



Omaka 2024-2025

GOAL

DAKODIA TOKEDKED UNSPUNKICIYAPI

**"PROVIDE DAKOTA LANGUAGE TO LOCAL
COMMUNITY & BEYOND"**

- ***Dakota Wounspe*** - Entry Level Dakota language class
- ***Siceca Wounspe*** - Mandated Dakota Language Classes for Summer Youth
- ***Phrases of the Week*** - DLI Facebook
- ***Wocekiya Unkagapi*** - Pipe Ceremony
- ***Dakota Wicoan Workshop*** -12 week Dakota Way of Life Workshop
- ***Wowapi Unkagapi*** - Developed Dakota Language Books
- ***Anpetu Inunpa Kanpi Omniciye*** - Tuesday Elder Sessions
- ***Ake Wanzi Kanpi Omniciye*** - Additional Elder Session for TZTS Staff
- ***Tiospa Zina Makoce Wowapi Kci Unskanpi*** - TZTS Forestry Grant Collaboration
- ***L/N/Dakota Language Teaching Certifications***
- ***Honoring Treasured Elders & Past DLI Directors***

DAKODIA WOUNSPE "ENTRY LEVEL DAKOTA LANGUAGE CLASSES"

- Dakota Language Classes throughout March & April every Tuesday & Wednesday from 3:30-4:30 pm
- In person & available on DLI Facebook live

• **Attendance**

- **In person:** the classes started out strong with an average of 10-15 people for the month of March. The month of April, in person attendance decreased with an average of 5-7 people attending, and some days no one showing up.
- **Online:** attendance showed strong engagement, with March averaging 150-225 participants and April averaging 80-100 participants; approximately 50% of the viewers were local community members and 50% were from outside the community, reflecting both local and broader interest in Dakota Language learning via social media/online platforms. Facebook video views ranged from 5,000 to 14,000, demonstrating that even with varying live attendance, the recordings remained highly impactful; videos stayed accessible on the page for one month before auto-deletion, allowing continued learning during that time.

UNSPUNKICIYAPI "WHAT WE'VE LEARNED AND HOW WE PLAN TO MOVE FORWARD"

- **High Initial Interest** – Attendance was strongest in the first month (150–225 participants online), showing that new offerings generate excitement and strong engagement.
- **Broad Reach Beyond the Community** – Roughly 50% of participants were local and 50% outside the community, reflecting both local commitment and wider interest in Dakota Language learning.
- **Sustained but Decreased Engagement** – The second month averaged 80–100 online participants, indicating that while interest remained steady, extended two-month scheduling may see a natural decline in live attendance.
- **Flexible Access Matters** – Facebook views ranging from 5,000 to 14,000 and one-month video availability showed that people continued to learn on their own time, even if they could not attend live.
- **Scheduling Consideration** – Shorter class cycles (such as one-month intensive sessions) or staggered scheduling may help maintain momentum and sustain high participation over time.

SICECA DAKODIA WOUSNPE

"MANDATED SUMMER YOUTH DAKOTA LANGUAGE CLASSES"

- Classes were held every Monday and Tuesday from 1:00–2:00 PM.
- Preparation time was short, but we did our best with the resources we had.
- Overall, it was challenging to keep the kids engaged and interested in learning Dakota Language. We had to adjust and find creative ways to make it fun.

Highlights from Two Successful Classes:

- **Archery with Jeremy Redeagle**
 - The youth were fully engaged and excited. They learned about Dakota history, stories, and the skill of bows and arrows. The class was fun, interactive, and they didn't want it to end.
- **Plants and Medicines with Charlotte Almanza**
 - Hands-on learning with culture and language combined. The youth enjoyed the activity, stayed engaged, and had fun while learning.

Plans for Next Year (2026):

- Structure 80–100% of the classes around Dakota Language through archery and Dakota horse culture, as this activity was most engaging and successful.
- Request an increase in class time from 2 hours to 3 hours to allow for more hands-on learning.
- Continue building fun, interactive, and culture-based approaches



Language of the Week Facebook Posts



- Shared weekly Dakota Language posts on Facebook.
- Each post featured:
 - One Dakota word
 - Examples of how to conjugate the word in different ways
 - 2-4 sample sentences or phrases showing the word in use
- Posts provided consistent, accessible language learning for the community and beyond.

