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## ALESEK INSTITUTE

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**Project Title:** Franks Landing Indian Community Project to Develop a Comprehensive Plan

**Award Amount:** \$80,000

**Type of Grant:** Social and Economic Development Strategies

**Project Period:** 9/30/2004 – 2/28/2006

**Grantee Type:** Native Non-Profit

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### PROJECT IMPACT

- 1 job created
- 2 Native American consultants hired
- 7 elders involved
- 7 youth involved
- 23 people trained
- 6 partnerships formed

### BACKGROUND

Franks Landing Indian Community (Landing) is located 60 miles southwest of Seattle. In 1994, Congress recognized the Franks Landing Indian Community as a self-governing, independent Indian community (but not a federally-recognized Indian tribe). The Landing's enrollment is approximately 1,500 members. A Council of Elders governs the Community. Although the elders are enrolled members of other tribes, such as the Puyallup, Nisqually and White Earth Chippewa, they reside in the Landing.

The Landing has a micro economy that provides limited services to its residents. Income from a small retail trade center that markets Indian artwork and tobacco, supplements the Wa He Lut Indian School budget. The community uses the

school to hold meetings and social events. The Alesek Institute is the Landing's community development corporation, which administered this grant.

### PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Franks Landing Indian Community Project planned to develop and successfully produce a Comprehensive Plan mapping regulatory, public service and development policies, systems, and programs for the next ten years. The Project promoted planning sessions by mailing fliers, sending e-mails, and publishing information in the Wa He Lut School newsletter and related media. Since the school is an important community cornerstone, when the principal left, the planning sessions were delayed until a new principal was hired. A second delay was due to heavy rainfall during the winter of 2005/2006. Major flooding made implementing the Project difficult, but when the weather improved, the Project moved forward.

Despite the delay, the Project conducted a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis identifying critical issues that faced the Landing. The Project qualitatively and quantitatively documented the Landing's assets and strengths; liabilities, or weaknesses, were also

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documented. The Project also developed schematics that depicted preliminary land-use designations for the Landing's property.

In a final step, the Project developed a short-term (one to three year) strategic action plan addressing the most critical issues and finalized the Comprehensive Plan. The Project also developed a survey to gauge the community's level of satisfaction with the Plan.

### **PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES**

This Project generated a large amount of community involvement, a key factor contributing to its success. Seven elders and seven youth were very involved in the Project and expressed their appreciation.

The Project involved all cross sections of the community, including natives outside the core community, non-native groups and individuals with common interests, and individuals who rarely participated in community-based activities. One community member shared that a number of people engaged in the planning process were rarely involved in other community activities. She indicated that she was, along with other community members, enthusiastic about the Project as well as potential projects in the future. It made them want to become involved to ensure the Project's success.

Community members also shared their excitement and hope about the future and what it holds for them now that they have a guiding document and concrete roadmap. Elizabeth Tail commented, "The plan will not end like the people creating it. It is an important tool. It celebrates leadership in the community."

The Comprehensive Plan institutionalized policies and gave the

Community direction. James Miles added, "The planning process helped us see our foundational philosophy rooted in tradition that helped us formalize (solidify) the community thought and vision." Suzette Bridges commented, "The Project helped 'create our leaders.'"

This Project also nurtured local partnerships as they collaborated with the Community. Communication improved between all groups and common goals were reached. The Project fostered six partnerships with the local police, various tribal members and Ft. Lewis, which is a long-standing partner concerned with river management.

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## THE CHEHALIS INDIAN COMMUNITY

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**Project Title:** Chehalis Seven Generations Language Project

**Award Amount:** \$174,496

**Type of Grant:** Language

**Project Period:** 9/30/2004 – 2/28/2006

**Grantee Type:** Tribe

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### PROJECT SUMMARY

- 1 job created
- \$30,750 in resources leveraged
- 6 people trained
- 13 partnerships formed
- 29 products developed
- 30 elders involved
- 70 youth involved
- 90 Native language classes held
- 68 youth (0-18) increased their ability to speak a Native language
- 30 adults (18+) increased their ability to speak a Native language

### BACKGROUND

The Chehalis Indian Community is a federally-recognized tribe which governs the Chehalis Reservation, 26 miles southwest of Olympia. The current tribal membership stands at 742 individuals, with 325 residing upon reservation lands. About 40 percent of the population is under the age of 19 years.

