

**The Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit:  
Culturally Responsive Early Literacy Programming for Children and Learning Resources for Librarians**

Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI) is a nonprofit organization located in Juneau, Alaska. SHI’s mission is to perpetuate and enhance the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian cultures and its goal is to promote cultural diversity and cross-cultural understanding. SHI, in partnership with the Alaska Library Association, the Haines Borough School District Library, the Juneau Public Libraries, the Petersburg Public Library, the Sitka Public Library, the Alaska State Library, the Montana State University’s Tribal College Librarians Professional Development Institute, and the Association for Rural and Small Libraries, respectfully seeks funding in the amount of \$249,891 to develop culturally responsive early literacy programming for children and learning resources for librarians and disseminate those resources via the project’s Toolkit.

During the two-year **Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit** project, SHI and its partners will: (1) Create a Cultural Responsiveness Organizational Self-Assessment for Libraries; (2) Produce, test, and refine two asynchronous e-Learning modules for library staff; (3) Co-design, deliver, and refine activity plans for nine Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events; (4) Develop the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit to make available resources created through this project and culturally responsive early literacy tools, videos, and linguistic resources created previously by SHI; and (5) Disseminate the Toolkit by (a) providing a train-the-trainer workshop for Alaska’s public libraries and for the nation’s tribal college libraries (which serve their local community) and (b) project partners disseminating the Toolkit to Alaska’s 93 public libraries, 22% of which are designated as tribal libraries, and to the nation’s tribal, rural, and small libraries – reaching a target audience of more than 8,000 libraries, librarians, students, and others who support local library services.

**I. Project Justification**

The project is relevant to the IMLS goal of **Lifelong Learning** by providing learning opportunities for the library workforce to build their understanding of cultural diversity and equity and how that knowledge can be applied to increasing the inclusivity of their library’s environment, programming, collections, and staffing. The project is responsive to the Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program’s **Goal #3** (*Enhance the training/professional development of the library workforce to meet the needs of their communities*) and addresses **Objective 3.2** (*Create training programs that build library workforce skills and expertise in contributing to the well-being of communities. This work may relate to ... efforts that increase equity and access*). Only 41% of the nation’s four-year old children are enrolled in publicly funded preschool programs; in Alaska, only 22% of four-year old children are enrolled in federally funded preschool programs.<sup>i</sup> Providing librarians with a Toolkit to use to deliver Raven Reads’ award-winning, culturally responsive early literacy programming will increase children and their caregivers’ equitable access to high quality early literacy programming.

Our nation’s children are struggling to learn to read. Only 32% of fourth grade students in the United States are proficient in reading. In 2022, the average reading score for fourth grade students was lower than all previous assessment years since 2005. Also in 2022, the average fourth grade reading scores fell in 30 states/jurisdictions and

<b>Figure 1: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): Percentage of 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Proficient/Above in Reading, 2022</b>				
<i>U.S. Department of Education Data<sup>ii</sup></i>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>National Average</b>	35%	35%	34%	32%
--Alaska: 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Students, Combined	25%	26%	27%	24%
--Alaska: Caucasian 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Students	36%	37%	36%	44%
--Alaska: 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Students, AK Native	11%	9%	9%	6%

across all four census-defined regions: Northeast, Midwest, South, and West.<sup>iii</sup> Nearly 25% of Alaska’s K-12 students are of Native heritage; in 2022, the percentage of Alaska’s Indigenous fourth grade students proficient in reading was just 6%.

The decline in children’s reading proficiency is not solely the result of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on our nation’s educational systems. Results from the U.S. Department of Education’s 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress show fourth grade student’s reading proficiency declined in more than half states and on average was lower than in 2017.<sup>iv</sup> Reading proficiency for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students has been declining for decades.<sup>v</sup> For example, in 2022, average fourth grade reading scores based on standardized assessment was higher for Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, and White students than in 1992 – but not for AI/AN students.<sup>vi</sup>

<b>Figure 2: Average 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Sub-Population Scores for Reading Proficiency by Student, 2000-2022</b>											
<i>U.S. Department of Education Data<sup>vii</sup></i>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2022</b>
National Average – All Students	213	219	219	221	221	222	222	223	222	220	217
Alaska Average – All Students	N/A	212	211	214	211	208	209	213	207	204	204
National Average – AI/AN Students	214	207	204	203	204	202	205	205	202	204	197
Alaska – AI/AN Students	N/A	183	183	188	179	175	173	184	169	173	168

## Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Cultural Responsiveness

People whose lives and cultures are not valued or treated as important are less likely to invest in the overall learning process, whereas those who feel valued will be ready to learn.<sup>viii</sup> The cultures, languages, and histories of our nation's Indigenous children and students have been, and often still are, omitted from (or stereotyped in) the learning materials and instruction they receive in their classrooms – and even from the books and programs available to them at their libraries. This situation adversely affects the educational experiences and learning outcomes of Indigenous children and students.

Culturally relevant pedagogy was introduced in the 1990s by Gloria Landson-Billings; she defined it as teaching "that empowers students to maintain cultural integrity, while succeeding academically."<sup>ix</sup> Culturally responsive educational programming is a child/student-centered approach in which the child/students' unique cultural strengths are identified and nurtured to promote the child/student's achievement and a sense of well-being about their cultural place in the world.<sup>x</sup> Most school districts, libraries, and Indigenous-serving entities now strive to deliver culturally responsive programming.

In 2012, SHI developed a comprehensive, 50-hour cultural responsiveness training for Southeast Alaska's teachers. Hundreds of primary and secondary educators have completed SHI's training, designed to promote teacher connections in Alaska Native cultures, improve school climate, and boost academic success for Native students. SHI recently created an asynchronous cultural responsiveness e-Learning module for educators and will refine content from that training to develop the project's asynchronous e-Learning Module – *Cultural Diversity Training for Librarians and Library Staff*.

Broadly presented, delivering culturally responsive programming requires individuals be culturally competent by having an awareness of one's own cultural identity and views about other cultures, the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of the children and families served, and the ability to understand the within-group differences that make each of us unique – while celebrating between-group variations. Culturally responsive individuals strive to continuously support minoritized peoples through examination of assumptions about race and culture.

## Cultural Responsiveness Resources for Librarians and Library Staff

Alaska is home to the country's largest per capita population of Indigenous people. Alaska's population is 734,000 and 21.5% of its residents – and 25% of its children – are Alaska Native.<sup>xi</sup> Our country's American Indian and Alaska Native population increased from 5.2 million in 2010 (1.7% of the nation's total population) to 9.7 million (2.9% of total population) in 2020.<sup>xii</sup> In 2021, only 0.6% of the country's library workforce identified as being of Indigenous heritage.<sup>xiii</sup> The nation's library workforce needs and deserves to be supported to implement culturally responsive programming.

AkLA's *Guidelines for Culturally Responsive Alaska Public Libraries* were created by 10 Alaska Library directors during a 2001 workshop facilitated by Dr. Lotsee Patterson and sponsored by the Alaska State Library. Dr. Patterson is Professor Emeritus of the School of Library and Information Science at the University of Oklahoma, a citizen of the Comanche nation, and one of three founding members of the American Indian Library Association (AILA), an affiliate of the American Library Association. AkLA's guidelines are available on the worldwide web – but are underutilized.