Plans for Next Year (2026):

- Shift focus to sharing vocabulary, phrases, sayings, and teachings gathered from elder sessions, audio and video recordings.
- Posts will highlight living knowledge from fluent speakers, supporting language revitalization directly from the elders.
- Aim to deepen community connection to Dakota Language and culture.

DAKODIA POI
LANGUAGE OF THE WEEK

UNSPUNKICIYAPI
TO TEACH EACH OTHER

UNSPĒ - TO TEACH
UNSPĒWAYĒ - I TEACH
UNSPĒYAYĒ - YOU TEACH
UNSPĒPI - THEY TEACH
UNWASPE - TO TEACH ME

DAKODIA UNMASPE HE?
CAN YOU TEACH ME DAKOTA LANGUAGE

"ANPETU INUNPA CA KANPI
HENA OB DAKODIA UNSPEUNKICIYAPI
"EVERY TUESDAY WE TEACH EACH OTHER DAKOTA LANGUAGE WITH THE ELDERS"

DAKODIA POI
LANGUAGE OF THE WEEK

YUONIHAN - TO HONOR
BDUONIHAN - I HONOR
DUONIHAN - YOU HONOR
YUONIHANPI - THEY HONOR
UNYUONIHANPI - WE HONOR
WICAYUONIHAN - TO HONOR THEM

"ANPETUC DE ATE OWASINNA HENA UNYUONIHANPI"
"WE HONOR ALL THE FATHERS TODAY"

"DAKOD WAE KINHAN TAKUYAPI BDUONIHAN"
"I HONOR MY RELATIVES WHEN I SPEAK THE DAKOTA LANGUAGE"

DAKODIA POI
LANGUAGE OF THE WEEK

KIKSUYA - TO REMEMBER
WEKSUYĒ - I REMEMBER
YEKSUYA - YOU REMEMBER
KIKSUYAPI - THEY REMEMBER

MIKSUYA - REMEMBER ME
NIKSUYAPI - THEY REMEMBER YOU
CIKSUYĒ - I REMEMBER YOU
UNKIKSUYAPI - WE ALL REMEMBER

WICUNKIKSUYAPI
WE REMEMBER THEM

DAKODIA POI
LANGUAGE OF THE WEEK

TEHINDA - TO CHERISH
TEWAHINDA - I CHERISH
TEYAHINDA - YOU CHERISH
TEHINDAPI - THEY CHERISH
TECHINDA - I CHERISH YOU
TEWICUNHINDAPI - WE CHERISH THEM

DAKODIA KIN NINA TEWAHINDA
"I REALLY CHERISH THE DAKOTA LANGUAGE"

DAKODIA KIN TEYAHINDA KINHAN WOYAHDAKE KTE
"IF YOU CHERISH THE DAKOTA LANGUAGE YOUR GOING TO SPEAK IT"

DAKODIA POI
LANGUAGE OF THE WEEK

TOKATAKIYA
WICUNICAGE WAYAKAPI

"LOOKING TO THE FUTURE GENERATIONS"

DAKODIA POI
LANGUAGE OF THE WEEK

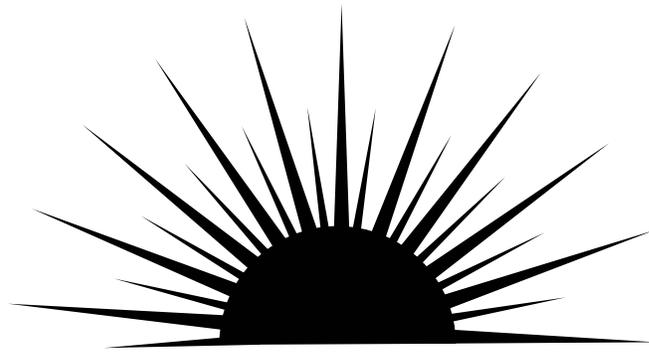
WICADA - TO BELIEVE
WICAWADA - I BELIEVE
WICAYADA - YOU BELIEVE
WICADAPI - THEY BELIEVE