The Chehalis language is categorized as Salishan, a family of 23 languages confined to western Canada and the Pacific Northwest. Salishan languages are

characterized by their gutturalization, agglutinativity and strings of consonant clusters. All the languages within the Salishan family are currently considered endangered, with all remaining fluent speakers of advanced age. The Tribe is facing considerable challenges in preserving its language. At grant application, only two fluent Chehalis speakers remained: Kathleen Barr, 83, a Chehalis Tribal member, and Dr. Dale Kinkade, 81, a university-based linguist.

### PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the two-year Chehalis Seven Generations Language Project was to develop Chehalis language teachers and implement multi-generational language learning classes. A rudimentary curriculum and Chehalis Dictionary already existed, which provided this Project's foundation. The Project planned to recruit the strongest and most dedicated students from a previous program to become teachers-in-training and engage them in intensive language study with the two remaining fluent speakers. Following teaching certification, these new teachers would then be placed in the classroom to work with families. The Project also planned to record and store the language lessons on CD for posterity and for

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tribal members who wish to extend the learning environment outside of the classroom.

The Project successfully identified six individuals, aged from mid-to late-teens to mid-thirties, who agreed to participate as teacher-trainees. Unfortunately, the Project encountered a major setback when the linguist passed away. The remaining fluent speaker agreed to train the teacher-trainees, and help create and implement lesson plans for the language classes. None of the trainees have yet to be certified; with the loss of the linguist, the Project did not have specific criteria for teacher certification. Notwithstanding these setbacks, the Project successfully sponsored Chehalis language classes to a core group of 30 students representing all age groups.

The Project has also successfully captured and documented 27 language lessons to CD. This was critical given the poor health and advanced age of the remaining fluent speaker.

Due to the success of the language classes, the Chehalis language curriculum has expanded to the tribal Head Start program. This further secures the delicate state of the Chehalis language by entrusting it to the youngest generation. Additionally, local Chehalis artisans have been brought in as contractors to lead special craft sessions in basket weaving, beading, woodcarving, horsehair weaving, moccasin making and baby-board production. The teaching of the words and phrases associated with these activities combine to create interactive cultural language lessons from which both student and teacher can benefit.

### **PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES**

Students recorded what the Chehalis language classes meant to them. They reflected upon the personal impact as well as

the perceived collective impact upon the Tribe. Many students made note of the practical benefits of studying with Mrs. Barr, the only remaining fluent native speaker. Cynthia Davis commented that “It is very important for us to hear the sounds pronounced correctly. Many words are very difficult since they have to be spoken from the back of the throat.”

However, the desire to speak the language of their ancestors as it was originally spoken extends beyond achieving correct pronunciation. Janet Havelick succinctly expressed: “I am extremely proud to be able to say I am learning my people’s language.”

As the students and teacher-trainees anticipate the future of their language, all understand the critical stage has not yet passed. However, a mother proudly observed that, “My children are becoming so used to the language, their language, that sometimes they slip into it without thinking.”

*“This class has given me an opportunity to give life to an almost extinct language and to continue our culture, which is one of the few things that we have left that is truly ours.”*

Jesse Gleason  
Teacher-Trainee

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## CONFEDERATED TRIBES AND BANDS OF THE YAKAMA NATION

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<b>Project Title:</b>	Yakama Business Training and Technology Centers
<b>Award Amount:</b>	\$859,038
<b>Type of Grant:</b>	Social and Economic Development Strategies
<b>Project Period:</b>	9/30/2003 – 2/28/2006
<b>Grantee Type:</b>	Tribe

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### PROJECT SUMMARY

- 26 jobs created
- \$21,354 in resources leveraged
- 124 people trained
- 11 partnerships formed
- 2 products developed
- 11 businesses developed
- 35 elders involved
- 450 youth involved

### BACKGROUND

The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation is a federally-recognized tribe comprised of 14 tribes and bands. The Tribe has over 9,600 tribal members. Its reservation is one of the largest in the nation, covering 1.4 million acres. It is in a rural, isolated and economically-distressed area of south-central Washington, approximately 200 miles from Seattle.

The average per capita income of Tribal members is \$10,474, \$10,000 less than the State average. The Tribe's unemployment rate is 18 percent, as compared to the county's rate of 12.1 percent. Comparative educational statistics indicate that Tribal members' education levels are also lower with only 28.25 percent graduating from

high school and less than 6 percent obtaining bachelor degrees.

Community surveys indicated that many tribal members were interested in opening businesses but needed training and support. The surveys also showed that only 34 percent had computers and fewer (19 percent) had Internet access.

### PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Yakama Business Training and Technology Centers (Project) was to open three centers that would provide access to computers and deliver small business assistance to aspiring entrepreneurs. This three-year Project was successfully implemented and all objectives were completed as planned.

Their first objective, to develop the center's infrastructure, was the most challenging. Upon grant award, the Project had difficulty finding a site suitable for the main Business Training and Technology Center. After several leads and false starts, the Project finally procured an ideal site in tribal space – four months behind schedule. The Project also experienced delays and turnover in the key program manager position. Fortunately, the Project's technology specialist maintained continuity and helped ensure the Project's success. Despite delays, the

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Project opened three handicapped-accessible Centers in Toppenish, White Swan and Wapato. The Centers have been an overwhelming success with well over 700 member visits. The Project also conducted ten formal business development seminars, led by successful business owners, university professors and lawyers.

Most importantly, the Project provided one-on-one assistance in developing business plans. Eleven businesses have opened and many jobs have been created by these businesses. The new businesses include a gas station and convenience store, espresso shop and a floral store.

The Centers are well-staffed and will continue to provide the same services to the community with on-going support from existing partnerships, such as the University of Washington. The Centers have expanded their services by developing a career training program with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program, and an education program, the Wellpinit/Tribal School Alliance Program for high school drop-outs who want to earn diplomas. Given these partnerships and the Centers' successes, the Tribe intends to sustain the Centers.

#### **PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES**

Many youth use the Centers' computers to learn and practice typing skills and use the Internet to find information and send emails to friends and family. They have learned about different careers and have a better understanding of what education is needed to pursue the careers of their choice, particularly in the business field.

Learning was not limited to the youth, as many adults also improved their computer skills. A technology assistant commented, "I've been able to help an optometrist with his computer skills so he can take work home to do on his home computer." Adults

were also instructed on how to conduct computer-based job searches.

The most beneficial impact was on the local economy and tribal entrepreneurs. The Business Training and Technology Centers provide valuable one-on-one counseling, which helps potential entrepreneurs build their business plans. The Floral Shop owner commented, "The one-on-one help and computer instruction has really helped me organize and prepare my business." The one-on-one counseling extended to existing businesses as well. The Espresso Drive-Thru owner commented, "I did one-on-one with the program manager to get help with marketing. She helped me find a supply company for promotional tools. That company actually created my slogan and I've used it on pins, letter cutters and other promos."

Additionally, tribal entrepreneurs have taken advantage of their newly acquired Internet skills and have used the web as a place to sell items such as beadwork. One tribal entrepreneur uses the computers at a Center to order Mary Kay Products, which she then sells on the reservation. The aid does not end with the opening of a business. The Centers continue to be a valuable resource and available for assistance on all business-related issues.

The Project's impact has extended beyond the tribal community to its partners. The non-native community has a greater understanding of the tribal community. A University of Washington Extension Partner explained, "Students and faculty are learning an unbelievable amount about the Yakama Nation and how the Tribe works, as well as learning about what life is like on a reservation. It's a great opportunity for cultural learning."

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## DUWAMISH TRIBAL SERVICES

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**Project Title:** The Duwamish Exhibit and Gallery at MOHAI

**Award Amount:** \$120,890

**Type of Grant:** Social and Economic Development Strategies

**Project Period:** 9/30/2005 – 12/29/2006

**Grantee Type:** Tribal Non-Profit

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### PROJECT SUMMARY

- 1 job created
- \$56,950 in resources leveraged
- 2 people trained
- 10 partnerships formed
- \$7,500 in revenue generated
- 5 elders involved
- 12 youth involved

### BACKGROUND

The Duwamish Tribe is comprised of 569 members. In surveys of its membership, the Tribe has three priorities – to develop a facility to preserve, honor and share Duwamish culture, to continue seeking federal recognition and to develop a sound economic base to ensure the long-term tribal sustainability. Today, the Tribe has only three-quarters of an acre of land in West Seattle. The Tribe purchased the site with plans to build a longhouse and cultural center.

### PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Duwamish Exhibit and Gallery at MOHAI (Project) is two-fold. The Project would express the Duwamish Salish culture and would defend the

Duwamish identity within the Seattle area. To achieve this, the Duwamish Tribe proposed to partner with the Seattle Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) to exhibit its history, culture and art. The Project also anticipated selling contemporary art based on Duwamish culture.

