



West Regional Native American Language Resource Center (NALRC)

Newsletter Issue #1
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It is a privilege to introduce you to the West Regional Native American Resource Center!

In 2022, the Native American Language Resource Centers Act established three regional Native American Language Resource Centers (NALRCs) and a National NALRC at the University of Hawai'i - Hilo. The West Regional NALRC is located at the University of Arizona and builds on the ongoing work of the American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI) in support of Indigenous language maintenance and revitalization efforts. The West Regional NALRC serves communities of the West region, which includes Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah and New Mexico. The West Regional NALRC is working in collaboration with the Arizona TCU Consortium comprised of [Tohono O'odham Community College](#), [San Carlos Apache College](#), and [Diné College](#) to support Native language teaching and learning programs.

The West Regional NALRC's purpose is to: (1) provide support and advocacy for the inclusion of Native American languages in local, state and regional educational systems; (2) provide training and technical assistance in implementing evidence-based pedagogical strategies, assessments, qualifications and processes for Native American language medium instruction; (3) provide technical assistance to Native American Language Programs seeking Federal resources; and (4) provide consultation and support for Tribal language programs in implementing and sustaining effective curriculum and other language work.

Over the past several months, the West Regional NALRC team has been working to

locate Indigenous language programs within our region and identify community language needs. We have spoken with representatives from several language programs who are working passionately to build Indigenous Language Immersion schools, organize language classes, foster inclusive spaces for Native language use, and organize training opportunities for Native language teachers and Tribal education staff.

Let us know how we can support your Native language efforts!

Meet the West Regional NALRC Team!



The West Regional NALRC is directed by Dr. Sheilah Nicholas (Hopi) of the Qalwungwa (Sunforehead Clan) from Songoopavi Village (Second Mesa) on the Black Mesa Plateau of Arizona. As a Professor in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Sociocultural Studies at the University of Arizona, a Faculty Instructor for AILDI, and Immersion Instructor-Consultant for the Indigenous Language Institute, Dr. Nicholas is an expert in Indigenous culture-based education, Indigenous language revitalization, and the Oral Immersion approach to Indigenous language revitalization.

Dr. Nicholas is joined by Dr. Adrienne Tsikewa (Zuni) who serves as the West Regional NALRC Program Manager. Dr. Tsikewa completed her PhD program in Linguistics at the University of California, Santa Barbara in December of 2024. She also earned an MA in Native American Languages and Linguistics (NAMA) from the University of Arizona in 2013. Mateo Pomilia is the West Regional NALRC's Graduate Assistant and a current NAMA student.

West Regional NALRC Offerings

The West Regional NALRC will be offering three **Certificate programs** that provide specialized educational pathways for those Native language teachers, scholars, community members and activists who wish to strengthen their skills and knowledge in specific areas of Native language work:

Indigenous Language Immersion (ILI): ILI schooling is an innovative approach in which most or all instruction occurs in the Indigenous language, with a strong culture-based curriculum. ILI has proven to be an effective education practice that supports language acquisition, academic achievement and well-being for minoritized groups. The goal of the ILI Certificate program is to provide educators with tools to improve education practice for Native American learners while harnessing skills to meaningfully engage in ILI research, policy and implementation.

Mentor-Apprentice Learning in the Native American Language Classroom: the Mentor-Apprentice (MA) method has shown efficacy in the classroom and in community-based adult education programs and is one of few methods that have been shown to create new speakers. Participants in the Mentor-Apprentice Learning in the Native American Language Classroom Certificate program will gain numerous hours of exposure to their language each week, requiring both master and apprentice to develop new language habits in order to create the desired immersion situation. UA students enrolled in Diné Bizaad and Tohono O’odham language courses are currently eligible to participate in the Mentor-Apprentice language program.

Indigenous Language Revitalization: Indigenous language revitalization refers to the efforts of a people or community to create language-learning programs and services to awaken their language or keep their language alive and flourishing. Please continue to check our website for updates on this Certificate offering.

Learn more about our Certificate Programs

The West Regional NALRC also provides **Project Planning and Consultation** for language programs in our region. These services are geared towards helping language program leaders articulate their goals, identify community strengths and needs, and chart a strategic direction for their programs. For access to these services, please [contact us](#).

Indigenous Language News

O’odham Ñi’ok Ki: staff celebrate inauguration

O’odham Ñi’ok Ki: (O’odham Language Center) staff recently celebrated the inauguration of their new state-of-the-art facility on the Tohono O’odham Community College campus. The facility is equipped with a recording studio and multi-media features to immerse the visitor in the O’odham language and culture. The O’odham Ñi’ok Ki: vision was established in 2020 as a dedicated space designed to achieve the Tohono O’odham Nation’s goal of reclaiming the O’odham language. The

O'odham Ñi'ok Ki: provides support, training and programs for language learners and teachers within the community and serves as a site for language documentation and research.



10-Year National Plan on Native Language Revitalization released

Last month, the White House Council on Native American Affairs published a 10-Year National Plan on Native Language Revitalization. The Plan calls for historic action to address the United States government's role in the loss of Native languages across the lower 48 states, Alaska and Hawai'i. The Plan directly confronts the systematic and deliberate campaign by the United States to forcibly assimilate Native peoples and eradicate Native languages and cultures — a campaign extensively documented in the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Reports as enshrined in legislation such as the Civilization Fund Act of 1819 and formally acknowledged by President Biden in his October 2024 apology to Native communities. The 10-Year National Plan makes clear that Congressional action is now required to preserve Native languages.

Click [here](#) to access the Plan.

Grant opportunities

National Endowment for the Humanities - Awards for Faculty at TCUs

The Awards for Faculty program seeks to strengthen the humanities at Tribal Colleges and Universities by encouraging and expanding humanities research opportunities for individual faculty and staff members. Awards support individuals pursuing humanities research that is of value to scholars, students, and or a general audience. While the program welcomes proposals in all areas of the humanities, projects related to Indigenous knowledge that sustain and strengthen tribal languages and or cultural traditions are especially encouraged.

Deadline April 9th, 2025

Luce Indigenous Knowledge Fellowship

The Luce Indigenous Knowledge Fellowship is offered by First Nations Development Institute in partnership with The Henry Luce Foundation to honor and support a select cohort of fellows as they work to further Indigenous knowledge creation, dissemination and perpetuation in Indigenous communities. The intent of this fellowship is to support the exceptional creativity, progressive and critical thinking, and Native knowledge holders and knowledge makers as they move their field forward in ways that will ultimately lead to broad, transformative impacts for Indigenous communities.

Deadline May 7th, 2025

Administration for Native Americans (ANA) Grants

The ANA offers a variety of funding opportunities related to Native language preservation and revitalization.

Deadline May 20th, 2025

Upcoming events

American Indian Studies Association (AISA) 2025 Annual Conference | Tempe, Arizona | February 5-7

International Mother Language Day celebration | February 21, 10:00 - 2:00 | University of Arizona Mall

International Conference on Language Documentation and Conservation | Honolulu, Hawai'i | March 6-9

TCU Native Language Summit | Rapid City, South Dakota | March 9-10

Symposium on American Indian Languages (SAIL) | Tucson, Arizona | April 3-4

American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI) summer session | Tucson, Arizona | June 9 - July 3

AILDI's 2025 summer session will include the following course offerings:

1. Linguistics for Native American Communities
2. Methods & Ethics in Linguistic Research: Language Technology for Data Sovereignty
3. Writing for Linguistics (online)
4. Introduction to Native American Sign Language

Visit aildi.arizona.edu for more information.





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