WOWICADA
FAITH-BELIEF

WIUNKICIDAPI
TO BELIEVE IN EACH OTHER

WICAIČIDA
TO BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

WICAMICIDA
I BELIEVE IN MYSELF

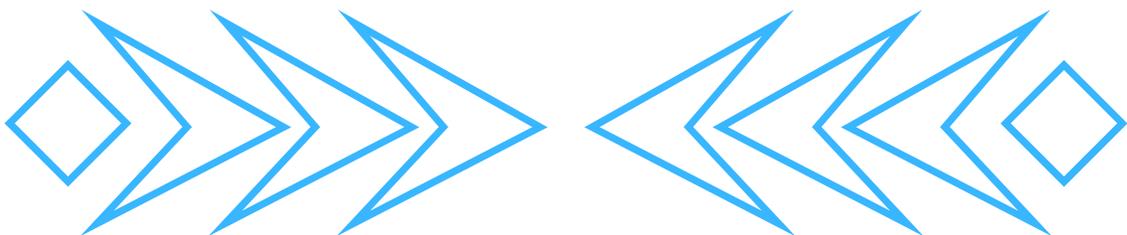


PIPE CEREMONIES AT THE DAKOTA LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

- We hosted 1–2 Pipe ceremonies for 4 months at the Dakota Language Institute, open to everyone.
- The purpose was to teach and share the Dakota way of life through the Pipe and to create a safe, healing space for people, especially those in recovery.
- These gatherings were always filled with Dakota Language, support, and encouragement.
- Pte Cante Win - The Women Buffalo Heart Society Grandmothers came regularly and supported the ceremonies.
- The Dakota Language immersion class from TZTS often attended and shared songs.
- Young people were encouraged to say prayers in the Dakota Language, giving them confidence and practice.
- On average, we had 40–60 people attend each Pipe ceremony.

Key Takeaways:

- Pipe ceremonies help keep the Dakota Language alive in prayer and song.
- They create a healing and supportive space for community members.
- These gatherings bring together elders, youth, and families in one place to share language and culture.
- Young people are getting more chances to use the language in real ways, like prayer.



DAKOTA WICOHAN

“Dakota Way of Life Workshop – 12 Week Workshop”

- Duration: 12 weeks
- Sweats for men and women
- Activity evenings for men and women
 - Ceremonies & Teachings:
 - Pipe Ceremony
 - Song and Drum
 - Storytelling
 - Hands-On Cultural Activities:
 - Skirt making
 - Ribbon shirt making
 - Drum making
 - Traditional games
 - Traditional foods
- Focus: Dakota Language, culture, and spirituality throughout all activities
- Impact: Strengthened community connection, provided cultural healing spaces, and reinforced Dakota way of life practices for participants.
- **NO Plans For Next Year (2026)**

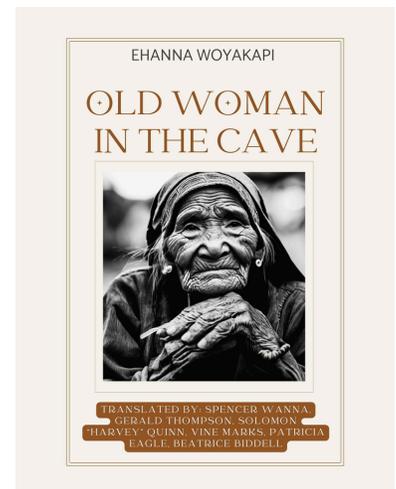
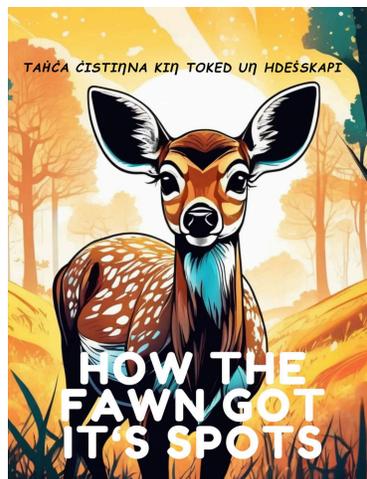
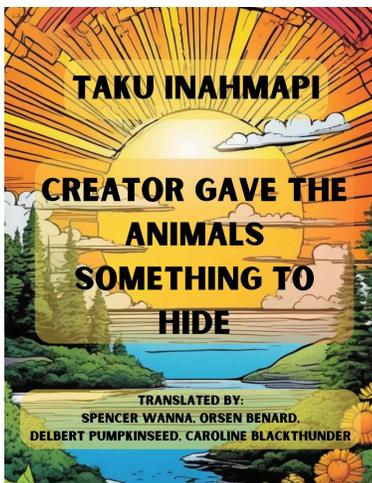
In Collaboration with 3 Tribal Programs



