

LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION

Resources



Included here is a list of some tutorials, and links to helpful organizations; and some definitions for common types of language documentation workers.



Language Documentation Worker Descriptions

Cultural Experts: community experts with knowledge of cultural context of language.

Speaker-Signer participants: if new materials are being collected, speakers or signers of the target language are necessary! If possible, recording speakers/signers of different ages, genders, regional or family groupings will be valuable. Speakers of various levels of fluency may also be valuable participants in your project.

Collectors of Documentation: if new materials are being collected, workers need skills in interviewing, conversation, and linguistic elicitation. The latter may require some basic training in linguistics.

Transcriptionists: one of the most time-consuming and difficult steps in language documentation is transcription. Transcriptionists need excellent software and equipment (see page 1), and competence in both the target language and the language of analysis. Transcriptionists may require support in the form of software specific training and development.

Archivist: manages the long-term storage and preservation of language data and ensures data is properly formatted, backed up, and made accessible to the community.

Analysts: the documentation project will require workers who understand the grammar and orthography of the language, and who can break words, phrases and sentences down into their component parts. Training in linguistics is critical for analysts.

Technologists: organizing and using language documentation requires knowledge of how to use and potentially how to develop various kinds of software. While technologists might not be solely devoted to a documentation project, their support (including support from your Institutional IT Department) is crucial to your project's success.

Project managers: documentation projects can be complex, involving multiple teams of workers creating and managing a wide variety of resources. These projects are typically long-term efforts, with multiple deliverables and changing needs and resources as the language community and the technology landscape change.

Audio/Video Specialists: operates and maintains recording equipment to ensure data is collected in the highest quality format.

Database Manager: responsible for creating and maintaining the digital database where linguistic data, transcripts, and metadata are stored.



Mary Johnson
Director, Native Language Programs
mjohnson@aihec.org



www.aiheclanguagescenter.org



Helpful Organizations

There are a variety of organizations who work in language documentation and revitalization. In addition to AIHEC, these organizations can be helpful as well. The Native American Language Resource Centers were established by the Dept. of Education and serve in a national and regional capacity.



National Native American Language Resource Center

(University of Hawaii): <https://www.nnalrc.org/>



West Region (Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah):

<https://aildi.arizona.edu/west-nalrc>



Northwest Region (Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and

Washington): <https://nili.uoregon.edu/>



Midwest Region (Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota,

Wyoming, Kansas, Missouri, and Colorado):

<https://www.littlepriest.edu/nalrc/>



The American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI)

<https://aildi.arizona.edu>

AILDI hosts a summer Institute offering courses in language documentation; and develops and offers workshops by arrangement with local communities.



Northwest Indian Language Institute (NILI)

<https://nili.uoregon.edu>

NILI does work similar to AILDI in the northwest.



Advancing Indigenous Languages Technologies (AILT)

<https://ailt.arizona.edu>

AILT supports advancing language technologies that serve Indigenous language community needs.



Indigenous Language Institute (ILI)

<https://www.ilinative.org/>

ILI provides vital language-related programs & services to Native nations, tribes, and communities.



Tutorials & Resources

Language Revitalization Planning Toolkit

<https://language-toolkit.fpcc.ca/>

This is a great resource from the First People's Cultural Council and was developed to support Indigenous communities creating their own language revitalization plans.

Endangered Languages Project Webinars

<https://www.youtube.com/@endangeredlanguagesproject>

ELP is an online gathering space to share knowledge, resources, and support to strengthen Indigenous and endangered languages.

Language Geek

<https://www.languagegeek.com/>

LG is dedicated to the promotion of Indigenous languages by providing tools to aid in communication such as free keyboard layouts necessary for writing Native languages.