The first objective was to design and operate an exhibit and gallery at MOHAI. The partnership between the Duwamish Tribe and MOHAI was instrumental in achieving this objective. The Project successfully opened an exhibit and gallery at the grand entrance of the Museum, attracting the immediate attention of the Museum's 120,000 annual visitors.

The second objective involved producing and selling ceramic dinnerware and art based on a Salish design. Achieving this objective proved much more difficult. The success of this objective was dependent on a skilled potter who produced ceramic pottery in Salish design – one of only three artists of this trade. Initially, this work was delayed because it took the artist time to find a facility that would be appropriate to produce pottery. Then, the negotiation of the artist's contract took longer than expected. Once the contract and facility were secured, production and training of the two

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apprentices began and sales started well. Then, an incident left her unavailable to complete her work. Fortunately, the artist and apprentices had already produced enough merchandise to stock the gift shop and fill most orders. To its credit, the Project did not cease efforts, but worked with its partners and received technical assistance to create an ANA Project Improvement Plan that would, with a three-month no-cost extension, enable them to complete this objective. The Project Improvement Plan included different steps for the continued supply of the artist's goods.

In July 2006, the Project had just completed the Project Improvement Plan and submitted a request for no-cost extension through December 2006. The intended activities during this period were to create a new business at MOHAI involving stage productions in a large venue – the 370-seat MOHAI auditorium. Some stage productions occurred, however, attendance was disappointing and the Project decided to end the performances.

#### **PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES**

The MOHAI and the Project staff were pleased with the Project's impact and remarked that other tribal members have expressed pride towards the exhibit. Since the exhibit was designed with tribal member approval, it accurately reflects the Tribe's history.

The Project has had a positive economic impact. Every quarter, a different artist is featured at the museum. The marketing and exposure each artist receives impacts both the artist and their sales. In addition, the Project has made a small profit on pottery sales.

Finally, the exhibits achieved the awareness about the Duwamish Tribe in the non-native

community and among other tribes native to the area. With over 120,000 people visiting the MOHAI annually, the Project has fostered an improved understanding and appreciation for the Duwamish Tribe.

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## MAKAH TRIBAL COUNCIL

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**Project Title:** Makah Mini Mart and Fuel Facility

**Award Amount:** \$471,760

**Type of Grant:** Social and Economic Development Strategies

**Project Period:** 9/30/2004 – 9/28/2006

**Grantee Type:** Tribe

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### PROJECT SUMMARY

- 4 jobs created
- 2 businesses created
- 5 Native American consultants hired
- 40 elders involved
- \$758,734 in revenue generated
- \$1,122,942 in resources leveraged
- 34 people trained
- 9 partnerships formed
- 12 individuals received environmental training

### BACKGROUND

The Makah Indian Tribe is a federally-recognized tribe located on Neah Bay, where the Strait of Juan de Fuca meets the Pacific Ocean. There are 2,389 tribal enrollees, 1,356 of whom reside on the 29,668 acre reservation.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the reservation's unemployment rate was 24 percent and the per capita income was \$11,000. The Tribe had developed a Comprehensive Plan that included an economic development project. The Project was designed to provide basic services and

jobs for community members, as well as generate tribal revenue.

### PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

This Project intended to provide start-up funding for a new tribal enterprise (Makah Mini Mart and Fuel Facility) and develop tribal business and industry ordinances. The Makah Mini Mart was the combination of two tribal entities – Makah Fuel and Makah Smoke Shop.

Project funds were used to purchase inventory and equipment and train new employees. The funds were also used to pay local artists to design interior and exterior art work for the building, giving the Makah Mini Mart a uniquely "Makah" look.

Due to poor weather conditions, there was a long delay in the beginning of the construction of the Makah Mini Mart. The Tribe worked with the general contractor to accelerate construction once it began. Due to issues blocking a new boat ramp and fuel float installation, the Tribe and its construction manager coordinated with the Tribe's Environmental, Forestry and Fisheries Departments to resolve the issue. The Tribe terminated the Makah Mini Mart's executive manager and hired a replacement that proved capable of working

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with a number of part-time employees. Despite these set-backs, the Makah Mini Mart was able to open earlier than scheduled.

To carry cash to and from the Makah Mini Mart the Project planned to purchase an armored truck and hire two security transporters. During implementation, it was found that there were numerous requirements to operate an armored truck and related staff training costs. After consultation with an independent Certified Public Accountant, it was determined revisions to the Tribe's internal controls for handling cash were sufficient to safeguard cash.