WOWAPI UNKAGAPI

“Book & Material Development”

- Completed Projects (2025):
 - 3 Dakota Language books completed, fully translated by treasured elders.
 - 1 book geared toward elementary-level learners. “Creator Hid Something From the animals”
 - 1 book designed for middle school/high school learners. “How the Fawn Got It Spots”
 - 1 book geared toward advanced language learners. “Old Woman in Cave”
 - 2 of the books fully animated and illustrated by the Dakota Language Institute team.



Future Plans (2026):

- Continue producing Dakota Language books translated by elders.
- Provide additional illustrated and animated materials for both youth and adult learners.
- Develop Curriculum from the elder recordings and make them accessible through DLI website
- Developed elementary level Dakota Language curriculum with an emphasis on interactive learning through games and play-based activities.
- Update Flash Cards
- Update Posters
- Update Greeting Cards

KANPI DAKODIA WOUSNPE

“TUESDAY ELDER SESSIONS”

- **Schedule:** Hosted every Tuesday morning, 9:00–11:00 AM at the Dakota Language Institute.
- **Community Access:** Open to the community; all language learners and those needing translations are welcome.
- **Meals:** Breakfast is provided to all attendees; RSVPs are encouraged so staff can prepare enough food.
- **Attendance:** Sessions average 40–60 community members each month.
- **Activities:**
 - English-to-Dakota storytelling and translations.
 - Use of Dakota Language Institute’s archival recordings with elders for translation and teaching.
 - Dedicated time with fluent elders for direct language learning and support.
- **Support:** Elders are available every Tuesday to assist with translations and share language knowledge.
 - South Dakota Education Teaching Re-Certification credits were provided to TZTS staff during Tuesday Elder Sessions.



KANPI DAKODIA WOUSNPE AKE WANZI

“ADDITIONAL ELDER SESSION WITH TZTS STAFF”

Dakota Language Institute Collaboration with TZTS

- **Partnership:** Collaborated with TZTS to add another elder session for TZTS Staff.
- **Elder Sessions:** Provided additional sessions focused on Dakota Language
- **Frequency:** Held every Thursday from 3:30-4:30 after school throughout the school year.
- **Location:** Sessions took place at the Dakota Language Institute.
- **Purpose:** Ensured continued learning and support for TZTS Dakota Language staff, supporting Dakota Language learning



FORESTRY GRANT COLLABORATION WITH TZTS

- **Collaboration Initiated** – Dakota Language Institute (DLI) was invited by TZTS to assist with a forestry grant focused on learning spaces for traditional plants, medicines, and gardening.
- **Garden Space Established** – Through this collaboration, DLI created a new garden and learning space at our location.
- **Materials Provided at No Cost** – The grant covered materials and supplies, including:
 - Untreated gardening beds
 - Soil and seeds
 - Tools and equipment (rakes, shovels, weed eater, etc.)
 - Benches and maintenance supplies
- **Mission and Vision** – Our goal is to expand the garden behind DLI to grow foods that promote sustainability for the community and treasured elders.
- **Community & School Engagement** – The garden space will be shared with:
 - Local schools to provide hands-on learning opportunities
 - Community members to reconnect with Dakota practices around food and medicine
- **Language Revitalization Opportunity** – We have begun creating Dakota Language signage (plant names, medicines, cultural terms), making the garden not only a food source but also a living classroom for the language.
- **Integration with DLI Initiatives** – This space also supports our publishing, printing, and sublimation projects by allowing us to produce educational materials (signs, posters, booklets, curriculum) based on the garden.