Revised by AkLA's Alaska Native Issues Roundtable in 2018, the Guidelines state that they can be used to: "Guide preparation, training, and orientation of library staff to help them address the culturally specific needs of their Indigenous patrons." [Supporting Doc 2] The Alaska State Library held an "Alaska Native Libraries, Archives, and Museum Summit" in 2011 and a "Culturally Responsive Libraries Workshop" in 2013. This project builds on that work by using AkLA's Guidelines to (1) create a *Cultural Responsiveness Organizational Self-Assessment for Libraries* and (2) support the development of the asynchronous e-Learning Module – *Cultural Diversity Training for Librarians and Library Staff*.

## Raven Reads Culturally Responsive Early Literacy Programming

SHI designed its **Raven Reads** program in collaboration with Indigenous families, communities, and early childhood specialists to address decades of research indicating children who are fluent readers by the end of third grade are likely to do well in school, graduate from high school, and go on to higher education.<sup>xiv</sup> Raven Reads serves Alaska Native children, ages 0-5, and their extended families by hosting nine monthly Family Literacy Events annually (September-May) and providing enrolled children with nine Raven Reads books (or other culturally responsive book) annually.<sup>xv</sup>

Family Literacy Events follow a dialogic programming model, incorporating culturally infused activities that increase children's oral language and phonemic skills: pictures and puppets; rhymes, songs, and dance; and drums and clapping. The events feature the assembled group reading a Raven Reads book together (modeling shared book reading) and engaging in culturally responsive early literacy building activities (modeling dialogic activities) – as children and their caregivers visit activity stations to participate in programming that also enhanced children's social and emotional skills.

The Library of Congress recognized [Raven Reads](#) with a [2017 Best Practice Honoree award](#) – making it one of only 15 programs in the world to receive the honor that year. The award recognizes organizations making outstanding contributions to increasing literacy and encourages continued development of innovative methods for promoting literacy

and the dissemination of effective practices. The Library of Congress stated that SHI's Raven Reads program model and implementation "serves as a valuable model for other organizations seeking to create evidence-based literacy programs."

Integral to Raven Reads programming are SHI's 30 Raven Reads children's books written and illustrated by Alaska Native authors and artists. AILA awarded SHI's *Shanyaak'utlaax: Salmon Boy* its [2018 AILA Youth Literature Award](#) and *How Devil's Club Came to Be* was reviewed by the [American Indians in Children's Literature](#) (AICL). In 2020, *Raven Makes the Aleutians* was awarded an AILA Picture Book Honor and AICL recognized *Cradle Songs of Southeast Alaska*. In 2021, the Alaska Center for the Book selected *Shanyaak'utlaax: Salmon Boy* as the [state's featured children's book](#) at the National Book Festival, an annual festival sponsored by the Library of Congress. [Supporting Doc 2]

### **Efficacy and Current Implementation of Raven Reads Programming**

SHI's Raven Reads programming employs – and its Raven Reads book support – the **Home Literacy Model**, which empowers parents, guardians, caregivers, and families to feel confident in their roles and abilities to foster their child's development of their emergent literacy skills. Home literacy context models arose from groundwork laid by Jerome Bruner, who assisted in creation of the nation's Head Start programming model in the 1960s.<sup>xvi</sup>

The Home Literacy Model supports and demonstrates to caregivers the importance of using (1) caregiver-child shared book reading (dialogic reading) to strengthen children's oral language development and reading frequency; and (2) caregiver-child teaching (dialogic activities) to strengthen children's early literacy development and subsequent reading fluency.<sup>xvii</sup> Reading *frequency* and *fluency* are positively associated with children's fourth grade reading proficiency.<sup>xviii</sup>

SHI piloted Raven Reads in Juneau from 2014-2017, serving 190 Native families. Independent evaluation shows, on average, parents *enrolling* in the program read with their children 120 minutes/week. Families *served* reported increasing time spent reading with their children to 160 min/week – an increase of 33%. Furthermore, families engaging in six or more Family Literacy Events/year read with children 180 min/week – an increase of 50%. As a result, between 2014-2020, Juneau's incoming Alaska Native kindergarten students' early literacy skills [increased by an average of 11.6%](#).

SHI now offers Raven Reads in 14 Southeast Alaska communities, serving approximately 400 children. However, **Southeast Alaska, with a population of approximately 72,000 residents, comprises less than 10% of Alaska's total population.** This project and its Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit will allow more Alaska Native and American Indian children and their caregivers to engage in Raven Reads programming through their local libraries – assisting caregivers to enhance their children's early literacy skills and future reading proficiency, thus promoting greater educational equity.

SHI also receives requests from non-Native families to participate in Raven Reads programming, but SHI's current funding only allows SHI to serve Alaska Native children. Findings from SHI's 2022 Raven Reads at the Library demonstration project suggest supporting librarians to implement Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events build their abilities to implement programming that enhance *all* children's early literacy skills and cultural competencies.

### **The 2022 Raven Reads at the Library Demonstration Project**

In 2022, SHI partnered with three public libraries located in Southeast Alaska (the Juneau Public Libraries, the Petersburg Public Library, and the Sitka Public Library) on a demonstration project to develop activity plans used to host three Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events for *all* children and their caregivers. The Association for Library Services to Children and Families state in *Importance of Diversity in Library Programming and Materials for Children*:

As our Nation continues to diversify, it is essential that children learn to understand the important role of their culture and the cultures of other people in creating an overall global culture respectful of differences. One way that children learn about the world around them and other cultures is through the social messages found in stories. Stories help children understand how society perceives their culture as well as the cultures of their classmates, teachers, caregivers, and others, thereby influencing their social and identity development. One place children interact with stories on a regular basis is the library. Through its materials collections and programs, the library introduces children to many stories, starting at a very young age.<sup>xix</sup>

SHI's Early Childhood Education Specialist and library staff co-designed activity plans using themes in Raven Reads Books and library staff modeled shared book reading using those books. Guidance and funding to support the libraries to engage Elders or other cultural knowledge holders in the family-centered, community-based programming was provided. One participating caregiver explained: "*I loved the song, drumming, other languages – really brought the book to life!*"

Project highlights include a tribal elder writing a song for families to sing during a Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Event; a child with limited mobility able to participate in the programming; and older children engaging in dialogic role play during *their* library time using culturally responsive activity stations created for the programming. Approximately 150 children were served, and 26 new library cards issued to participants. [Section IV/Supporting Doc 2]

## Target Population and Project Beneficiaries

The **target groups** for the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit project are (some redundancy, est. reach of 8,000):

1. **60 librarians and library staff** (based on discussion with the libraries) cumulatively **employed by the project's four partner libraries**. The librarians and library staff at these partner libraries will complete the project's two asynchronous e-Learning modules, comprising approximately 4 hours of training.
2. **250** (based on previous attendance) **of Alaska's librarians** attending the Alaska Library Association's (AkLA) 2025 Annual Conference, which will feature a train-the-trainer Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit workshop.
3. **50** (based on previous attendance) **Librarians from the nations' tribal and tribal college libraries** that attend Montana State University's 2025 Tribal College Librarians Professional Development Institute (TCLI), which will feature a train-the-trainer Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit workshop.
4. **165 public and tribal libraries** receiving a press release about/link to the Raven Reads Toolkit during the project
  - a. The Alaska State Library will provide this information to Alaska's 93 public and tribal libraries, and
  - b. TCLI staff will provide the information to its directory of 72 tribal libraries throughout the nation.
5. **8,000** (based on discussion with ARLS) **librarians, students, and other members of the Association for Rural and Small Libraries** (ARSL) disseminating a press release about/link to the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit.

