

# ATALM NEH Grant Funding

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Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan

## MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Native Village of Afognak Receives \$6,000 Award from The Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums**

**Kodiak, AK** – Native Village of Afognak received a \$6,000 short-term grant through the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM) American Rescue Plan: Humanities Grants for Native Institutions. This grant opportunity is intended to help Native Cultural Institutions to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and provide humanities programming to their communities. Funds were provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 passed by the U.S. Congress.

Funds support the Dig Afognak Cultural Program that will implement programs and activities that share Alutiiq cultural knowledge and traditions within the larger Kodiak community and pass down the rich history and practices of the Afognak people.

Dig Afognak was established in 1993 as part of a community-wide effort to regain, restore and carry forward the light of our ancestral Alutiiq culture. Archaeological research in the Kodiak Archipelago began in earnest following the Exxon-Valdez oil spill in Prince William Sound in 1989. With the clean-up of Alaskan shorelines following the disaster, many archaeological sites were being disturbed and valuable information lost. Storm waves, vandalism, and time itself were working to destroy the archaeological record and cultural heritage.

As Dig Afognak has developed over the years, traditional cultural activities and youth camps were added to the schedule alongside archaeological research. Now, Dig Afognak has transformed into a haven for cultural exploration. For over 25 years, NVA has successfully and safely planned, coordinated, and hosted various cultural immersion camps that are widely attended by youth around the Island.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is not only responsible for the loss of culture keepers, Native language speakers, elders, and government leaders, but also the closure of cultural institutions, furloughed staff, and reduced programming,” said ATALM Board Chair Walter Echo-Hawk. “We are grateful to the NEH for recognizing the unique ways Native communities are experiencing this pandemic and we are pleased to have this additional opportunity to provide ongoing support.”

Native Village of Afognak was selected by an independent Peer Review Panel and is one out of 34 awardees to receive funding. Other Round Two awardees representing 17 states include Tribal governments and Native nonprofit organizations, as well as higher education institutions and non-native nonprofit organizations working in partnership with state or federally recognized tribal entities. A list of grantees is available at [www.atalm.org](http://www.atalm.org)

“The National Endowment for the Humanities is grateful to the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums for the association’s important work in administering American Rescue Plan funding to help Native American cultural institutions recover from the pandemic,” said NEH Chair Shelly C. Lowe (Navajo). “These grants provide valuable humanities resources to tribal communities and represent a lifeline to the many Native heritage sites and cultural centers that are helping preserve and educate about Indigenous history, traditions, and languages.”

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## **ABOUT Native Village of Afognak**

The Native Village of Afognak (NVA) is a federally recognized Tribe. The ancestors of our members settled permanently in the village of Ag’waneq on the island of Afognak. Members of our tribe inhabited Ag’waneq, located 20 miles off the north shore of Kodiak Island, until the 1964 Good Friday earthquake and tsunami. This destroyed the original village of Afognak and displaced the villagers. As a result, our Tribal members are now spread out across Alaska and lower 48. In 2002, the NVA Tribal Council reorganized the Tribe under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. NVA provides various programs and services to over 800 Tribal members. Our largest and most attended program we offer is Dig Afognak.



## **ABOUT THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES**

Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at: [www.neh.gov](http://www.neh.gov).



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## **ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF TRIBAL ARCHIVES, LIBRARIES, AND MUSEUMS**

The Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM) is an international association dedicated to preserving and advancing the language, history, culture, and lifeways of Indigenous peoples. Founded in 2010, ATALM maintains a network of support for Indigenous cultural programs, provides professional development training, enables collaboration among tribal and non-tribal cultural institutions, and advocates for programs and funding to sustain the cultural sovereignty of Native Nations. To learn more, visit [www.atalm.org](http://www.atalm.org)

