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Doyon Foundation Awarded \$2.65 Million Grant from U.S. Department of Education's Alaska Native Education Program

Fairbanks, Alaska – July 8, 2025 – Doyon Foundation is proud to announce it has been awarded a grant of \$2.65 million from the U.S. Department of Education's Alaska Native Education (ANE) Program. The three-year grant will support the creation of an online Denaakk'e educational language learning game, which is focused on improving language development outcomes for Alaska Native students.

The project will develop and implement culturally relevant strategies to increase student engagement and motivation toward language learning, while also supporting Alaska Native language preservation. Additionally, the project will collect critical data to support the evaluation and continuous improvement of ANE-funded programs.

"This project represents a powerful step forward in our mission to preserve our Native languages," said Mariah Pitka, Executive Director of Doyon Foundation. "By combining traditional knowledge with innovative educational tools, we're creating meaningful opportunities for youth to connect with their heritage in a way that's engaging, relevant, and rooted in identity."

The Denaakk'e Language Gamification Project addresses three primary goals:

- Increase student engagement and motivation in learning the Denaakk'e (Koyukon Athabascan) language through interactive and gamified educational tools.
- Expand and strengthen the skills of Indigenous Language Instructors, especially in using technology to create innovative and effective learning experiences.
- Enhance professional development opportunities for Instructors, empowering them to integrate digital and online resources into their classrooms.

In partnership with the Yukon-Koyukuk School District (YKSD), the project's core activities will include the creation of an online Denaakk'e language learning game, delivery of professional development for instructors in classroom and online teaching methods, and training on incorporating educational games into instruction. The project will also develop an assessment tool to evaluate K-5 student engagement and language development.

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Holly Wofford, Native Language Teacher at YKSD shared her enthusiasm:

“As a language teacher, I am always looking for innovative ways to keep my students engaged and make learning enjoyable. Doyon's new project encompasses all of that—Fun, Engaging, and Innovative! I am very excited to be involved in this project. It will provide a creative way to work towards Language Revitalization by giving our kids a modern approach to learning their language that surrounds their interests. This is exactly the path we need to be on to bring our languages back...Hoozoonh!”

This project was created in collaboration with GBH Media Services, the award-winning public media producer behind *Molly of Denali*.

To support this work, Doyon Foundation is currently hiring a Program Manager to oversee the grant activities and ensure successful implementation of the project goals. Read the job description and apply at doyon.com/careers.

Doyon Foundation was established in 1989 as the private, non-profit arm of Doyon, Limited. The foundation's mission is to provide educational, career, and cultural opportunities that enhance the identity and quality of life for Doyon shareholders.

For more information and the latest updates, visit www.doyonfoundation.com, find us on social media, contact 907-459-2048 or foundation@doyon.com.

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