

Heritage Language Policy

Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes

Vision Statement--Affirming the Creator Spirit placed the peoples of the Confederated Salish, Pend d'Oreille and Kootenai Tribes on this earth to coexist with all creation and to serve as guardians of the natural world through a spiritual bond that maintain the balance of life;

Affirming the Treaty of Hellgate of 1855, put three distinct peoples together on one reservation that have two distinct cultures, and two distinct language families, who are governed under one tribal government;

Affirming language is the conduit for expressing spiritual beliefs that are integral to the living culture;

Affirming the perpetuation of the cultures and languages of the Confederated Salish, Pend d'Oreille and Kootenai Tribes is a necessity to the tribal government, departments, families, youth, and future generations;

Therefore the Tribal Council approves the following Heritage Language Policy of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

Reservation-Wide Policy on Heritage Languages

1. The Tribal Council designates and reaffirms the responsibility of the Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee and the Kootenai Culture Committee to guide, monitor, and coordinate language efforts. The Culture Committees have the oversight authority to ensure all language efforts and projects developed by departments and programs are consistent with the goals of the strategic language goals and plans.
2. The Culture Committees with the fluent speakers will develop a CSKT Language Goal and Strategy Outline. This document will identify the various tools and methods available in teaching language.
 - a. Comprehensive Salish-Pend d'Oreille Language Plan shall be developed, established, and implemented by the Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee through consultation among fluent speakers, tribal members, education institutions, linguistic communities, and others interested and involved in preserving the Salish language.
 - b. Comprehensive Kootenai Language Plan shall be developed, established, and implemented by the Kootenai Culture Committee through consultation among fluent speakers, tribal members, education institutions, linguistic communities, and others interested and involved in preserving the Kootenai language.

3. The Tribal council recognizes the roles played in the preservation and revitalization of the Salish and Kootenai languages of various tribal programs and educational institutions, including the Culture Committees, Early Childhood Services, Nkwusm, the People's Center, Salish Kootenai College, Tribal Education, Tribal Cultural Preservation, and others.
 - a. The Council directs tribally funded programs, to support the effort to revitalize the Salish and Kootenai languages.
 - b. The Council encourages community and educational entities to support the efforts to revitalize the heritage languages.
4. The Tribal Council designates the Tribal Education Department to support and provide educational record keeping in language for: 1) the Montana Class 7 Native American Language & Culture Specialist license; 2) reservation K-12 school language programs; and 3) coordinate permanent records with the SKC Registrar for Class 7 specialists.
5. Within one month of the Tribal Council's approval of this policy, each culture committee shall report back to the Council on how their language plan will be developed. Within six-month months of approval of this policy, each culture committee shall present their language plan to the Tribal Council for approval and inclusion in the FY 2006 budget, and annually thereafter.

Approved by Tribal Council—August 18, 2005