

National Science Foundation
Workshop for
**Documenting Endangered
Languages**



October 14 - 17, 2007
The New England Center,
University of New Hampshire,
Durham, NH

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Documenting Endangered Languages

Program Solicitation NSF 06-577



National Science Foundation

Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences



National Endowment for the Humanities



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of Natural History

Full Proposal Deadline: September 15 annually

The DEL program supports:

- fieldwork to record in digital audio and video format one or more endangered languages;
- later stages of documentation including preparation of lexicons, grammars, texts and databases;
- digitization and other preservation efforts which provide wider access to such documentary materials, including previously collected materials and those concerned with languages which have recently died and are related to currently endangered languages;
- training native speakers in descriptive linguistics;



The DEL program supports:

- further developing standards and databases to make this documentation of a certain language or languages widely available in consistent, archivable, interoperable, and Web-based formats;
- analysis of findings in the light of current linguistic theory;
- creating other infrastructure, including workshops, to make the problem of endangered languages more widely understood and more effectively addressed.



Documenting Endangered Languages

Award Size and Duration:

- Approximately 6-10 Standard or Continuing Grants ranging from \$12,000 to \$150,000 per year for one to three years.
- Approximately 12 Fellowships of \$4,200 per month for awards lasting from six to twelve months; the maximum stipend is \$50,400 for a twelve-month tenure period.
- At least half of the available funding will be awarded to projects involving fieldwork.



Documenting Endangered Languages

- DEL gives the highest priority to projects that involve actually recording in digital audio and video format endangered languages before they become extinct.
- Documentation is a key complement to language revitalization efforts, but DEL does not support other aspects of projects to revive or expand the actual use of endangered languages. Tribal groups interested in the full range of language revitalization activities should contact the Native Language Program of the Administration for Native Americans in the Administration for Children & Families of the US Department of Health and Human Services.



Sample DEL projects

- **Sharon Hargus, University of Washington**

“Athabaskan Personal Histories of Climate Change in Alaska and Canada”

As part of her linguistic field research on three endangered Athabaskan languages, the PI will collect personal memories of climate change in Alaska and British Columbia, thereby providing a Native perspective on climate change.

- **Linda Langley, McNeese State University**

“Kowasa:ton il:halas -- Let Us Hear Koasati: A Filmic Documentation Project of Koasati”

This project will create a web-based electronic archive, audio-dictionary and searchable database of word lists, personal narratives, and naturally-occurring conversation for the severely endangered Koasati language, a Muskogean language with a rapidly declining population of fluent speakers. The PI is herself a tribal member.



Sample DEL projects

- **Claire Bower, Rice University**

“The Language of Bardi Precontact Narratives”

The PI will prepare a published edition of the Bardi mythological and social texts which Gerhardt Laves transcribed in the late 1920s at a time before the full impact of European settlement had caused extensive language loss in Australia’s North-West. The Bardi language, one of eight languages in the Nyulnyulan family, is highly endangered, with only about 30 fluent speakers, all of whom are over the age of 60.

- **Carol Genetti, UC Santa Barbara**

“Workshop on Field Linguistics and Language Documentation”

This award supports a two-week workshop on the practical aspects of doing field work, to be held as part of a six-week field work summer school at the University of California-Santa Barbara in 2008. The proposed Institute in Field Linguistics and Language Documentation will fill a gap in training in field linguistics in this country. This two-week workshop will provide training for graduate students, faculty, and language activists on practical topics in doing fieldwork. The range of classes includes less-often covered topics such ethics, cross-cultural sensitivity and revitalization methods. Such training should be part of the standard linguistics curricula, but especially in the US, field methods is often not taught, even at major universities.



