



First Peoples' Cultural Council

LANGUAGE AUTHORITY AND PLANNING BEST PRACTICES

These “best practices” were collected directly from community reports on Language Authority and Planning submitted to FPCC. This collection of “best practices” was compiled for the purpose of distributing to all communities involved in Language Authority and Planning to provide support and encouragement in overcoming common challenges.

COMMUNITY INCLUSION:

- Include and consult with ALL the Nations with the same language
- Representatives from all areas and nations must be included.
- Board of directors should have a representative from each Band
- Whether or not they are participating, all bands receive copies of all resources developed.
- All bands also have access to language resources.
- Include all bands, even if they are not officially part of the funded organization
- If a band is not officially affiliated, community members should still be encouraged to participate.
- Take fairness and equality into consideration at every point in planning and implementation
- Avoid politics - Consider that political differences within the tribe may make communication and collaboration challenging
- Consider that logistical issues such as road conditions may not allow many community members to attend the meetings as scheduled
- The number, diversity and remoteness of communities may create challenges in communication and collaboration.
- Dialect differences need to be dealt with – works towards a way to share resources and overcome differences.
- Some communities are ahead of others as far as language revitalization – sharing is important.

REPRESENTATION:

- Allow each band/nation to decide on how they will choose representatives.
- Peer selection of Committee works best to avoid political intervention and nepotism

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- The meaning and value of the term “Language Authority” needs to be clear to all community members.
- Develop a clear understanding of the role of the language Authority—apply for funding, approve teachers, etc.
- Tribal Councils’, band governments’ etc. roles in language revitalization also need to be clearly defined.
- Decide on clear responsibilities of individuals involved.

COMMUNICATION:

- Communication may be difficult due to geographic separation.
- Have representatives from each area consult with their community members and stakeholders, then bring the information to a central meeting when it is feasible.
- Communicate with elders directly and personally, not through bands and administration
- Use personal contact when collecting information for language surveys
- Use technology such as teleconferencing, internet and Skype when in-person meetings are not feasible.
- Meeting directly with the people involved in language revitalization in the communities is effective for gathering information, assess needs and setting priorities.

ORTHOGRAPHY:

- Revisit orthography issues – find ways to overcome problems with differing opinions.
- An adequate writing system should work for all the dialects

TEACHERS/TRAINING:

- Teachers need curriculum – curriculum development and standardization is important.
- Immersion-based programs work best.
- Work towards training more teachers to overcome shortages.