



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project Contributes to Major Report on National Native Languages Survey Submitted to Congress

Mashpee, MA (October 29, 2024) — The Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project (WLRP) is pleased to announce that the *Report to Congress on Design Options, Priorities, and Considerations for a National Native Languages Survey*, along with the *Draft Native Languages Survey*, has officially been submitted to Congress. This report, developed through a partnership between the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) and the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE), underscores essential steps to support the preservation and revitalization of Native American languages across the United States.

The report was produced as part of the Durbin Feeling Native American Languages Act of 2022, signed into law by President Biden on January 5, 2023. The Act emphasizes the urgency of Native language revitalization, naming the survey as a vital component in this ongoing effort.

A Community Work Group (CWG), consisting of 15 Native language experts from across the country, including Alaska and American Samoa, collaborated with federal partners and survey designers to ensure Native perspectives were central to the process. The CWG contributed valuable insights on survey development, community engagement strategies, and the survey's design and distribution.

Jessie Little Doe Baird, a linguist and citizen of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, was a key member of the CWG.

"We are incredibly proud to have contributed to this monumental effort," said Baird. "This survey is essential to understanding the state of Native languages across the country. It marks a significant step forward in ensuring that our languages not only survive but thrive for future generations."

[Survey Goals and Approach](#)

The Survey of Native American Languages, as outlined in the report, is designed to build strong relationships and trust between the federal government, Tribal Nations, and Native language communities. It will create a knowledge base on federal efforts already in place, while refining approaches and content as the survey progresses. This process will ensure the needs of Native language communities are at the forefront.

Jessie Little Doe Baird added, "Language is at the core of our identity, culture, and sovereignty. This report, and the survey to follow, will provide vital data to guide us in reclaiming our languages and continuing our work in the face of numerous challenges."

The proposed survey also follows ACF's Roadmap for Collaborative and Effective Evaluation in Tribal Communities, ensuring that Native perspectives are respected and central to every step of the process.

Next Steps

With the submission of this report, there is a request in the FY2025 budget for the ANA to pilot the survey, should funding be appropriated. WLRP will continue to work alongside the ANA, OPRE, and other Native language programs to implement this survey and gather the necessary data to further language reclamation efforts.

For those interested in reviewing the full report, it is available via the following link:
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ana/priorities/language/durbin-feeling>

About the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project (WLRP)

The Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project is dedicated to reclaiming and preserving the Wôpanâak language, which has been endangered for many years. We believe that language is a part of cultural identity, and we are committed to ensuring that all Tribal members now and in the future can learn and speak this beautiful language.

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