The four libraries participating in the project are representative of the varied characteristics of Alaska's libraries. The Alaska State Library reports there are 93 public libraries in the state, 22% of which have been designated as tribal libraries by their local tribe or governing body, and approximately 36% of the state's public libraries are "smaller public libraries" and serve remote and rural communities in which large percentages of residents are of Alaska Native heritage.<sup>xx</sup>

The three branches of the **Juneau Public Libraries** are located in Alaska's third largest community and the state's capital city. The **Sitka Public Library** is located in the state's 10<sup>th</sup> largest community. The State of Alaska has designated Juneau (population 32,000) and Sitka (population 8,400) as urban communities. Like most communities in Southeast Alaska – and many communities in the state – Juneau, Sitka, and Petersburg can only be reached by air or by water.

Petersburg (population 3,350) and Haines (population 2,050) are the 34<sup>th</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup> largest of Alaska's communities. The Alaska State Library considers the **Petersburg Public Library** a "smaller public library." The **Haines Borough School District Library** will provide Raven Reads at the Library programming for students in grades K-2. Haines has road access to some Alaska communities, but only access by air or water to other Southeast Alaska communities.

There are fewer than 100 public libraries in Alaska and approximately 250 members of Alaska's library workforce participate in AkLA's Annual Conference to engage in professional development opportunities. Montana's State University's TCLI maintains a directory of 74 of the nation's tribal libraries/tribal college libraries (in the U.S., there are 32 accredited tribal colleges and universities); most tribal college libraries provide programming for their communities.

As ARSL notes in its letter of project commitment: 1 in 3 public libraries in the U.S. serve a population less than 2,500 people, providing an opportunity to support librarians, library staff, and library users who are frequently overlooked. Resources developed through the project will be shared by ARLS with its membership. [Supporting Doc 1]

The project's **ultimate beneficiaries** are the children and caregivers who engage in Raven Reads at the Library programming during the project and long after the project is successfully completed through their library's use of resources made available through the project's Toolkit. Based on SHI's 2022 Raven Reads at the Library demonstration project – which took place when Southeast Alaska was still experiencing high rates of COVID-19 in many communities – SHI and its four partner libraries estimate at least **250 children** (and their caregivers) will be served during the project. Through dissemination of the project's Toolkit to the target groups, SHI and its project partners estimate that thousands of children and their caregivers throughout the nation will benefit from culturally responsive early literacy programming.

The characteristics of these ultimate beneficiaries include: (1) Alaska's Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and their caregivers; (2) through this project, students in grades K-2 who will be served by the Haines Borough School District Library; (3) Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and caregivers served by our Nation's tribal libraries, which include tribal college libraries serving their community; and (4) Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and caregivers served by our nation's rural and small libraries. Another characteristic some of these children share is (5) living in poverty.

Library services support underserved families to acquire the most valuable early literacy tools – books to read with their children and strategies for using shared book reading to enhance their children's early literacy. In the United States, 1 child in 6 lives in poverty. That equates to 11.9 million of the nation's children.<sup>xxi</sup> The *Parents, Children, Libraries, and Reading* report published by the Pew Research Center, demonstrates that 84% of parents with children ages 0-6 feel that libraries are very important for their children, and families earning less than \$50,000 annually are eager to take advantage of more library services.<sup>xxii</sup> In 2019, the median household income for American Indian/Alaska Native people (AI/AN) was \$49,906 (it was \$71,664 for non-Hispanic white households) – and 20.3% of AI/AN families lived in poverty.<sup>xxiii</sup>

## **The Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit Compliments and Builds on Existing Theory and Practice**

There are numerous toolkits available for use by the nation’s library workforce to support children’s development of early literacy skills. One example is the Bay Area Museum’s **Reimagining School Readiness Toolkit**, created in collaboration with the Pacific Library Partnership and the California State Library and launched in 2018. The Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit project will create and share with library professionals an adaptable, *culturally responsive* toolkit and training to enhance children’s early literacy skills that is rooted in the Alaska Native Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian cultures of Southeast Alaska and promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion in library programming.

Raven Reads at the Library programming will expand on SHI’s use of the Home Literacy model to create and share resources for libraries to support caregivers to use shared book reading and dialogic activities to build children’s early literacy skills. Raven Reads at the Library encourages increased use of library resources in children’s homes; during the 2022 demonstration project, 26 new library cards were issued to participants. SHI and the Alaska State Library have provided Alaska’s libraries with SHI’s 30 Raven Reads books, which can be acquired online from SHI’s Heritage Store.

Tracking emerging literacy and reading proficiency data for 4,000 children (ages 0-5) for eight years, researchers identified a “causal effect of reading to children on the reading skill of the child.”<sup>xxiv</sup> The positive effects of shared book reading was evident in data collected for 10-11 year old children and “compared to not reading or reading on 1-2 days per week,” shared book reading 3-5 days per week had a similar effect as children being nearly half a year older (based on reading proficiency); shared book reading 6-7 days per week had a similar effect as the child being nearly one year older.

## **II. Project Work Plan**

### **Planning, Executing, and Managing the Project**

SHI was created as a 501(c)3 nonprofit in 1980 by Sealaska Corporation, which was established through the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. SHI employs 76 full-time employees, and its Native hire rate is 57%. SHI is headquartered at its Walter Soboleff Building in Juneau, Alaska. [See Organizational Profile] SHI and its project staff will plan, execute, and manage the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit project with support from its project partners.

### **Project Activities and Sequence of those Activities**

SHI’s two-year Implementation Project is comprised of eight primary objectives, three completed in Year 1 and five completed in Year 2. The project activities necessary to achieve the eight project objectives are described below.

**Objective 1** (Year 1, Months 1-8): SHI’s Communications & Publications Deputy Director (CPD) disseminates a press release about the IMLS project; the Project Coordinator (PC) establishes the project’s Advisory Committee (AC). Supported by the PC, the AC uses AkLA’s Culturally Responsive Guidelines to develop the **Cultural Responsiveness Organizational Self-Assessment for Libraries** by creating a qualitative rating system for the Guideline’s indicators for assessing equity, access, and diversity of library (1) environments, (2) programs/services, (3) collections, and (4) staffing.

**Objective 2** (Year 1, Months 1-12): The Project Director (PD) draws from SHI’s asynchronous e-Learning Module *Cultural Responsiveness Training for Educators* to create the slide deck for the project’s **asynchronous e-Learning Module I: Cultural Awareness and Diversity Training for Librarians and Library Staff**. The PC creates slides for Module I, describing the Cultural Responsiveness Organizational Self-Assessment for Libraries and how it can be used/modified for use by libraries. The AC reviews the slide deck; PC incorporates their feedback. The PD and PC create an online training post-survey. Library staff at the partner libraries complete the training/survey; PC reviews feedback and refinements made to Module I with the AC. The PD approves Module I for dissemination in Year 2, using the Toolkit.

**Objective 3** (Year 1, Months 1-12): SHI’s Early Childhood Education Specialist (ECS) establishes the project’s Community of Practice (CoP) – staff from the project’s partner libraries who will implement the project’s Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events in Year 2. The ECS develops and provides the CoP with a new activity plan monthly; ECS and CoP **co-design nine Raven Reads at the Library activity plans**. ECS and PD create an online post-participation survey with QR codes (paper surveys will also be made available) to obtain caregiver feedback in Year 2, when the activity plans are used to support monthly programming at the four libraries. PD approves the activity plans.