Positive Impacts & Benefits

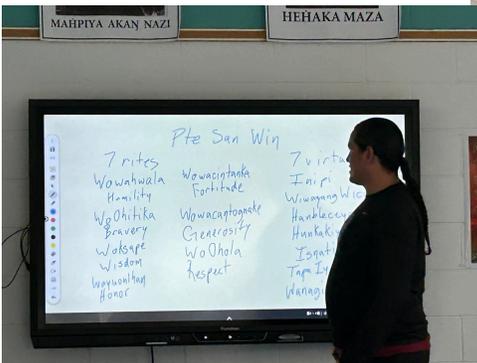
- No-Cost Expansion – DLI received significant resources at no cost, maximizing community benefit without financial burden.
- Sustainability & Food Sovereignty – Helps prepare foods for elders and teaches future generations about Dakota ways of self-sufficiency.
- Cultural Knowledge Sharing – Provides space for traditional teachings around medicines, gardening, and food preparation.
- Language in Action – Reinforces Dakota Language in a natural, hands-on environment.



L/N/DAKOTA LANGUAGE TEACHING CERTIFICATIONS

Throughout the year, the Dakota Language Institute certified:

- 6 local teachers
- 2 non-local teachers
- **Updated Certification Process** – The process was strengthened to ensure quality and readiness for classroom teaching.
- **New Requirement** – Each candidate is now required to provide two 45-minute in-person teaching lessons, tailored to the grade level they plan to teach.
- **School Collaboration** – In partnership with TZTS, candidates are placed in front of actual classrooms to deliver these lessons.
- **Assessment Criteria** – The Dakota Language Institute evaluates each candidate based on:
 - Effectiveness of teaching methods
 - Classroom engagement techniques
 - Overall ability to deliver Dakota Language learning in a meaningful way



Woyuŋonihaŋ

GOING INTO THE NEW YEAR 2025 THE DAKOTA LANGUAGE INSTITUTE WANTED TO RECOGNIZE AND ACKNOWLEDGE A FEW RELATIVES WHO GOT US TO WHERE WE ARE TODAY IN THE EFFORTS OF THE DAKOTA LANGUAGE

TOKEDKEDTAŋHAŋ UŋHIPI KIKSUYAPI !

BEATRICE "BEA" BIDELL - TREASURED ELDER
SOLOMON "HARVEY" QUINN - TREASURED ELDER
GERALD "GT" THOMPSON - TREASURED ELDER
PATRICIA "PAT" GILL - TREASURED ELDER
SPENCER WANNA - TREASURED ELDER
(NOT IN PHOTO) VINE T. MARKS JR - TREASURED ELDER
(NOT IN PHOTO) RICARDO BERSTCH - DLI DIRECTOR 3 YEARS
JANET BROWN - D.L.I EMPLOYEE 10+ YEARS
ERIN GRIFFIN - DAKOTA LANGUAGE ADVOCATE
JEREMY REDEAGLE - DLI DIRECTOR 1 YEAR
TAMMY DECOTEAU - DLI FOUNDING DIRECTOR
DR. SHERRY JOHNSON - TRIBAL ED. DIRECTOR





ARCHIVES

Physical & Digital

- Physical Archive - SAFE
 - tapes, usb's, cd's - 100's
- Around 2022-2023 Ric Bertsch Director at that time collaborated with a university to digitize the recordings. Which is the present day the archives we work with. No upload tracking and monitoring system was in place. Metadata in the digital archives is very minimal with most not having any at all. And also, we do not know of what physical became digital.
 - 2025 An estimated Inventory was taken inside the digital archives
 - Estimated Total Audio & Video Recordings: 1,000+
 - Off all audio and video recordings the metadata was very minimal for each recording with most not having any at all.
 - Provide Metadata to Recordings
 - Metadata: Who, What, When, Where
 - Listen to each individual recording to provide the details
 - Total Recordings that now have Metadata
 - Total: 91

