elders and program partners—the local college, radio station, and newspaper. It also uses well-tested technological systems—a proven email broadcast, website with integrated iTunes podcast function, CollectiveAccess database, and existing audio editing software. We need only a new microphone. The project's one novel element is a collections database module that allows the AWOW archive to be publicly accessed. This module represents an advance in AMAR's capabilities—the first public link to its collections database. It will be created by Whirl-i-gig, the developers of CollectiveAccess, expressly for AMAR's system. This project is AMAR's fourth with Whirl-i-gig. As such, the module is based on a successful partnership and knowledge of AMAR's database (Attachment 15).

Risks: The biggest risk to this project is the loss of elderly Alutiiq speakers. The average age of our six-member team is 82. As such, the very first steps in *Preserving Words* will be to work with Elders. This will include developing and recording new lesson content and re-recording any poor quality, older content. This work will be done at regular, scheduled, weekly gatherings at AMAR (Attachment 10). Elders will be paid for their time and receive staff support—meeting reminders, assistance arranging transportation, comfortable seating, a cup of tea, an agenda. Importantly, two Elders voice AWOW's Alutiiq language content—Mr. Alokli and Mrs. Shepherd. If one is not available, AMAR can record the other. Finally, AMAR's Executive Director April Counciller is a fluent second language Alutiiq speaker. She could record if necessary.

Results

Intended Results: This project has four concrete goals (Table 1). First, the museum intends to capture a final set of AWOW lessons by recording Elder voices. The project begins with this effort given its critical importance and time sensitive nature. Second the project will complete and standardize program materials so that all lessons have the same four files—text, graphic, audio, and podcast—and can be used indefinitely. Third, the program will preserve all program content in a well-organized, formally documented archive collection to ensure its indefinite availability. Fourth the project will train another museum staff member to manage the program and create written resources to assist. All four of these goals have the same intended result—to sustain the popular, effective Alutiiq Word of the Week program.

Data Collection: To document project activities we will collect the following data (Table 1):

Table 1. Project Goals and Data Collection

Goal	Measurement	Items for Reporting
1. Work with Alutiiq Elder speakers to develop and share content for a final set of new AWOW lessons.	A. Number of social media posts soliciting topic ideas B. Number of lessons developed (text, graphics, audio) C. Number of radio broadcasts, email broadcasts, social media posts, web posts, and newspaper articles distributed	a. Minutes of Elders Group meetings b. List of subjects suggested by public c. List of subjects suggested by Qik committee d. PowerPoint of potential topics e. Master lesson schedule f. Examples of lessons distributed via email g. Copies of Newsletter articles
2. Develop missing content for older lessons for future distribution.	A. Number of graphics developed B. Number of audio files re-recorded C. Number of podcasts developed	a. Master lesson log
3. Preserve all AWOW program files in an organized, accessible collection.	A. Number of catalog entries B. Number of photo collections linked to AWOW collection C. Number of online archive entries	a. Registration log entry b. Lesson catalog c. Archive finding aid d. Online archive URL & screen shot e. Volunteer reviewer comments

4. Train an additional staff member to manage the AWOW program.	A. Number of podcasts published by trainee B. Number of website posts created by trainee C. Number of email broadcasts created by trainee D. Number of social media post built by trainee	a. Written program procedures b. Written plan for lesson airing
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Contributions to Collections Care: *Preserving Words* will develop a formal collection out of AWOW program resources that are currently scattered and disorganized. It will bring these original resources, reflecting 22 years of research, into AMAR’s permanent holdings. Additionally, many AWOW lesson graphics include a photo from AMAR’s collections. These uses are not recorded in collections records. As part of creating the AWOW collection, Lancaster will systematically cross reference the photo used in each lesson with its originating collection. She will do this in the museum’s CollectiveAccess database.

Tangible Products: *Preserving Words* will result in the development of additional AWOW lessons content—52 text files, 468 graphics, 92 audio files, and 300 podcasts (Table 2). AMAR will also produce a catalog of lesson components, a finding aid describing the complete program archive, written procedures for program management, a written plan for lesson publishing, and two newsletter articles. Finally, over the course of the project AMAR will develop electronic files for sharing two years-worth of AWOW lessons—104 each of email broadcasts, social media posts, and web posts (see Attachment 2 for examples). These will be built in the museum website and through a Zoho app suite, both of which support scheduling for release.

