

Tribal Curriculum District Grants/Federally Recognized Indian Tribe Grants

Budget Language

\$400,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 is provided solely for the office to administer grants to support the incorporation of tribal curriculum into social studies curricula. The tribal curriculum must include materials about the history, culture, and government of the nearest federally recognized Indian tribe or tribes, including federally recognized Indian tribes whose traditional lands and territories included parts of Washington, but that now reside in Oregon, Idaho, and British Columbia, for the purpose of giving students the opportunity to learn about the unique heritage and experience of their closest federally recognized tribal neighbors. Grant funding may be used for costs associated with curriculum design and implementation and costs related to collaboration with federally recognized Indian tribes, including reimbursements to tribes for collaboration-related costs. Of the amounts provided in this subsection:

- (i) \$200,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 is provided solely for grants to school districts; and
- (ii) \$200,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 is provided solely for grants to federally recognized Indian tribes, including federally recognized Indian tribes whose traditional lands and territories included parts of Washington, but that now reside in Oregon, Idaho, and British Columbia.

Proviso Purpose

This proviso responds to longstanding tribal advocacy, including priorities articulated through the Centennial Accord, and builds upon the foundational work established by House Bill 1495 (2005) and Senate Bill 5433 (2015). The purpose is to strengthen collaborative partnerships between school districts and tribes while ensuring students have opportunities to learn about the history, culture, and government of their nearest federally recognized Indian tribe or tribes, including those whose traditional lands and territories encompassed parts of Washington but now reside in Oregon, Idaho, and British Columbia.

Grant funding supports costs associated with curriculum design, implementation, and meaningful collaboration with federally recognized Indian tribes. This dual grant structure recognizes that successful tribal curriculum implementation requires both school district capacity-building and tribal nation engagement and leadership.



Services Provided

Grant Activities Supported:

- Curriculum Development: Development of grade-appropriate written curriculum units focused on tribal history, culture, government, treaty rights, and environmental stewardship for middle and high school students
- Professional Development: Educator training programs including summer academies, professional development days, and workshops to support proper implementation of tribal curriculum materials
- Digital Resources: Creation of educational websites and video content to provide accessible curriculum materials and cultural resources
- Partnership Building: Government-to-government relationship development between tribes and school districts through luncheons, meetings, and collaborative planning sessions
- Cultural Programming: Integration of tribal storytellers, elder involvement, and hands-on cultural activities including facility tours and outdoor education experiences
- Implementation Support: Pilot program coordination, needs assessments with school districts, and ongoing technical assistance for educators implementing tribal curriculum

All services aligned with HB 1495 (2005) and SB 5433 (2015) mandating tribal history integration into Washington state social studies frameworks.

Criteria for Receiving Services/Grants

The JMLSTI support grant prioritized collaborative partnerships between Washington State educational institutions and tribal governments to advance the implementation of tribal sovereignty curriculum. Eligibility criteria ensured that funded projects would strengthen government-to-government relationships and support culturally authentic curriculum delivery.

Eligible Applicants:

- Washington State school districts engaged in active collaboration with federally recognized tribes in Washington State
- Federally recognized tribes in Washington State partnering with school districts to support JMLSTI curriculum implementation

Application Requirements: Eligible applicants were required to submit a letter of intent demonstrating:

- Existing or developing partnership between the school district and tribal government
- Commitment to incorporating the John McCoy (luliláš) Since Time Immemorial tribal sovereignty curriculum

- Identified use of funds to support curriculum development, professional learning, tribal consultation, student engagement, or related implementation activities

Beneficiaries in the 2024-25 School Year – GC2

Number of School Districts: 7
 Number of Schools: 7
 Number of Students: N/A
 Number of Educators: N/A

Beneficiaries in the 2024-25 School Year – GD2

Number of School Districts: N/A
 Number of Schools: 2
 Number of Students: N/A
 Number of Educators: N/A
 Other (Tribes): 2

Are Federal or Other Funds Contingent on State Funding?

No.