**Objective 4** (Year 2, Months 1-10): CoP members use activity plans co-designed in Year 1 to implement monthly **Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events** at their libraries and encourage caregivers to complete post-participation surveys. ECS uses participant feedback as it is received to refine the activity plans; the refined activity plans are reviewed monthly with the CoP. The PD approves use of the activity plans for dissemination through the Toolkit.

**Objective 5** (Year 2, Months 1-7): ECS, PC, PD, CPD, and SHI’s Technical Media Specialist (TMS) produce the **Raven Reads at the Library: Culturally Responsive Early Literacy Program Design and Delivery video**. Project Staff “storyboard” the video (plan footage/interviews to demonstrate Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events); PC, PD, and CPD develop narrative script. TMS shoots footage (Raven Reads at the Library programming at the Juneau

Public Libraries and interviews of library staff). TMS edits footage and overlays narration. CoP, AC, PD, PC, ECS, and SHI Leadership review video; TMS refines video, if needed. PD approves dissemination of video through the Toolkit.

**Objective 6** (Year 2, Months 1-7): PC, assisted by PD, creates slide deck for the project's **asynchronous e-Learning Module II: Raven Reads at the Library – Culturally Responsive Early Literacy Design and Delivery** that describes the Raven Reads program history, use of Raven Reads books to support the program, the Indigenous pedagogy underlying the program, and the project's activity plans to implement Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events. ECS and PD create the online post-survey for the training. Librarians at partner libraries complete the training/survey; PC and PD use feedback to refine the training as needed and the PD approves dissemination of Module II through the Toolkit.

**Objective 7** (Year 2, Months 1-10): PD, PC, ECS, and SERRC (contractor) "storyboard" the **Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit**, identifying its design, functionality, and content. The Toolkit will be comprised of several linked webpages on SHI's website. SERRC iteratively develops the Toolkit with the PD, PC, ECS and uploads project resources (provided by project staff) to the Toolkit. PC develops an online survey for Toolkit users to use to provide feedback and ask questions. The CoP, AC, PD, PC, and ECS test the Toolkit and survey; SERRC, assisted by SHI project staff, use that feedback received to refine the Toolkit, as needed. PD approves use of the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit.

**Objective 8** (Year 2, Months 1-12): PC and AC design training content and agenda for the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit train-the-trainer workshop, one method of **disseminating the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit**. PD approves workshop content/agenda. PC and ECS lead the workshop at AkLA's Annual Conference; PC, ECS, and AC use participant feedback to refine workshop content/agenda. PC, ECS, and AC member lead the workshop at TCLI. CPD (with the PC, ECS, PD) writes a press release as an informative article about the project, its results, and featuring a link to the Toolkit; AkLA, TCLI, Alaska State Library, TCLI, and Assoc. for Rural and Small Libraries **disseminate** the press release to libraries, librarians, and students. PC and ECS co-author Project Impact Report; PD refines/finalizes that report.

### **Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit SHI Project Staff and Toolkit Contractor**

**Project Director** (PD – 3% FTE). SHI's Education Director, Kristy Ford, will supervise, support, and approve the work of the Project Coordinator and Early Childhood Education Specialist and support the creation of the project's two e-Learning modules, video, and Toolkit. She will submit interim/final grant reporting and refine/approve the Project Impact Report. She holds Master of Arts degrees in Teaching and in Educational Leadership. SHI's Education Director since 2018, she oversees SHI's Raven Reads program and culturally responsive training activities. She has been a classroom teacher, a Juneau School District Principal, and worked in early childhood education. She is experienced with developing asynchronous e-Learning courses, managing grants, providing programmatic/fiscal oversight, and reporting on grants.

**Project Coordinator** (PC – 30% FTE). SHI's Raven Reads Program Manager, Tess Olympia, will coordinate the AC's activities and assist to develop the two e-Learning Modules, video, Toolkit, and the train-the-trainer workshops; she will co-lead two workshops with the ECS and a member of the AC and co-author the Project Impact Report with the ECS. She holds a bachelor's degree and a certificate in language pathology and has completed 60 hours of professional development in culturally responsive learning. She has been SHI's Raven Reads Program Manager for five years and worked in early childhood education for 15 years. She develops/delivers train-the-trainer workshops annually for SHI's 14 Raven Reads Community Liaisons. She is experienced in grant management, scheduling, budget oversight, and reporting.

**Early Childhood Education Specialist** (ECS – 25% FTE). Kaye Roldan will establish and collaborate with the Community of Practice (CoP) to co-design nine Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Event activity plans and use participant feedback to refine/finalize the activity plans with the CoP. She will support the development of asynchronous e-Learning Module II, the video, and the Toolkit. She, the PC, and a member of the AC will co-lead the project's two workshops, and she will co-author the Project Impact Report. She holds a bachelor's degree in Education, she develops activity plans for SHI's Raven Reads Family Literacy Events, and she managed the 2022 Raven Reads at the Library demonstration project. SHI also assists SHI's Raven Reads Program Manager to lead annual train-the-trainer workshops.

**Senior Media Technical Specialist** (MTS – 20% FTE, Year 2 only). Kai Monture will shoot footage of Raven Reads at the Library Events and interviews with library staff delivering the programming, edit footage, and create the project's short video. Kai is of Alaska Native heritage and was raised in the Tlingit culture, knowledge, and traditions of his family. He has held his position with SHI for nearly three years. He works with digital audiovisual media to "capture and create" unique and interactive ways for the public to learn about Alaska Native culture. Kai studied Anthropology and Broadcast Film at University of Alaska and has worked as a Production Assistant for National Geographic and The Travel Channel

**Communications & Publications Deputy Director** (12 hours Year 1 / 100 hours Year 2). Kathy Dye will write/disseminate two press releases in Year 1 (announcing project / announcing Raven Reads at the Library programming at four libraries). In Year 2, she will oversee/check the work of the Senior Technical Specialist, assist project staff to write narrative script for the video, narrate the video, and write a press release about the project/project results and providing a

link to the Toolkit for use by SHI and its partners to disseminate a project overview, results, and a link to the Toolkit. She holds a BA degree in Journalism and has worked for SHI for 20 years, creating community outreach tools & publications.

**SERRC.** (52 hours in Year 2 - \$5,000). SHI will contract with SERRC to create the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit, comprised of linked webpages on SHI's website. SHI has previously contracted with SERRC to create similar toolkits that are comprised of linked webpages on SHI's website. SERRC is a statewide non-profit authorized by statute in 1976 to help schools meet Alaska's educational and operational needs. SERRC's Technology Operations team serves across Alaska, implementing, managing, and supporting the technology that runs Alaska's schools and organizations.

### **Raven Reads at the Library Advisory Committee**

The Advisory Committee (AC) is comprised of librarians who assisted SHI to design the project and have committed three hours per month throughout the two-year project to develop and refine the project's resources/deliverables.