#### **PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES**

The Makah Mini Mart achieved its objectives. It created six new jobs, reducing the unemployment rate by 0.6 percent. Merging the two Tribal enterprises into a single business increased revenues by 15 percent, decreased costs by 10 percent and resulted in a net income increase of 5 percent. More importantly, it helped the Tribe realize its dream. Lois Peterson, Administration Services Manager said, "We always dreamed of having a mini mart. It's an important service to have. We have had temporary buildings, shacks from the 1980s on and now to have this!"

Prior to the Makah Mini Mart, tribal members traveled between 22 and 98 miles round trip for services. It is estimated that access to the Makah Mini Mart's basic banking services (i.e., ATM) and 24-hour fuel service increased disposable income by approximately 3 percent for 471 reservation households.

Prior to the Makah Mini Mart's opening, emergency vehicles traveled 20 miles round-trip during non-business hours to refuel. Given the reservation's large

geographic area, refueling is required often. The Makah Mini Mart provides 24-hour fuel service, reducing response ready time of emergency vehicles. "Emergency vehicles having access to fuel 24 hours per day makes Neah Bay a safer place," according to Lois Peterson.

According to Wade Green, a tribal member and artist, "The painting on the poles was designed to blend in with the overall look of the building and environment - makes me proud as an artist." The art work not only improved their pride, but the Makah Mini Mart's art work display vastly expanded the Makah artists' businesses.

In addition to assisting five self-employed artists, the Project helped expand the revenues of three Tribal enterprises - a restaurant, hotel, and camp ground; one tribal member established a pizza business. Tourists are now able to extend their stay in the Neah Bay area since cash and fuel are readily available.

Due to the Makah Mini Mart's success, the Tribe is now considering other projects such as propane sales, a coin-operated boat, a car wash and improving the boat ramp to ease congestion during the high season. The Tribe sells over 40,000 recreational permits annually which give these ideas strong potential.

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*"The opening of the Makah Mini Mart was a social event at which people had a sense of pride. The art work provides a sense of community and pride in jobs."*

Debbie Wachendorf  
Tribal Council Member

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## PORT GAMBLE S'KLALLAM TRIBE

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**Project Title:** Recruit, Train and Certify New Native American Foster Parents

**Award Amount:** \$365,485

**Type of Grant:** Social and Economic Development Strategies

**Project Period:** 9/30/2004 – 9/29/2006

**Grantee Type:** Tribe

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### PROJECT SUMMARY

- 2 jobs created
- \$88,360 in resources leveraged
- 44 people trained
- 8 partnerships formed
- 1 product developed
- 13 foster parents certified
- 57 youth involved
- 8 elders involved

### BACKGROUND

The Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe has slightly over 1,000 enrolled members, with approximately 350 children under the age of 18. The Tribe's reservation is comprised of 1,341 contiguous acres located on the State of Washington's Kitsap Peninsula. Tribal members reside on the reservation or in the surrounding Kitsap County and Puget Sound area.

At Project proposal, the Tribe's Indian Child Welfare Program had placed 22 children in uncertified foster families. Lacking certification, these caregivers were ineligible for State aid.

### PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Project purpose was to develop foster parent certification that would enable the Tribe to provide care and services for their children based on S'Klallam values. To achieve this goal, the Project identified two key objectives.

The first objective was to provide culturally-appropriate foster parent training to the Port Gamble S'Klallam community. The Project acquired and tailored existing curriculum (i.e., Native American Training Institute "Extending Our Families through Unity" handbook) to make it culturally-appropriate and applicable to the S'Klallam Tribe. This objective presented the Project's greatest challenge – State/Tribal negotiations to give the Tribe authority to license foster parents. To overcome this challenge, the Project worked closely with the State, which licensed the program manager to conduct foster training which approved the culturally-sensitive curriculum. With the State's cooperation, the Project reduced forms and paperwork, making it easier for interested tribal members to become foster parents. Tribal members were required to undergo background checks and drug testing, which the police department

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provided free-of-charge. Upon background check completion, tribal members attended training including 30 hours of foster parent training, as well as first aid and safety, CPR and HIV training. The Project trained 42 tribal members, certified 13 foster parents and had four certifications pending (including the Tribal Chairman and two Tribal Councilors). Six foster parents and the program manager also attended State-sponsored workshops for fostering children with behavioral problems.