Table 2. Existing and Needed Lesson Content

Item	Existing*	New Final Season	Missing from Old Lessons	TOTAL NEEDED
Lesson Text	572	52	0	52
Lesson Graphic	52	52	468	520
Word & Sentence Audio Files	572	52	40	92
Podcasts (audio & narration)	324	52	248	300

*includes 12 lessons planned for Season 23 currently in development.

Sustainability: The products of *Preserving Words* (see Table 2) will be added to an AWOW archive—a formal collection in AMAR’s holding, professionally registered and duplicated following established policies and procedures. These curated resources will also be made available to the public through AMAR’s website on a newly established link to the AWOW collections through CollectiveAccess. Importantly, Whirl-i-gig will provide Lancaster training on module management to support its long-term use. In addition, project files will be copied to a hard drive and an online server to create masters. Together, these activities will ensure the cultural knowledge gathered by the project is carefully preserved and made accessible to the public indefinitely. Also, by developing a set of lesson resources that can be used for many years, this project will reduce future staff labor and thus cost. It will help AMAR deliver AWOW with significantly improved efficiency.

Generated Change: *Preserving Words* will train a second staff member to manage all aspects of the program, and thus build human capacity for a core program. It passes program staff knowledge forward. At a deeper level, the project will promote cultural pride. The weekly lessons give authority to culture bearers. Their development and distribution reaffirm the importance of the knowledge stored in the Alutiiq community and honor those who share. It also highlights the importance of Elders by sharing their voices publicly and igniting feelings of connection among tribal members (see Attachment 7).

Finally, this project will help AMAR build knowledge of the Alutiiq world. When the museum opened in 1995, the Alutiiq were among the least known Alaska Native people. One of AMAR’s long-term goals has been to reawaken awareness of Alutiiq heritage to combat misunderstanding and promote cultural celebration. Many museum programs have contributed to this work. AWOW has been a particularly valuable. The program provides a public forum to tell Alutiiq stories, combat stereotypes, and address community issues from land ownership to climate change. By building and sharing new lessons, and by preserving all program content for future use, *Preserving Words* will support this continuing effort.

Schedule of Completion – YEAR 1, New Lesson Creation

Tasks	Staff	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	Jun
Publish press release	CC	█											
Solicit public ideas for words / topics	CC, V	█											
Create PowerPoint with potential lesson topics - words & photos	CC, CA	█											
Select new words with Elders, write sentences, review spellings	CS, ED		█	█									
Identify any poor or missing audio, re-record	CS, Elders			█									
Record Elder speakers	CS, Elders			█	█								
Develop new lesson graphics	EC			█	█								
Write new lessons	CC				█	█	█	█	█				
Review new lessons	CS, ED				█	█	█	█	█				
Record new lesson narrative	CS					█	█	█	█	█			
Edit recordings to develop audio & podcasts files	CS								█	█	█		
Upload and schedule podcasts	C, CS										█		
Share project in AMAR spring newsletter	CC											█	
Upload and schedule website lessons	CC, CS											█	█
Develop and schedule email broadcasts	CC,CS											█	█
Deliver annual program content to radio and newspaper	CA												█

Key: CS = Curatorial Specialist, CC = Chief Curator, EC = Exhibits Coordinator, ED = Executive Director, V = Volunteers

Schedule of Completion – YEAR 2, Program Archiving

Tasks	Staff	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	Jun
Share Year 1 lessons	CA, KMXT, KDM	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Complete interim grant report	CC	█											
Update Master list of lessons	CC	█											
Contract Whirl-i-Gig & develop CollectiveAccess module	CC	█	█	█	█	█	█	█					
Assemble program files for archiving	CC, ED		█	█	█								
Create all missing graphics (ca. 21 per wk)	EC, CC		█	█	█	█	█	█					
Create all missing podcasts (ca. 10 per wk)	CS		█	█	█	█	█	█					
Register collection, describe program files, catalog lesson files	CFM						█	█	█	█			
Cross reference lesson photos with originating collections	CFM									█	█		
Evaluate module and publish to AMAR website	CFM, V, CC										█		
Develop lesson sharing schedule & publication procedures	CC, CS										█		
Build and schedule podcast, eblast, and website features for S25	CC, CS										█	█	
Share online archive in spring newsletter	CC											█	
Complete final grant reporting	CC												█

Key: CS = Curatorial Specialist, CC = Chief Curator, CFM = Collections & Facility Manager, EC = Exhibits Coordinator, ED = Executive Director, V = Volunteer, KMXT = Public Radio, KDM = Newspaper