- **Erin Hollingsworth**, District Librarian at the North Slope Borough School District. She has previously worked for Tuzzy Consortium Library, Iñisagvik College, a tribal library, as the Public and Youth Services Librarian, tasked with providing children's programming; many tribal college libraries are also the community's public library. She is a member of the Alaska Library Association and serves on its Alaska Native Issues Roundtable.
- **Jonah Lamb**, Public Services Librarian and Associate Professor (tenured) of Library Information Science at the University of Alaska Southeast (since 2013) and President of the **Alaska Library Association** (AkLA). He holds a Master of Library Services degree, a certificate in open education resources librarianship, and is a mentor for the Bridging Knowledge: Supporting Indigenous Scholars into the Fields of Librarianship, an IMLS funded project.
- **Catherine Melville**, Acting Director of the Juneau Public Library (JPL) holds a Master of Library Science and has worked for the JPL since 2003. She has held many positions at JPL and has deep knowledge of JPL services and training needs. She previously served as JPL's Library Manager Technical Services, knowledge she will draw from to support development/review of the project's asynchronous e-Learning Modules and Toolkit.
- **Jamie Thill**, Early Literacy and Children's Coordinator, Alaska State Library. She supports Alaska's librarians and caregivers by providing advice and training on library storytimes and other early childhood programs and maintaining early literacy play spaces. She possesses extensive experience providing early literacy and children's services consultancy to library professionals and leaders, specifically to serve underserved children and families.

### **The Community of Practice (CoP) for the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit Project**

The CoP is comprised of a staff member from SHI's library partners collaborating with SHI's Early Childhood Education Specialist to co-design/implement/refine activity plans for nine Raven Reads at the Library Family Events.

The **Juneau Public Libraries** (JPL) are comprised of the downtown Juneau Public Library, the Mendenhall Valley Public Library, and the Douglas Public Library. The JPL is a member of the [Alaska Library Catalog](#), a consortium of 87 public, academic, special, and school libraries serving 92% of the population of Alaska and sharing 3.2 million library materials. JPL participated in the 2022 Raven Reads at the Library demonstration project.

**The Petersburg Public Library** (PPL) is a small, rural library and an anchor institution for the community providing children's programming and display space for original art pieces created by local artists and collections. The library also hosts the Petersburg Listening Project to record (and share via its website) conversations that document and foster the community's interwoven connections. PPL participated in the 2022 Raven Reads at the Library demonstration project.

**The Sitka Public Library** (SPL) has served Sitka residents since 1923. SPL's building was built in 1967. An addition, more than doubling the library's size, was completed in 1983. An extensive library expansion and remodel project for the library was completed in 2016. SPL participated in the 2022 Raven Reads at the Library demonstration project, despite the fact that the community was experiencing very high rates of COVID-19 infections.

**Haines Borough School District Library** will provide Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events for students in grades K-2, allowing SHI and the CoP to develop/demonstrate services for that age group. In 2014, the district's Elementary School was one of only three schools in Alaska recognized by the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, a program honoring schools for their progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups.

### **Time, Financial, Personnel, Other Resources Needed to Carry Out Activities**

The 2-year project requires \$249,891 in funding. Personnel (\$108,020): PD (3% FTE), PC (30% FTE), ECS (25% FTE), MTS (20% FTE); CPD (112 hours). Benefits (\$55,091). Travel (\$10,660): 2 staff provide training at AkLA Conference; 2 staff and 1 AC member provide training at TCLI. Contracts (\$5,000): SERRC creates Toolkit. Supplies (\$7,600): office / children's programming. Other (\$28,681): Stipends for 4 libraries and 1 AC member (time developing project/away from duties), honoraria for elder programming participation, SHI IT/Occupancy. Indirect Costs (\$34,839).

## **Incorporation of Target Group Perspectives and Ongoing External Input, Validation, and Consensus Building**

The perspectives of the Target Group were the impetus for the development of the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit project. In 2021, the Director of the Juneau Public Libraries (JPL) met with SHI's President, Tlingit anthropologist and educator, Dr. Rosita Worl. The JPL Director was aware of SHI's work in developing and delivering culturally responsive training for educators and other organizations and asked if SHI could develop and provide culturally responsive training for the JPL staff. SHI's President was interested in collaborating to develop programming that would also encourage Alaska Native families to engage in the programs and services offered by public and tribal libraries.

SHI conducted research and discovered the Alaska Library Association's (AkLA) Culturally Responsive Guidelines for Alaska's Public Libraries. SHI reached out to the President of AkLA to discuss using the guidelines to create cultural responsiveness training for library staff. SHI then developed an ad hoc committee of librarians with diverse roles and perspectives. Meetings with that committee led to SHI's development of the Raven Reads at the Library demonstration project. Based on favorable project results, including feedback provided by librarians and caregivers participating in the project, SHI and this project's Advisory Committee (AC) designed the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit project.

The project includes ongoing external input, validation, and consensus building through development and use of surveys to obtain participant feedback (both from library professionals served and caregivers engaging in Raven Reads at the Library programming). The project's surveys for the two asynchronous e-Learning modules and Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events will be used by project staff, CoP, and AC to refine resources created during the project that SHI/partners will disseminate to the target groups through train-the-trainer workshops and by sending an informative press release to target groups describing the project, project results, and a link to the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit.

## **Mechanisms for Tracking Progress and Achieving Intended Results**

The Project Coordinator (PC) and Early Childhood Education Specialist (ECS) will create **Project Effectiveness Reports** quarterly, documenting individuals participating in the project and activities completed during the reporting period, based on the project's Schedule of Completion. The Project Director (PD) will review/refine these reports, which will be provided to SHI's Board of Trustees and be used by project staff to prepare interim/final IMLS reports.

The PC and ECS will document the number of hours spent on the project by the members of the CoP and AC to track **efficiency** and for use documenting payment of stipends (libraries/one AC member) and honoraria (elders). Quarterly, the PC and PD will meet to review the project award budget and compare it to documentation provided by the SHI Finance Department to ensure project expenses are/remain within budget and to identify/correct any erroneous budget charges.

The project uses participant surveys to assess the **quality** of resources created during the project; project staff use that feedback to refine the resources prior to dissemination through the project's Toolkit. Quarterly, the PD, PC, and ECS will meet to review the project's Schedule of Completion, assess the fit between target completion dates and actual completion dates, and implement corrective action, as needed, to ensure the project objectives are completed within the **time allotted**.

## **Dissemination of Project Content**

To support the dissemination and subsequent use of the Toolkit by librarians and libraries, the PC and the AC will develop the content and agenda for the Raven Reads at the Library Train-the-Trainer Workshop. The PC is experienced providing train-the-trainer workshops as a part of her job as SHI's Raven Reads Program Manager.

SHI has secured commitment from two of its project partners to provide the workshop to their membership. The Alaska Library Association (AkLA) is a nonprofit professional organization for the employees, volunteers, and advocates at academic, public, school, and special libraries. AkLA's goals are to promote vibrant libraries that deliver outstanding services to their users and to provide professional development opportunities through its Annual Conference. AkLA has committed to providing the opportunity for the project's PC and Early Childhood Education Specialist, with assistance from AC members in attendance, to deliver the workshop at AkLA's 2025 Annual Conference. [Supporting Doc 1]

Montana State University's Tribal College Librarians Institute (TCLI) is a five-day institute that welcomes 30-60 participants annually and covers topics from basic librarianship to cutting edge developments, while addressing cultural concerns. This is especially important because more than half of these librarians are non-Native and most also provide programming for children (information provided by TCLI). In discussion with the TCLI Coordinator about the project, she stated: "Yes, this sounds amazing! And so relevant for the TCLI audience." The PC, ECS, and an AC member (Erin Hollingsworth) will provide the workshop at TCLI 2025. [Supporting Doc 1]

Supported by the PD, PC, and ECS, SHI's Communications & Publications Director (CPD) will write an informative Press Release about the project, its results, and providing a link to the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit. AkLA, TCLI, the Association for Rural and Small Libraries, and the Alaska State Library will also disseminate the Raven Reads at the Library press release, with an anticipated reach of more than 8,000 libraries, librarians, library staff, students, and others



who support library services, and thus are served by these project partners. [Supporting Doc 1]

The CPD will share the press release on SHI's website/social media platforms and send it to media outlets. In 2021, SHI's website logged 79,472 unique visitors. SHI uses Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (31,033 followers total) to communicate with constituents and the public. SHI's CPD had wrote and disseminated 78 press releases to media outlets in 2021, resulting in 123 news stories published or broadcasted about SHI's projects, programs, and services that year.