The second objective was to place all tribal children with foster parents in their community. At the Project's completion, all 22 children were placed with certified foster families within their community.

#### **PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES**

The S'Klallam children now benefit from certified foster care that ensures a safe and loving home environment within their own community. Placements have become more stable, since foster families receive additional financial and higher quality support. In addition, the children have benefited financially. These youth can now receive counseling and any other services that Medicaid is unable to fund. One youth will be attending college with a scholarship available to foster children.

Foster parents have benefited by a better understanding of the continued involvement of the biological parents and tailored instruction to individual homes. They can attend advanced State-sponsored training sessions and have a better understanding of, and access to, financial aid.

The S'Klallam community is proud that their children remain connected to the Tribe. The Tribe's support services have been strengthened and the communication between agencies has improved. The Tribe's programs and community have

benefited financially, since State-provided foster parent funds have replaced tribal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funding. Tribal TANF funding can now be extended to other needy families.

By creating a culturally-appropriate foster care curriculum, the Project broadened the State's capabilities. The Project also broadened the State's capacity by reducing the State's workload and providing more foster parents and stable homes. The Project set a model for neighboring tribes who have expressed interest in certifying foster parents among their members. The Project's success will continue since the State has agreed to continue funding for the Tribe's foster care program and the Tribe has committed to providing foster parent certification.

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## SHOALWATER BAY INDIAN TRIBE

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**Project Title:** Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribal Shellfish and Finfish Monitoring Project

**Award Amount:** \$482,774

**Type of Grant:** Environment

**Project Period:** 9/1/2003 – 2/28/2006

**Grantee Type:** Tribe

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### PROJECT SUMMARY

- 4 jobs created
- 10 elders involved
- \$119,214 in resources leveraged
- 17 youth involved

### BACKGROUND

The Shoalwater Bay Indian Reservation is located on the shores of Willapa Bay at North Cove on the Pacific Coast of Washington State. The reservation occupies 1,034 acres of land on the northern side of the Bay.

Since the reservation is small and isolated, the people of the Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe (Tribe) have maintained some of their traditional ways of life, especially those centering upon a subsistence lifestyle. Subsistence foods continue to play a major role in the lives of the Shoalwater people on and off the reservation. The Willapa Bay community relies on logging, oystering, fishing and farming for income. Although modern forestry, farming and agricultural methods have produced a greater return on investment, these methods have come at an environmental cost. There was concern that the environmental impact of modern technology may have affected the

reproductive health of the Shoalwater Tribal population.

The Shoalwater Bay community has been impacted by an infant mortality problem of staggering proportions. Between 1988 and 1993, only ten of 27 documented pregnancies on the reservation resulted in the birth of children who survived past the age of two years. This infant mortality rate is 25 times higher than the national average. A joint report issued October 27, 1994 by the Tribe, Indian Health Service and the State of Washington recommended a broad-based community-wide strategy to restore the reproductive health of the Shoalwater Bay community. This strategy involved health research, community health assessments, environmental assessments, direct health care services, health education, and health staff recruitment, retention and training. The Tribe implemented the recommendations and believed the crisis had passed.

However, in 1999 a new report was released that found 50 to 67 percent of all pregnancies ended in miscarriages during the years of 1997 and 1998. Eight of nine confirmed pregnancies had ended in miscarriages in 1998 alone. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed

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the high rate of miscarriages and recommended that a renewed examination of environmental concerns be undertaken. Some families were moving from the area to avoid potential miscarriages. The Tribe diligently began to re-examine various environmental factors as no conclusive reason for the high infant mortality rate had previously been found.

#### **PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

The testing proposed under the Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribal Shellfish and Finfish Monitoring Project was one aspect of environmental testing that had not been completed during earlier studies. This Project would focus on the area's shellfish and finfish stock since surveys indicated that approximately 75 percent of the tribal membership's diet is fish and shellfish.

The major challenge with the Project occurred in the first year. The Project manager was hospitalized for many weeks, and then not released to work for several months. The severity of his illness prevented him from being able to answer questions concerning the Project status and location of files. The lost time compelled the Project to request a no-cost extension to successfully complete the grant.

Nonetheless, the grantee successfully tested for heavy metals in fish and shellfish. There were no significant findings for heavy metals, but testing did find polychlorinated biphenyls (i.e., PCBs). The grantee readjusted the testing plan to begin looking at PCBs in the fish and shellfish. The lack of significant PCB traces has been a great relief to the community. They want the periodic testing to continue to assure that a healthy environment in which to raise their families is maintained. The actual cause of the infant mortality rate has never been determined. However, the construction and opening of a modern community health clinic has improved the rate significantly.

