



Organization

Background Information

Organization name: Indigenous Language Institute

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Organization Description

Purposes and goals of the organization: The Indigenous Language Institute (ILI) facilitates innovative and successful community-based initiatives for language revitalization through collaboration with other appropriate groups, organizations, and individuals. The organization also promotes public awareness of the importance of preserving indigenous languages. The guiding philosophy behind ILI is to help create speakers of endangered indigenous languages while we still have speakers left.

ILI provides vital language-related services to native communities seeking to preserve and revitalize their unique languages. The services available from ILI range from simple intuitive *how-to* teaching aids to technologically advanced language training programs.

Geographical area(s)/region the organization serves: Santa Fe, New Mexico

When the organization was founded: 1992

How the organization was founded: ILI was founded in 1992 by Joanna Hess as the Institute for the Preservation of the Original Languages of the Americas (IPOLA). The purpose of the organization was to implement a project with the Hotevilla-Bacavi Community School of the Hopi to publish Hopi-English bilingual children's storybooks. In 2000, the name was changed to the Indigenous Language Institute (ILI) to better reflect the mission of the organization – to assist all tribes and nations in their efforts to revitalize native languages to create new generations of speakers.

Types of programs included in the organization: ILI is the national center for research, technical assistance, and public education regarding indigenous language revitalization. ILI's initiatives include

- **Language Materials Development Center** provides multimedia technology training to enable community language practitioners to develop their own materials in native languages. Languagegeek® Native font and keyboard enablement, storybook creation, digital storytelling are taught at workshops conducted by ILI. The audio lab digitizes older formats into current, stable media that can be used to record languages.
- **Public Awareness and Education** disseminates the results of the research program through publications, seminars, workshops, and consulting services to tribes, in addition to the web site and newsletters. The **Language Materials Repository** is a reference library at ILI of language materials developed by various tribes and institutions. The ILI national network connects people, programs, and organizations to strengthen communication concerning indigenous language revitalization issues.
- **Research & Development** (see **Research conducted by the organization**)

What the organization has in place

Financial support the organization receives: US government, foundation, and corporations

Other support the organization receives: Volunteers from corporations

Assistance or funding the organization would like to receive: As a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization, ILI seeks funding support from all sectors: foundations, government, corporations, and individuals. ILI launched an Endowment Campaign in 2008 to raise \$10 million by 2012 to ensure continuity of operations. \$4 million of the funds raised will be a Language Endowment Fund to provide scholarships and bridge funds to language programs.

Research conducted by the organization: The Research and Development arm of ILI studies the best practices in motivating people to learn and use languages; develops, tests, and builds templates and products that help language acquisition; and provides proven research information to grassroots communities.

Connections with other organizations:

Feeder schools:

Northeastern State University, Oklahoma

Santa Fe Indian School, Santa Fe

Bellevue Community College, Seattle (Bellevue)

Winona State University

Special challenges

Challenges the organization has experienced: Funding and inadequate space

Additional support the organization wishes to receive: ILI seeks funding support to strengthen and build our capacity.

Insights and Future Directions

Insights to share with others who are interested in learning more about the organization: ILI is driven by the urgency of the work to revitalize indigenous languages. We believe that there is a ten-year window of opportunity to make a difference, and to turn the tide of language decline so that indigenous languages become a vibrant component of everyday life in Indian communities. There is a race against time to save the precious human heritage and to maintain diversity.

Vision for the organization in the future: ILI constantly strives to effectively deliver our services and best practice models to indigenous communities in order to help create new speakers within the critical timeframe of 10 years. Our vision is to ensure that the endangered languages become spoken by people of all ages in everyday life so that individual identities, traditional wisdom, and values are passed on to future generations.