



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Eisenbeisz and Assembly Members

Thru: John Leach, Municipal Administrator

From: Jessica Ieremia, Library Director

Date: May 12, 2022

Subject: Alaska Interlibrary Cooperation Grant

Background

In the summer of 2021, the remains of 215 children were found at a residential school in Kamloops, Canada. This prompted a continent-wide effort to repatriate the remains of children and uncover the histories of colonial education policies directed at Indigenous children and families. In Alaska, individuals and tribes are seeking whatever information is available about the dozens of boarding schools, orphanages, and day schools that operated in Alaska as early as 1877. Alaska's Libraries, Archives and Museums (LAMS) have collections that contain the information they seek. Some LAMs are unfamiliar with what they have, aren't sure how to appropriately share what they have, or just don't know where to begin. This project brings together the Sitka Public Library, Alaska Native Heritage Center, Museums Alaska, Alaska State Museum and a steering committee to create an action plan that will guide efforts to uncover and share this chapter of Alaska's history.

Analysis

In June 2021, the United States Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland directed the Department of the Interior to coordinate an investigation into the Federal Indian boarding school system, with a focus on the location of schools, burial sites, and the identification of children who attended the schools. That report has been released and identifies 25 boarding schools, day schools, sanitariums, and orphanages in Alaska. Two locations of those schools reside in Sitka. This report highlights some of the conditions these children endured at these schools and raises important questions about the consequences of this system.

Very little is known about Alaska's boarding schools, their locations, and names. This

project is extremely important to provide Alaska Natives, and other Alaskans working to uncover information about the boarding schools, orphanages, and government education institutions in our state. LAMs in Alaska likely hold records and objects relevant to the Alaska Native boarding schools – records that survivors and the families of survivors should be able to access and to give them a voice in deciding how they are shared.

The guidelines this project will provide to LAMs is a way of sharing their collections that are sensitive to the trauma that many experienced and help in this historic truth-telling will be able to describe their collections, create meaningful programming, and develop future exhibitions in service of healing and reconciliation.

Fiscal Note

The costs of travel, supplies, services, other expenses, and a 10% indirect rate for CBS administrative costs are included in the grant budget of \$71,486. If the Sitka Public Library is awarded the grant, total expenses will be covered.

Should the funds be awarded, a supplemental appropriation to cover these costs will be presented to cover these costs as they are included in the FY2023 budget.

Recommendation

Approve this resolution authorizing the Municipal Administrator to apply for and execute a grant with the Alaska State Library for \$71,486 to convene and develop a statewide action plan for Libraries, Archives and Museums to uncover and share Alaska Native boarding school, orphanages and education history.

CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-16

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA (CBS)
AUTHORIZING THE MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATOR TO APPLY FOR AND
EXECUTE A GRANT WITH THE ALASKA STATE LIBRARY FOR \$71,486 TO
CREATE AN ACTION PLAN FOR ALASKA NATIVE BOARDING SCHOOL
HISTORY**

WHEREAS, boarding schools, orphanages, and other institutions of Alaska Native education profoundly affect the wellness of Alaska Native communities, yet the history remains mostly unknown; and

WHEREAS, Alaska collecting institutions such as libraries, archives and museums contain materials that document this history and need guidance to make these collections available; and

WHEREAS, this grant proposes to convene a steering committee of boarding school survivors and collections professionals who will generate an action plan that will guide Alaska's libraries, archives and museums to uncover and share the history of boarding school, orphanages, and Alaska Native educational history.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka that the CBS Municipal Administrator is authorized to apply for and execute a grant with the Alaska State Library for \$71,486 to create an action plan for Alaska Native boarding school history.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska on this 24th day of May, 2022.

Steven Eisenbeisz, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sara Peterson, MMC
Municipal Clerk

1st and final reading: 5/24/2022

Sponsor: Administrator