State Funding History

GC2 – Tribal Curriculum District Grants

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2025	\$200,000	\$199,500

GD2 – Federally Recognized Indian Tribe Grants

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2025	\$200,000	\$66,666

Number of Beneficiaries Per Fiscal Year (e.g. School Districts, Schools, Students, Educators, Other)

GC2 – Tribal Curriculum District Grants

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2025	N/A

GD2 – Federally Recognized Indian Tribe Grants

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2025	N/A

Programmatic Changes Since Inception (If Any)

The legislature did not provide ongoing funding for this work. Beginning July 1, 2026, the funding for this grant/program/partnership/contract will end and OSPI will no longer implement this grant/program/partnership/contract.”

Program(s) Evaluation or Major Findings

Significant Impact on Implementation Capacity

Post-grant surveys confirmed the JMLSTI support funding substantially increased educators' confidence and capacity to incorporate tribal sovereignty and Indigenous perspectives. Districts reported a fundamental shift from viewing this work as an "add-on" to recognizing it as foundational curriculum. Implementation expanded beyond Social Studies into English Language Arts, mathematics, and science, with educators demonstrating increased intentionality and cultural competence.

Strengthened Tribal-District Partnerships

The grant deepened collaborative relationships through ongoing consultation, government-to-government meetings with tribal councils and school boards, and partnerships with tribal education departments, language teams, and cultural experts. Districts engaged in meaningful curriculum co-development with tribal partners, creating locally-relevant, tribally-endorsed materials including grade-specific units, tribe-specific sovereignty curriculum, and integration of Native-authored resources.

Direct Student Engagement and Professional Learning

Students experienced meaningful Indigenous education through field trips to cultural centers on tribal lands, weekly cultural groups, hands-on experiences including regalia-making and land stewardship, and community celebrations with Elders and tribal leadership. The grant enabled approximately 20 staff members per district to attend the Washington State Indian Education Summer Teaching Institute and participate in tribal-led professional development, significantly building district-wide capacity.

Major Challenges Faced by Program(s)

Grantees reported significant technical difficulties with the inaugural year of the Education Grant Management System (EGMS), including challenges with user roles, application navigation, and management of primary points of contact. These technical barriers created additional

administrative burden for Tribal Nations, State-Tribal Education Compact (STEC) schools, and school districts accessing grant funding.

Critical Finding: Capacity Constraints Limit Implementation

While school districts demonstrate strong interest and eagerness to implement JMLSTI curriculum respectfully and accurately, two interconnected capacity barriers emerged:

Districts require adequate time for formal tribal consultation and approval processes. The pace of consultation, while necessary to honor tribal sovereignty, can challenge timely implementation of staff- and student-driven initiatives.

Tribes face significant capacity limitations, with some responsible for supporting up to 37 school districts with minimal staff. This severely constrains consistent engagement, curriculum guidance, and the approval processes districts require.

Ongoing Support Needs

Districts identified persistent challenges requiring continued support:

- **Educator confidence:** Many staff still lack confidence or knowledge about local tribal history and Indigenous Ways of Knowing, requiring ongoing professional development and tribal partnership
- **Logistical barriers:** Transportation limitations, bureaucratic payment delays, late-year funding receipt, and technical issues (broken website links) hinder full implementation
- **Resource gaps:** Continued need for culturally aligned instructional materials, flexible funding for transportation and collaboration, and compensation for curriculum development time

Future Opportunities

Both school districts and tribes recognize the value of JMLSTI curriculum and welcome collaborative support. Post-grant surveys confirm that targeted assistance produces satisfactory outcomes and increases implementation capacity. However, sustained investment in both tribal capacity building and district resources is essential for responsible, culturally accurate implementation statewide. Districts possess the willingness and tools are available—what remains critical is adequate support for the tribal-district partnerships necessary for authentic, respectful curriculum delivery.

Other Relevant Information

N/A

Schools/Districts Receiving Assistance

[Click here to see a list of all OSPI grant recipients in the 2025 Fiscal Year.](#)

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