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Sample DEL projects

- **David Rood, University of Colorado at Boulder**

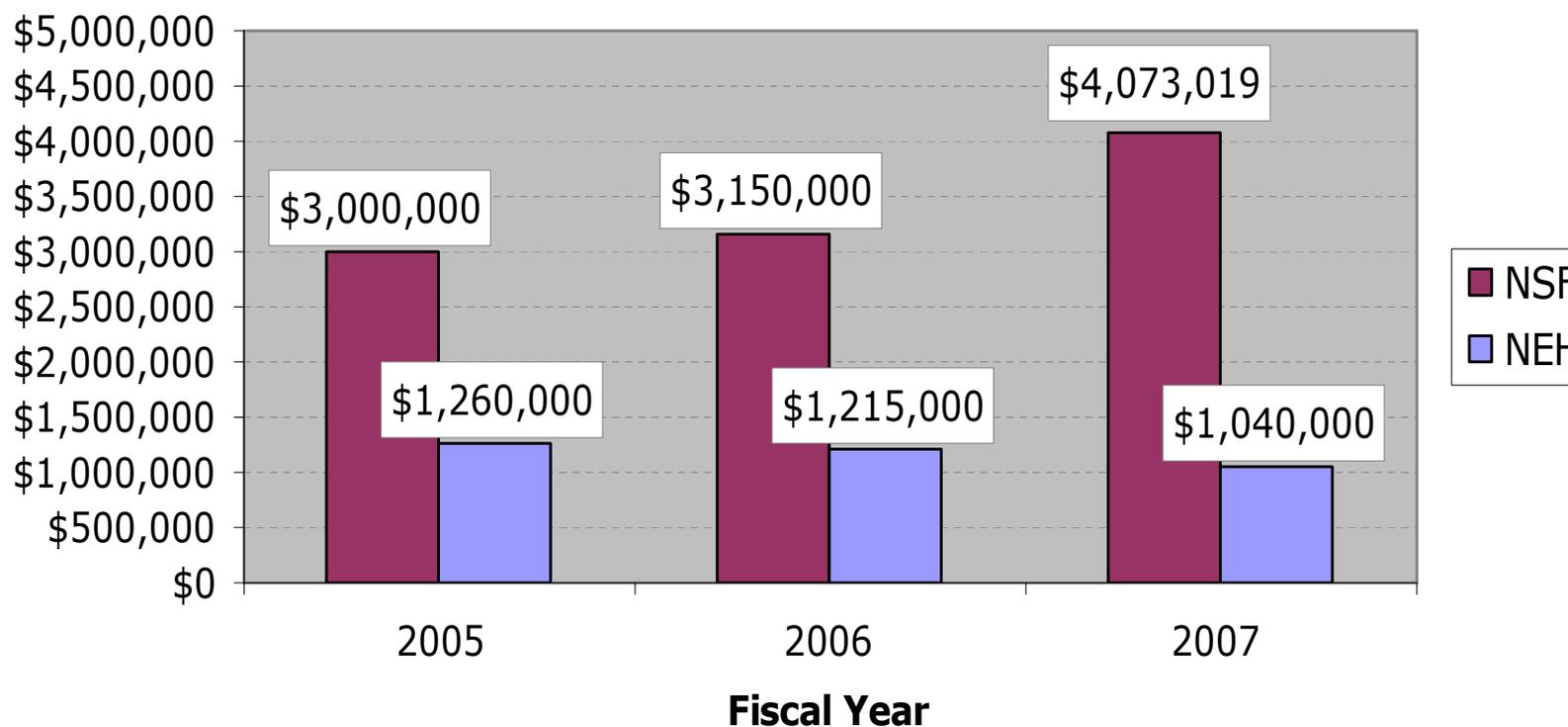
“Documenting Lakota Conversation”

two important goals: (i) training three semi-fluent speakers of Lakota in a three-year MA program in ethnographic videography, and (ii) archiving annotated video- and audio- recordings of the language.

Having a cohort of three Lakota students creates a support group that will help these students at all levels of their schooling. In addition to the linguistic training, they will also be trained in videography. The students will collect, transcribe, and analyze about 100 hours of naturalistic conversational video-taped data.