#### **PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES**

The Project has successfully provided assurance that environmental impacts to the local food and water supply have not occurred. Tribal members who fish to feed their families now know that the fish is safe. Local businesses no longer need to fear that the fish they supply to the local community might be negatively affecting the community. And, the community is steadily growing now that tribal members are confident the environment is safe.

Two tribal members who lost children pre-term for unknown reasons in the late 1990s shared their gratitude for the environmental testing provided at the lab. They indicated that the testing and periodic reports gave them peace of mind. They would like to see the lab continue all types of environmental testing (water quality, tissue toxicity, etc.) to assure that the Tribe and its neighbors are keeping the environment safe for all.

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## UPPER SKAGIT INDIAN TRIBE

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**Project Title:** Learning to Work  
**Award Amount:** \$115,200  
**Type of Grant:** Social and Economic  
Development Strategies  
**Project Period:** 9/30/2004 – 6/30/2006  
**Grantee Type:** Tribe

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### PROJECT SUMMARY

- 1 job created
- 2 people trained
- 5 partnerships formed

### BACKGROUND

The Upper Skagit Indian Tribe is a federally recognized Tribe located in northwest Washington. The Tribe governs a 78 acre reservation and has 755 enrolled members, with the majority of those members living either on or near the reservation.

Tribal members have the lowest income and educational status in the county and the highest drop-out rate for the school district area. The average on-reservation age is 23 years and the reservation unemployment rate is 58 percent. For the past four years, the Tribe has subcontracted from the State of Washington's Department of Social and Health Services operation of WorkFirst – Washington's welfare-to-work program.

The State of Washington currently operates the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program on the Tribe's behalf. The Tribe believed that the State was not meeting tribal member needs, lacked cultural sensitivity and the Tribe was concerned about sanctions imposed upon

tribal members' welfare payments. The Tribe believed it was harmed by State budget cuts and its progress toward self-sufficiency was impeded due to its inability to develop long-range goals and plans with a contract that is re-negotiated yearly. The Tribe hoped to remedy this problem by submitting a proposal for its own Tribal TANF program rather than continuing its contract through the State.

### PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The first objective of this Project was to gather and analyze Tribal, State and Federal data for a first TANF application draft. The targeted community included a large portion of Skagit County where an estimated 2,859 Native Americans reside; the Swinomish Reservation in LaConner; members of the Samish Indian Nation in Anacortes; and the Nooksack Tribe. All activities were completed on this objective with the exception of developing and defining a model for an inclusive and creative array of work.

The second objective was to produce a user-friendly Tribal TANF Policies and Procedures Manual. All activities were completed, except submission to the appropriate government agencies.

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The third objective was to negotiate an approved Tribal TANF application and to have the Tribe administer its own TANF program. The Tribe would provide direct services to its client population and have local access to a broader array of programs. Under the Tribal TANF program, the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe Employment Enhancement Center would have authority to declare a Family Assistance Unit (FAU) eligible or ineligible for cash assistance. The Project started late and this delayed meeting the final objective on schedule.

The Project suffered a setback when the Nooksack Tribe decided not to partner with the Upper Skagit Tribe. This lowered the number of individual Assistance Units (AUs) upon which the Tribe would receive funding to manage the TANF program. As a result, the number of projected AUs totaled 30, which would not be feasible for the Tribe to run their own TANF program. Since the Project director believed that the number of AUs was undercounted, the Project ensued negotiations with the State regarding the number of eligible AUs in the Upper Skagit service area.

The Project had a late start and, as a result, the Project needed additional personnel to complete the objectives on schedule. Tribal employees assisted the Project director (these hours could have been considered leveraged resources, but the Tribe and Project did not track the hours). In addition, the Project drastically under-spent their budget, requiring an ANA technical assistance provider visit, corrective action plan and subsequent submission of a no-cost extension.

At the Project's conclusion, an agreement between the Tribe and the State of Washington on program funding levels had been reached. The only outstanding issue was the official signing of the agreement with the State's Governor, the Tribal Chair,

and the State's Secretary of Social and Health Services.