### **III. Diversity Plan**

#### **The Inclusion of a Diversity of Perspectives and Practices in the Project**

SHI and its partners designed the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit project by applying an equity lens to ways libraries can support underserved populations to enhance their children's early literacy skills, thus contributing to inclusionary practices in the library field. For example, the activities that develop nine activity plans then used to implement nine months of Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events at four libraries during the project.

SHI will include a diversity of perspectives and practices to develop the activity plans through its engagement of a Community of Practice comprised of librarians at four partner libraries who will, supported by SHI's ECS, co-design, implement, and use caregiver feedback obtained through post-programming surveys to refine the activity plans.

SHI and its partners employed that iterative process to develop and deliver three Family Literacy Events during the 2022 Raven Reads at the Library demonstration project and inclusionary practices were enhanced. As one librarian stated:

*This programming was fantastic and I'm very excited about the quality of early childhood programming that came out of it ... I've always thought of story time as some of the cheapest programming we offer because I, as library staff, present it, and love it! Now, I'm aware I need to plan story time funding for the purpose of cultural programming in early childhood. I appreciate SHI staff made it possible for non-Native participants to learn about culturally appropriate programming in an inclusive and collaborative environment. That made it possible for the leap in my own learning. I would love to work further with SHI to develop story times around more of their titles.*

The Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit project employs a similar, inclusive and iterative design process to create and refine the two e-Learning modules (cultural responsiveness / program implementation) to share through the Toolkit.

#### **Involving Participants in Defining Challenges and Opportunities and Creating/Implementing the Project**

The Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit project co-designs activity plans to support Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events that involve community members in the planning and implementation of the events. This process allowed librarians participating in the 2022 demonstration project to identify and address opportunities and challenges.

*I ended realizing it is not enough to have diverse books in our collection that library staff read for story time. It's important to bring in Cultural Specialists, whenever possible, to present these books because that maintains the cultural integrity of the story.*

Caregivers engaging in the project's Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events will also be encouraged to complete post-participation surveys. Feedback from those surveys will used to refine the project's Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events – thus involving the project beneficiaries in identifying opportunities and unmet challenges that can be addressed during refinement of the activity plans, prior to dissemination through the Toolkit.

#### **Strengthening Libraries' Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Practices that Include a Diverse Library Workforce**

SHI and its partners are aware of "culturally responsive library walk models," tools libraries can use with community members to initiate, continue, or respond to interest in (or concerns about) library services and resources. For librarians/library staff who feel the need to conduct an internal review prior to an outward facing library walk, the project creates and shares the *Culturally Responsive Organizational Self-Assessment for Libraries*. To build on that resource, the project creates and shares e-Learning Module I: *Cultural Awareness and Diversity Training for Librarians and Library Staff*.

SHI and its partners are also respectful of members of the library workforce possessing well-honed cultural responsiveness rooted in their cultural heritage, knowledge, relationships, and/or breadth of service to their communities. Through discussion with members of the Advisory Committee, to support those (and all) librarians, the project creates training to specifically learn to implement Raven Reads at the Library programming using e-Learning Module II: *Raven Reads at the Library – Culturally Responsive Early Literacy Program and Delivery* and companion video (same name).

### **IV. Project Results**

#### **Project Results Address the Identified Need, Advance Knowledge/Understanding, and Benefit Society**

The Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit project develops and disseminates resources to Alaska's libraries and the nation's rural, small, and tribal libraries to support librarian to deliver culturally responsive early literacy programming.

There is a great need for this project; in 2022, only 32% of our nation’s fourth grade students were proficient in reading.

SHI’s 2022 demonstration project shows that culturally responsive Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events encourage caregivers of Alaska Native children to engage in library programming. Librarians who use learning and implementation resources shared via the project’s Toolkit will build their knowledge, skills, and abilities to deliver that programming for underserved children and families – advancing knowledge and understanding in the library field.

<b>Figure 3: Raven Reads at the Library Demonstration Project: Caregiver Feedback</b>	<b>Agree/Strongly Agree</b>
My child was exposed to new vocabulary	100%
My child heard a variety of letter and word sounds	100%
My child engaged in: culturally sustaining experiences (OR) new cultural experiences	100%
My child’s literacy skills will increase because of their participation in this event	96%
Our family has a library card	88%
Our family (or a member of our family) obtained a new library card	26%

Research shows that increased time spent by caregivers engaging in shared book reading with their children increases children’s early literacy skills and future reading fluency. The three libraries participating in SHI’s demonstration project reported increases library card attainment by participants and in book checkouts after hosting Raven Reads at the Library Early Literacy Events. Juneau had an increase of 127 more Raven Reads books checked out (an increase of nearly 10%).

The University of Nebraska has identified three developmental characteristics of why starting in early childhood to provide culturally responsive education is critically important “to creating a more just and inclusive society for all.”<sup>xxv</sup> These characteristics are: (1) Children as young as 2 ½ to 3 years old become aware of and begin to take in socially prevailing ideas, feelings, and stereotypes about people and about themselves; (2) A child’s interaction with parents, other children, the community, the media, and caregivers can inevitably shape their perception and judgement of others; and (3) Young children have the intellectual capacity for undoing any pre-existing unfair perceptions of others as they engage in meaningful, culturally responsive experiences with their primary caregivers. Thus, the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit project, which supports programming inclusive of *all* children and their caregivers, will generate benefits to society.

The PC and ECS will co-author the Project Impact Report documenting the number of librarians trained, use of participant feedback to refine the training, the number of children who engaged in Raven Reads at the Library, caregiver satisfaction with Raven Reads at the Library programming, use of caregiver feedback to refine the programming, and the number of librarians and libraries that received information about and a link to the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit.

### **Ensuring Adaptable Project Deliverables Usable by other Libraries and Communities**

AkLA’s Guidelines were created “to help public librarians examine how they respond to the specific informational, educational, and cultural needs of their Alaska Native users and communities.” The Guidelines note that while library directors were developing the Guidelines, “it became clear that they could be applied to other cultural and ethnic groups.”

Use of the Guidelines to create the project’s *Cultural Responsiveness Organizational Self-Assessment for Libraries* creates a tool with a rating scale to gauge equity, inclusion, and diversity practices related to their (1) library environment, (2) programs/services, (3) collections/resources, and (4) staffing. [Supporting Doc 1] Similarly, the asynchronous e-Learning Module I (*Cultural Awareness and Diversity Training for Librarians and Library Staff*) will support library staff to build their overarching awareness of cultural diversity – and will not focus exclusively on Alaska Native cultures.