Total DEL Funding from NSF and NEH 2005 - 2007



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DEL awards 2005-2007

FY2005

- NEH 13 fellowships @ \$40K = \$520,000
6 institutional awards in the Division of Preservation & Access
totaling almost \$740,000
NEH combined total \$1.25 million
- NSF: 26 institutional awards totaling just over \$3 million

FY2006

- NEH 12 fellowships (11 @ 40K + 1 @ \$24) = \$464,000
3 institutional awards: \$751,000
NEH combined total: \$1,215,000
- NSF: 14 new awards totaling approximately \$3,150,000

FY2007

- NEH: 10 fellowships (8 @ \$40K = 2 @ \$24) = \$368,000
3 institutional awards totaling \$672,000
NEH combined total: \$1,040,000
- NSF: 26 new awards totaling \$4,073,019.



DEL awards to tribal members

In FY2005, four of 39 awards went to tribal members:

- Phil Cash Cash, Nez Perce “A Filmic Language Documentation of Nez Perce and Sahaptin”
- Richard Littlebear, Dullknife Memorial College “Northern Cheyenne Endangered Language Project”
- Justin McBride, Kaw Nation
“Kaw Language Documentation Project”
- Kathy Sikorski, University of Alaska Fairbanks,
“Pedagogical Grammar of Gwich'in”



DEL awards to tribal members

Only four of 39 awards in the first year went to tribal members. The DEL management team identified a need for more effective outreach activities to increase the competitiveness of proposals originating in the tribal communities. The PIs developed an intensive four-week course in language documentation and grant proposal preparation which was first offered at the 27th American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI) at the University of Arizona (Tucson) in June, 2006. Funding this project sends a strong signal that the NSF-NEH Partnership for Documenting Endangered Languages is committed to increasing the participation of tribal members in this critical effort.

Ofelia Zepeda & Susan Penfield, University of Arizona “Increasing Competitive Research among Tribal Communities for Documenting Endangered Languages”

Ofelia Zepeda is a member of the Tohono O’odham Nation of southern Arizona, and a professor in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Arizona. She is a cofounder and director of the American Indian Language Development Institute, an international teacher preparation program for educators of Native American youth.



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DEL awards to tribal members

In FY2006, five awards went to tribal members:

- Jimm Goodtracks, Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska
“Ioway Otoe-Missouria Dictionary Project”
- Ellavina Perkins, Navajo Tribe: “Navajo (NAV)
Language Investigations”
- Anton Treuer: “Chippewa Grammar Project for
Southwestern Chippewa Dialect”
- David Treuer: “Chippewa Grammar Project for
Southwestern Chippewa Dialect”
- Ofelia Zepeda, Tohono O’odham: “SGER: Increasing
Competitive Research among Tribal Communities for
Documenting Endangered Languages”



DEL awards to tribal members

In FY2007, eight awards went to tribal members:

- **Joshua Brown**, Salish Kootenai College
“Speaking To the Future: Salish Language Preservation”
- **Carol Cornelius**, Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin
“Documenting and Archiving the Oneida Language”
- **Richard & Nora Dauenhauer**, Tlingit
“Documenting and Archiving Deg Xinag, Tlingit, and Other Northern Languages”
- **Sven Haakanson**, Alutiiq Heritage Foundation
“Alutiiq Living Words Project”

Note: Haakanson is a MacArthur award winner, 2007.



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FY2007 awards to tribal members

- **Linda Langley**, McNeese State University “Kowasa:ton il:halas -- Let Us Hear Koasati: A Filmic Documentation Project of Koasati”
- **Martha Macri**, U.C. Davis and Cherokee member
“J. P. Harrington Database Project: Transcription, Coding, and Indices”
- **Ellavina Perkins**, Navajo Tribe
“Navajo Language Investigations”
- **Terry Ragan**, Choctaw Nation
“Choctaw Language Preservation Project”



Other NSF support to tribal members

Michael Krauss, University of Alaska Fairbanks

“IPY: Documentation of Alaskan and neighboring languages”

This documentation project supports tribal scholars, including Edna Ahgeak MacLean (Inupiat)



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