#### **PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES**

The Upper Skagit community believes that the Project could be of major significance to TANF-eligible tribal members. The community believes the Tribe is currently running the TANF program because of the assistance it has received from this Project. Individuals stated that because of the wrap-around services provided by the Tribe and the Project they have become gainfully employed. Additionally, they recognized the ease of working with the Tribe as compared to the State because of the endemic cultural misunderstanding. The partnerships developed by the Project have continued to provide on-going technical assistance to the Tribe in its efforts to become a Tribal TANF program.

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## UPPER SKAGIT INDIAN TRIBE

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**Project Title:** Lushootseed Language Preservation Project

**Award Amount:** \$449,358

**Type of Grant:** Language

**Project Period:** 9/1/2003 – 8/31/2006

**Grantee Type:** Tribe

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### PROJECT SUMMARY

- 3 jobs created
- \$70,461 in resources leveraged
- 29 people trained
- 15 partnerships formed
- 22 products developed
- 174 elders involved
- 205 youth involved
- 6 language teachers certified
- 241 Tribal members increased their ability to speak Lushootseed
- 6 people achieved fluency
- 2 Native American consultants hired

### BACKGROUND

The Upper Skagit Indian Tribe has 755 enrolled members, with the majority of those members living either on or near the reservation. The Upper Skagit language is Lushootseed. The Lushootseed language is not used in daily conversation on the Upper Skagit Reservation, nor is it used in three neighboring tribe's reservations of the Sauk-Suiattle, Swinomish or Stillaguamish Tribes. On a limited basis, it is used in cultural and ceremonial activities. A language survey revealed that only three members could

speak the language fluently and eleven were able to speak in short sentences.

### PURPOSE OF THE GRANT

The Lushootseed Language Preservation Project planned to revive and record the language. A key to the Project's success was the elders. During the Project, the community lost several elders, including the oldest speaker, a spiritual-cultural elder who understood and spoke the language well. To mitigate this loss, the Project captured every meeting with the elders on videotape and recordings. To jog elders' memories, the Project provided archives of pictures, stories and language recordings from the Lushootseed Language Institute. The elders' responses resulted in considerable language recovery, in addition to cultural stories and traditions.

The collections of the Lushootseed language gathered from the elders helped the Project staff develop curricula. Each year a different set of curriculum was developed. Books were created with audio accompaniment and activities were culturally content-based and age-appropriate. In the first year, the curriculum focus was newborns to six years. Community members designed and made visual aids (such as dolls and stuffed animals) to cater to this age group. In the

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second year, the curriculum focus was for an after-school program for children seven to 12 years. This curriculum also included a play with scripts for the youth to perform and produce. In the third year, the curriculum focus was on teens. The Project also developed a language curriculum manual including terminology, background materials and more activities for the texts. Since so many activities were designed, the Project also created a separate game book.

Although prior survey results indicated that 30 tribal members were interested in language teaching, the Project struggled to recruit teachers. Once the Project promised teacher certification, more members were willing to participate. Six different courses were offered. Nonetheless, some teachers-in-training struggled with other priorities to attend classes. The Project tutored those who were motivated to complete the training. Six trainees completed courses and were completing their practicum the final month of the Project. Another eight are working with the Project and receiving tutoring sessions. The Project expected all to be certified within a year.

### **PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES**

One tribal member reflected on the Project's significance, "One of my goals is to be able to speak the language in public. A lot of what I want to do was learned from my Grandfather who was an Orator. The classes have helped me a lot to learn and see where I could go with the language."

The Project successfully linked generations, as suggested by the Education Manager, "All the little things added up to make the kids want to be more a part of and learn the language. The elders were also a wonderful part to allow the kids to see and hear the language and culture."

Elders are speaking in their native language to other elders. Additionally, others who understand the language, but previously would not speak it, are now conversing in their native tongue and take pride in doing so. Elders have gained a sense of worth as one tribal member commented, "Someday I would like to be fluent, in respect for others and the ones who have passed on to speak in the way they wanted us to."

Due to the historical migration of the families to other tribes or bands, the Project helped families reconnect. A tribal member commented, "The Project is very important to us because it allows us to connect to our family in the other tribes."

As the elders shared stories, even over the telephone, they began to remember more of the language, perpetuating their energy and interest for their native language and culture. A tribal member added, "Learning more about the language has helped us learn more about our culture and history." However, the elders were concerned about losing the language as one Project staff member reported, "One of the areas that meant a lot to the elders was the (Lushootseed) names that had been there and unfortunately lost into English."

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*"It has brought the community elders together and has really impacted the elders and allowed them to speak in their Native language."*

Upper Skagit Tribal Chairman

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