The project’s Learning Module II (*Raven Reads at the Library: Culturally Responsive Early Literacy Program Design and Delivery*) and the companion video for that training will provide learning resources with embedded and applied learning opportunities for librarians to better understand culturally responsive pedagogies in general, and specifically how a Raven Reads at the Library employs a culturally responsive pedagogy – and are likely to generate ideas amongst library staff for how their library can develop more Family Literacy Events that are responsive to local cultures.

### **Sustaining Project Benefits Beyond the Conclusion of the Period of Performance**

SHI’s 2022 Raven Reads at the Library demonstration project illustrated the programming can be successfully adapted and implemented by libraries and inspired libraries to consider reprioritizing their budgets to support culturally responsive, community-engaged children’s programming – demonstrating long-term sustainability. [Supporting Doc 2] SHI anticipates the **Final Impact Report** for the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit project will document similar results.

The development and dissemination of the project’s resources to support the delivery of **Raven Reads at the Library** programming using a **Toolkit** available through SHI’s high quality website ensures the project will sustain benefits far beyond the conclusion of the period of performance. SHI and the Alaska State Library have sent all of Alaska’s libraries a set of **Raven Reads books**; other libraries can/have acquire/d those award-winning children’s books using SHI’s website.



<b>YEAR 2: THE RAVEN READS AT THE LIBRARY TOOLKIT PROJECT</b>	<b>Year 2</b>											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b>Objective 4: Deliver, assess, refine nine (9) activity plans for <i>Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events</i> with four partnering libraries</b>												
20. Four (4) partner libraries host 9 Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
21. Four (4) partner libraries obtain participant feedback using post-survey (online or paper)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
22. ECS compiles participant feedback and uses feedback to refine activity plans as needed	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
22. CoP meets monthly/discuss Events and feedback; ECS finalizes plans; PD approves plans	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
<b>Objective 5: Produce <i>Raven Reads at the Library: Culturally Responsive Early Literacy Program Design and Delivery Video</i> (Module II resource)</b>												
23. TMS, CPD, ECS, PC, and PD "storyboard" the video (plan footage/interviews for video)	X											
24. TMS shoots footage: program delivery, interviews with library staff/participating caregivers	X	X	X	X								
25. CPD, PC, PD develop script for descriptive, instructional narration; CPD voices narration				X								
26. TMS edits footage to create video and overlays video narration; CPD reviews work/video				X	X							
27. CoP, AC, PD, PC, ECS, SHI Leadership review video; TMS refines video; PD approves						X	X					
<b>Objective 6: Create, test, refine asynchronous e-Learning Module II: <i>Raven Reads at the Library - Culturally Responsive Early Literacy Program Design and Delivery</i></b>												
28. PC creates/reviews Module II training content (Raven Reads history, pedagogy, etc) with	X	X	X									
29. PC, assisted by PD, uses instructional content to create slide deck for Module II			X	X	X							
30. ECS, PC, PD create Module II participant post-survey instrument (online survey)					X							
31. AC, staff at 4 libraries complete Module II/survey; PC and PD refine and finalize Module II						X	X					
<b>Objective 7. Develop Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit as specific, linked Webpages on SHI's Website</b>												
32. PD, PC, ECS, and SERRC "storyboard" Toolkit: design, functionality, and content	X											
33. SERRC develops Toolkit with PD, PC, ECS and uploads content to Toolkit as it's available (Note, all finalized activity plans [Objective 4] are available to upload in Month 10, Year 2)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
34. PC creates Toolkit user survey (online survey) for users to share feedback/ask questions						X						
35. CoP, AC, PD, PC, ECS test toolkit and user survey; SERRC refines Toolkit as needed						X	X	X	X	X		
<b>Objective 8. Disseminate Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit: Toolkit Shared with Alaska's Public Libraries and the Nation's Tribal Libraries</b>												
36. PC and AC design Train-the-Trainer Toolkit Workshop content/agenda; PD refines/approves	X	X	X	X	X	X						
37. PD and PC create Workshop participant feedback survey instrument (online survey)							X					
38. ECS, PC, AC Members Lead the Toolkit Workshop at AkLA's Annual Conference								X				
39. PC, ECS, AC refine Train-the Trainer Workshop content/agenda using AkLA trainee feedback								X	X			
40. PC, AC Member, and CoP Member Lead Train-the-Trainer Toolkit Workshop at TCLI										X		
41. CPD writes Press Release (project, project results, link to Toolkit); PD refines/approves										X		
42. SHI, AkLA, ASL, TCLI, ARSL disseminate Press Release on SHI's website/to membership										X	X	X
43. PC/ECS write Project Impact Report; AC/CoP review report; PD submits Final IMLS Project Report										X	X	X

## Digital Products

### Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit:

#### Culturally Responsive Early Literacy Programming for Children and Learning Resources for Librarians

- 1. Type: What type of digital products will you create?** Describe the digital content, resources, or assets you will create or collect, the quantities of each type, the digital file format(s), the accompanying metadata, and any relevant standards you will use.

Digital resources created by Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI) for this project will include press releases about the project posted on SHI's website and shared with media outlets, the Cultural Responsiveness Organizational Self-Assessment for Libraries (a printable document), PowerPoint slides (instructional content that comprises the project's two e-Learning modules), activity plans to support nine Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events (printable documents), online surveys to be completed by librarians and library staff engaging in the project's training, online surveys to be completed by caregivers to children participating in the project's Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events, and an agenda and handouts to support the project's Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit train-the-trainer workshops.

Content described above will be created will be generated by SHI project staff using Microsoft Office, Adobe Creative Suite software, and Google Suite (project surveys). The project's written content will be developed by SHI's trained project staff and verified by a supervisor (SHI's Education Director, the Project Director for the project being proposed) prior to being made available. Documents that will be made available online using the project's Toolkit will be generated using Microsoft Word and made accessible in PDF format compliant with WCAG 2.1 level AA. All work will be checked for accuracy by SHI's senior staff before it is uploaded to the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit by the contractor that is developing the Toolkit with SHI.

The project will also create a short video describing and demonstrating the implementation of Raven Reads at the Library Family Literacy Events. Senior Media Technical Specialist will use Adobe Premier Pro, most current version, is to edit digital MPEG4 files to create the project video. This editing work will be conducted by SHI. SHI will maintain quality control through practices of triple checking work: the work of the Senior Media Technical Specialist will be reviewed by SHI's Deputy Communications SHI's and Publications Director to ensure the quality of the technical work; the Project Director and SHI Leadership (President, Chief Operating Officer) will review the video to ensure quality of product.

SHI will maintain an uncompressed file as an AVI, and a compressed file as a MPEG4. The video will be the made available through the project's Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit (webpages on SHI's website) as MPEG4. The video will be made available through the Toolkit by the contractor SHI will work with to develop those webpages on its website.

SHI, as a standard practice, generates Dublin Core metadata for digital objects housed in its Archives. SHI's Education Department (whose staff will work on the project being proposed) has contracted librarian to further enhance the generation of metadata for born digital resources created by the Department and made available to the public through SHI's website. Based on creating digital products that will be made available through SHI's website (the Toolkit will be comprised of linked webpages on SHI's website), generating that enhanced metadata will apply to this project. For each digital product created and shared through this project's Toolkit, SHI will generate metadata following its standard practice and generate metadata appropriate for an entity creating digital resources with Indigenous populations and used by Indigenous populations and general public through SHI's website.