Goal of the Digital Archives

- Make accessible to learners and teachers
- Upload them to our website
 - Currently being worked on
- Long Term Goal
 - *Create curriculum from the recordings*
 - *Self teaching materials*
 - *Teaching materials*
- Currently
 - 8 of the 91 recordings have been identified to prioritize uploading into our website.
 - Once the 8 are uploaded we will open the webpage to make it accessible to everyone with log in and password protected. The Dakota Language Institute will approve each persons accessibility
 - Once the 8 are uploaded we will then begin a more intentional transcription effort
 - subtitles
 - a document of more details
 - content, topic, translation, specific details that pertain to how the elder speech is unique,

GOAL

DAKOTA WICOHAN

TOKEDKED

UNSPUNKICIYAPI

“PROVIDE CULTURAL STORYTELLING CLASSES AND GATHERINGS TO LOCAL COMMUNITY AND BEYOND”

- Tatanka Patapi ga Waci - Buffalo Harvest & Dance
- Ehanna Akicita ga Itanca Oyakapi Kin - Storytelling Series of Dakota Warriors and Chiefs
- Tatanka Inazin Oyate - Host Standing Buffalo Relatives

TATANKA PATAPI



- One of the biggest highlights of the year was the Buffalo Harvest and Buffalo Dance, which brought together many programs, relatives, and community members.
- The Dakota Language Institute received a Buffalo donation from the Tribe, with the meat set aside to prepare and support the elders for winter.
- Buffalo meat was also used to provide meals for programming and events hosted by the Dakota Language Institute.
 - In collaboration with South Dakota State University, Hankasi Dr. Erin Griffin, CEU South Dakota Education Teaching Certification credits were provided to TZTS staff during the Buffalo Dance and Harvest.
- The day before the Buffalo Dance, we hosted a storytelling event with Joe Circlebear and JR McArthur (from White Bear, Manitoba, Canada).
 - Middle school and high school students from TZTS were in attendance
 - The Buffalo Heart Society women were present and represented.
 - Total attendance: 74 people.
- The following day, the Buffalo Dance was hosted at the Buffalo Farm in Buffalo Lake.
 - Both TZTS and ESDS schools attended.
 - Total attendance: 136 people.
 - Community members shared this was a historic day, as it had been a very long time since a Buffalo Dance had taken place locally.
 - Dakota Language Institute was honored to lead this effort
- After the dance, the event transitioned to the new meat processing location for the Buffalo Harvest.
 - Many community members stepped up to help
 - Students from TZTS were present and received hands-on experience cutting Buffalo meat, which provided powerful cultural learning.

Key Takeaways:

- The event connected culture, language, and community service through storytelling, dancing, and harvesting.
- It helped prepare elders for winter while also feeding community programming.
- The return of the Buffalo Dance marked an important cultural revival for the community.
- Youth participation in both storytelling and harvesting strengthened cultural knowledge and identity.







EHANNA AKICITA GA ITANCA OYAKAPI KIN

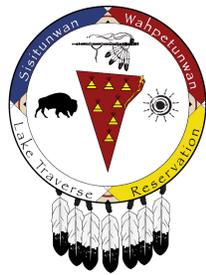


“STORY TELLING OF DAKOTA WARRIORS AND CHIEFS”

- The Dakota Language Institute hosted a storytelling series on Dakota Warriors and Chiefs.
- Originally planned as a 7-part series, but only 2 sessions were completed due to the storyteller, Akisa Redsoldier, traveling between SWO and Sioux Valley, Canada.
- Storytelling was offered in person at DLI and online via Facebook Live.
 - In-person attendance: averaged 15–30 people.
 - Live online viewers: averaged 120–250 people.
 - Video views (available for one month): averaged 10,000–15,000 views.
- The strong turnout shows a high interest locally and beyond the community for this type of storytelling.
- The storyteller’s dedication to research and collecting history, along with his style of presenting, created a space that was:
 - Deeply connected to Dakota identity
 - Healing and comforting
 - Full of encouragement, love, and cultural pride
- DLI would like to continue this initiative in 2026, either by completing the original series or beginning a new storytelling series.

Key Takeaways:

- Storytelling in this format is highly valued and widely attended both locally and online.
- The series provided a powerful cultural and healing space for community members.
- Future storytelling events have strong potential for continued growth and engagement.



