



Doyon Industrial Facility | 615 Bidwell Avenue, Suite 101  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701 | 907.459.2048 | 1.888.478.4755  
foundation@doyon.com | www.doyonfoundation.com

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Contact:  
Doris Miller  
Executive Director  
Doyon Foundation  
907.459.2050  
[millerd@doyon.com](mailto:millerd@doyon.com)

**Foundation Launches Language Revitalization Program**  
*Applicants Sought for New Program Director Position*

*Fairbanks, Alaska* – Due to the rapidly decreasing number of fluent speakers, Native languages within the Doyon region are not being passed on quickly enough to ensure their survival, creating an urgent need to promote and foster language opportunities for non-speakers.

To address this critical issue, Doyon Foundation is launching the Language Revitalization Program, a comprehensive, region-wide program to capture, preserve, share and perpetuate Athabascan languages. The Foundation is currently seeking a program director to lead this new endeavor. Individuals interested in ensuring the survival of Interior Alaska's Native languages are encouraged to view the job description available at [www.doyonfoundation.com](http://www.doyonfoundation.com) or to apply online at [www.doyon.com](http://www.doyon.com).

Earlier this year, the Doyon, Limited board of directors approved a resolution and a \$150,000 contribution to the Foundation to establish and operate the first year of the program. First-year goals include hiring a program director, building relationships and collaborating with like-minded partners, securing additional funding, and creating a pilot language-learning program, among other tasks.

"The resolution reaffirms the board's mission to strengthen our Native way of life and support the Doyon Foundation, which provides educational, career and cultural opportunities to enhance the identity and quality of life for Doyon shareholders," said Aaron Schutt, Doyon, Limited president and CEO.

"Providing cultural opportunities and a strong demonstration of Native traditional language and culture is at the core of Doyon Foundation's mission and vision," said Doris Miller, Foundation executive director. "Doyon's support of this program will enable us to make significant strides toward the revitalization of our Native languages, which is critical for their survival. We are grateful beyond words for Doyon, Limited's support."

The need for the program is clear: According to the Alaska Native Language Center, there are less than 500 speakers of the nine Athabascan languages in the Doyon region. Gwich'in and Koyukon have the most, with 150 speakers. Most of the others have fewer than 30 speakers.

(more)



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But this need is not just about language; it is also about bringing positive change to the people of the Doyon region. Research has shown that the ability to speak one's language is essential to strong self-identity, self-esteem and the perpetuation of cultural beliefs, values and traditions.

A quote from Victor Nicholas, Doyon, Limited board vice president and Doyon Foundation board member, sums it up. "It's our language – it's who we are," he said.

For the past four years, the development of this program has been a labor of love for the Foundation's language committee members, including Chair Paul Mountain, Lorraine David, Wesley Roberts Dalton, Teisha Simmons, Patricia Paul, Alan Hayton, Polly E. Hyslop and Susan Paskvan, as well as many others who have volunteered their time.

"The Doyon Foundation program could grow into a multi-million dollar, grant-funded department. That's been demonstrated by other Native corporations in the state," said Wesley Roberts Dalton, former vice president of the Doyon Foundation board of directors and former chair of the Foundation's language revitalization committee. "We can become leaders in language revitalization."

Doyon Foundation is the private foundation of Doyon, Limited, and serves the educational and cultural needs of Doyon's shareholders and their children. For more information, please visit [www.doyonfoundation.com](http://www.doyonfoundation.com) or contact Doris Miller, executive director, at 907.459.2050 or [millerd@doyon.com](mailto:millerd@doyon.com).

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