- 2. Availability: How will you make your digital products openly available?** In your Digital Products Plan, describe how you will make the digital content, resources, assets, software, and metadata available to the public. Include details such as the delivery strategy (e.g., openly available online, available to specified audiences) and underlying hardware/software platforms and infrastructure (e.g., specific digital repository software or leased services, accessibility via standard web browsers, requirements for special software tools to use the content, delivery enabled by IIIF specifications). Identify and explain the reasons for any limitations in your Digital Products Plan.

SHI and its website contractor (SERRC) for the project will be gratis and publicly available on the worldwide web via the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit, which will be comprised of linked webpages on SHI's website. Content uploaded to SHI's website to the Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit will be accessible to the public via standard web browsers and require no special software tools to access and use the content.

SHI's is built using WordPress and the new webpages that will comprise the Toolkit will be created using WordPress. Use of WordPress will make the Toolkit and metadata for the digital products openly available online. Any graphics designed to enhance the Toolkit will be created using Photoshop. The video being created through the project will be hosted on YouTube and embedded on the webpages for the Toolkit. The webpages that will be comprise the toolkit will be made compliant WCAG 2.1 level AA.

- 3. Access: What rights will you assert over your digital products, and what limitations, if any, will you place on their use? Will your products implicate privacy concerns or cultural sensitivities, and if so, how will you address them?** Identify any licenses under which digital products will be shared (e.g., Creative Commons licenses, RightsStatements.org statements). Describe what intellectual property rights you will assert over your digital products and explain any limitations or conditions you will place on their use. If your products implicate privacy concerns or cultural sensitivities, describe these issues and how you plan to address them.

SHI will not assert any ownership rights over the press releases, social media posts, printable content (activity plans, workshop agendas, handouts), the online survey instruments (SHI will maintain the privacy of the responses provided by participants completing the surveys), or the video created through this project. These digital products will not be copyrighted, and they will be assigned a non-restrictive Creative Commons license, and they will be made available, free of use, to any individuals or organizations that wish to utilize them without terms or conditions being enforced.

SHI will be placing digital content created through the project in the public domain and available for research and educational purposes. SHI will have all participants in the video created through the project sign a video and photo release form. The video released in the public domain will only be used for research and educational purposes only. For entities or individuals seeking special permission such as publishing, formatting into for-profit films, or using in a similar fashion, they must obtain the permission of SHI. SHI will use statements from RightsStatements.org when releasing the files.

SHI does not anticipate any privacy concerns related to digital products created through the project; the individuals participating in the video will sign a video and photo release and the other digital resources being created through the project will not incorporate clan-owned cultural and intellectual property. SHI reviews all materials before being shared online for clan-owned cultural and intellectual property. If any is found it is reviewed and SHI or the appropriate clan may allow use if it is accompanied with a statement acknowledging the information is the cultural and intellectual property of the Southeast Alaska Natives or the appropriate clan. SHI has a policy for clan-owned cultural and intellectual property.

- 4. Sustainability: How will you address the sustainability of your digital products?** Some digital products that are generated during a project should be long-lived, requiring permanent preservation, and others (e.g., preliminary analyses, drafts of papers, plans for future work, peer-review assessments, most social media communications, and communications with colleagues) should be retained and shared in the medium- or short-term. Describe your plan for preserving and maintaining digital products during and after the period of performance and identify the appropriate length of time different digital products should be curated. Address storage systems, shared repositories, technical documentation, migration planning, and commitment of organizational funding for these purposes.

SHI's Digital Preservation Procedures define and establish a process of regular review of digital files, ensuring multiple copies exist at separate locations, and watching file types for their longevity amid software adaptations over time. Data redundancy is a key component to SHI's digital asset preservation strategy. SHI will store access copies of all digital content created during the project on both its internal servers and create backup master copies on external hard drives. Working files will be backed up on a daily basis to ensure no loss. Checksums will be performed on preservation files to ensure data integrity over time. Metadata will be documented to support long-term preservation of the digital assets that are created. SHI commits organizational funding to store and sustain the digital data created through this project on SHI's internal servers during the award period and for a minimum of up to five years following the award period.

## Organizational Profile: Sealaska Heritage Institute

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANSCA) of 1971 was a legislative settlement of aboriginal claims to Alaska. As one of thirteen regional Alaska Native shareholder corporations established by ANSCA, and a federally recognized tribal organization, Sealaska Corporation (Sealaska) serves the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian tribes in 21 villages and communities spread over 35,000 square miles within Southeast Alaska. Sealaska provides benefits to approximately 24,000 shareholders and to their lineal descendants in living the region and the Lower 48. Sealaska accepts the responsibility to care for and promote its people's education, culture, indigenous languages, and way of life.

To accomplish and further this effort Sealaska created Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI) in 1980 as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. SHI operates with a mission to perpetuate and enhance Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian cultures and a goal of promoting cultural diversity and cross-cultural understanding. SHI is governed by a tribal Board of Trustees and receives guidance from its Council of Traditional Scholars, an appointed group of tribal Elders, a Native Artist Committee, and a Regional Language Committee.

SHI is headquartered at its Walter Soboleff Building and its Arts Campus. The two facilities, located in downtown Juneau, Alaska, are physically and aesthetically linked by an outdoor plaza used to host cultural and educational events, Alaska Native Art markets, and other community engagement activities. SHI fosters language revitalization, hosts leadership institutes for Native youth, develops culturally responsive curriculum for K-12 students, manages higher education scholarship programs, provides Northwest Coast arts trainings, engages in academic research projects, and operates a public museum, library, and archive at its Walter Soboleff Building.

SHI serves the general and academic Native and non-Native community by making its extensive library, archival, and ethnographic collections available to the public for research and educational purposes, hosting an annual public lecture series, mentoring visiting scholars and researchers, publishing academic essays and books, and having SHI staff present papers at scholarly conferences. SHI contributes to the documentation of Tlingit oral traditions through major publications, often in partnership with the University of Washington Press. SHI's Education Department utilizes SHI's library and archival collections in the development and implementation of its projects and programming.

The Education Department is SHI's largest department, employing 29 staff members. SHI's Education Department is managing U.S. Department of Education Alaska Native Education program grants used to develop and provide: curricular resources training for Juneau's elementary teachers to deliver culturally responsive writing instruction; curricular resources and training for teachers to provide STEAM-imbued instruction for middle and high school students; cultural responsiveness training for teachers and administrators; and curricular resources and mentoring Alaska Native students earning college degrees in the region's three Indigenous languages.

SHI is the lead applicant for **The Raven Reads at the Library Toolkit: Culturally Responsive Early Literacy Programming for Children and Learning Resources for Librarians** project, which will be staffed and managed by its Education Department. The Department's staff and its programming are overseen by SHI's Education Director, who holds a Master of Arts (MA) Degree in Teaching and another MA in Educational Leadership. SHI's Education Director is assisted in ensuring successful programmatic and fiscal oversight by Program Managers, such as the Raven Reads Program Manager.

Raven Reads is among the most popular programs and independent evaluation of the program consistently demonstrates the efficacy of the programming and caregivers' desire for more culturally responsive opportunities to increase their children's early literacy skills. Raven Reads programming employs a culturally responsive and culturally sustaining pedagogy rooted in the tribal values of Southeast Alaska's Indigenous peoples. Raven (*Yéil* in Tlingit; *Yáahl* in Haida; and *Txaamsm* in Tsimshian) is the central character in ancient oral narratives used to teach lessons to children and adults – uniting the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian cultures across space and through time. SHI has published 30 Raven Reads books written by Alaska Native authors and illustrated by Alaska Native artists.