STANDING BUFFALO VISIT





GOAL

TOKEDKED MAZASKA

UNKAMNAPI KTA

ICAGAPI

**EXPAND PUBLISHING, AND PRINTING OPERATIONS
AS REVENUE SOURCES, WITH A NEW MERCHANDISE
BRANCH TO SUPPORT DLI'S IMPACT AND
SUSTAINABILITY**

EXPANDING MERCHANDISE, PUBLISHING, AND PRINTING OPERATIONS

- ***Publishing and Printing Updates***

- Dakota Language Institute is currently updating all Dakota Language materials, including greeting cards and posters.
- Once updated, these materials will be marketed and promoted through:
 - Phone calls to schools
 - Email campaigns
 - DLI Facebook page
- All other printing services offered by DLI (banners, posters, flyers, business cards, brochures, books, etc.) will also be promoted through these same channels.

- ***Government Contract Expansion***

- DLI is preparing to expand into government printing contracts by bidding through online resources.
- ***Goal for 2026:*** Apply for and secure 2-5 government printing contracts.

- ***Merchandise Operations***

- A new merchandise branch has been added to DLI operations.
- Offerings include:
 - Sweaters, shirts, mugs, tumblers, bags, hats, table cloths
 - Keychains, graduation stoles, customized aluminum signs
- Production methods include sublimation, embroidery stitch, and heat press.

Key Takeaways:

- DLI is diversifying revenue sources through publishing, printing, and merchandise.
- Strategic marketing (phone, email, social media) will help grow visibility and reach.
- Entering the government contract space opens doors to stable long-term revenue.
- Merchandise expansion strengthens DLI's presence while offering products that carry Dakota identity and pride.



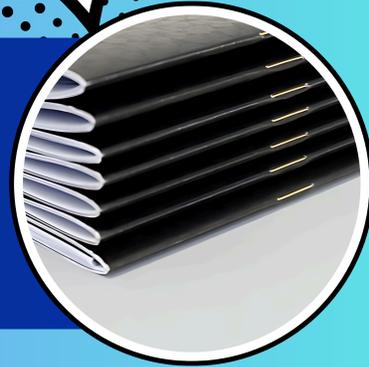
**SUPPORT LOCAL!
SUPPORT TRIBAL!
SUPPORT DAKOTA
LANGUAGE!!!!**

**PRINTING SERVICES
WE OFFER!!**

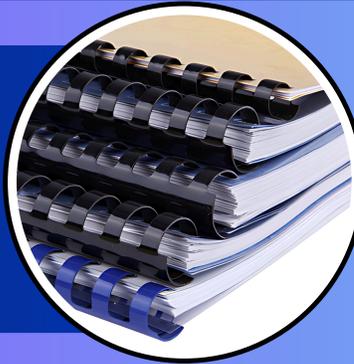


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DAKOTA LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

WEBSITE & STOREFRONT

DEVELOPMENT

- ***New Website Development***

- Creating a Dakota Language Learning Page with limited access, featuring archival recordings and developed curriculum.
- Access will be granted through DLI approval to protect and honor the voices of our elders, while still providing free learning opportunities to schools, tribal members, and communities without fluent speakers.
- This ensures that language learners across communities have access to Dakota Language, while safeguarding the voices of our elders.
- Establishing a new Dakota Language Institute website with upgraded software to support multiple payment options for printing, publishing, and merchandise sales.
- New software will include an in-person card payment terminal, along with support for Cash App, Venmo, Facebook Pay, and other convenient payment methods.

- ***New Storefront at DLI***

- Renovating and painting to create a clean, welcoming, and organized storefront space at the Dakota Language Institute.
- Storefront will feature Dakota Language books, materials, and merchandise, creating an inviting space for the community to connect with the language and culture.
- Provides a visible and accessible location for community members and visitors to engage with and support DLI initiatives.

- ***Positive Impact***

- By combining modern technology with cultural responsibility, DLI will offer language learning opportunities in a safe and respectful way.
- The storefront will serve as a bridge between the Institute and the community, making Dakota Language resources more accessible, visible, and celebrated.



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