



# State Library *of Oregon*

## Government-to-Government Report 2024

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This report is available online in the [Library News](#) section of the agency website.



## About the agency

The State Library of Oregon is an independent state agency established under ORS 357. It has four divisions that carry out its statutory and other functions.

- [Government Information and Library Services](#)  
The Government Services division collects state publications, federal documents, and items on Oregon history and culture. The print and digital materials are available to Tribal Nations, state employees, and the public. The division also provides specialized library services to state government employees and the Legislature.
- [Library Support and Development Services](#)  
The Library Support division provides grants, consulting, leadership, and services to support Oregon's academic, public, school, and special libraries and Tribal Nations in delivering library, technology, and information services to their communities.
- [Talking Book and Braille Library](#)  
The Talking Books division delivers free audiobooks and Braille books to people in Oregon, including Tribal citizens, who are print-disabled, whether due to visual, physical, or reading impairments.
- [Operations](#)  
The Operations division supports the work of the agency's other three divisions by assisting with administration, information technology, finance, volunteer coordination, and communications.

## Agency priorities

The State Library of Oregon is honored to work with the nine federally recognized Tribal Nations in Oregon and affirms their sovereignty. This commitment is stated in the agency's strategic priorities and objectives.

- [2023-26 Strategic Plan](#)  
The State Library's strategic plan includes an initiative to "Work together with Tribal Nations in Oregon to digitize and preserve documents of interest to Indigenous peoples."



- [2023-27 Library Services and Technology Act \(LSTA\) Plan](#)  
The 2023-27 LSTA Plan lays out priorities and objectives for the agency's use of annual federal LSTA Grants to States funds to support library services statewide. One of the plan's objectives is to "Work with Tribal Nations in Oregon to support access to library, technology, and information services." The 2023-26 Strategic Plan initiative to digitize documents works towards this objective.

### Activities supporting Tribal Nations and Indigenous peoples

The agency gave grants, supported digitizing publications, and shared information to support Tribal Nations in 2024.

### Grants

The State Library awarded one grant to a Tribal Nation in 2024.

- *Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR)*  
CTUIR's Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute had an old microform reader that lacked the ability to print or save articles. Many records, particularly federal ones, are accessible only on microform. With a \$10,772 grant from the State Library, CTUIR bought a new microform reader/scanner and a computer to operate it. The new device will assist with Tribal research and provide better access to records.

### Digitization

The agency's largest project supporting Tribal Nations involves digitizing Tribal newspapers and public-facing historical documents from Chemawa Indian School in Salem. The work is being done in partnership with University of Oregon Libraries (UO). Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) endorsed the project in [Resolution #2023-04](#). The project is being supported with the State Library's LSTA allocation.

In February 2024, UO hired Justin Spence to coordinate digitization of the newspapers and Chemawa materials. The position is paid 65% using LSTA funds from the State Library. Justin has an academic background in linguistics and worked with several Tribal Nations in the West, including the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians (CTSI), with language preservation and restoration projects. That background has proven helpful as Justin works with Oregon's Tribal Nations. Elizabeth Peterson, coordinator of UO's Oregon Digital Newspaper Program (ODNP), supports Justin in this work.



### Tribal Newspapers

This project seeks to broaden the reach of current and historical Tribal voices by adding newspapers published by the Nine Tribes to [Historic Oregon Newspapers](#) (HON), UO's digital platform of past and present Oregon news. Settler perspectives generally dominate online newspaper archives like HON. Adding Tribal newspapers provides important context and correction to those settler narratives.

UO is working with Tribal Nations to add their newspapers to HON. Two Tribes already added their newspapers to the platform before this project started: Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde's [Smoke Signals](#) and Confederated Tribes of Warm Spring's [Spilyay Tymoo](#).

This year, CTSI began adding newer issues of [Siletz News](#) to HON and are discussing working with UO to digitize older copies of the newspaper. CTUIR is actively considering an agreement to add the [Confederated Umatilla Journal](#) to the program.

### Chemawa Indian School materials

The digitization project also focuses on widening availability of publications from the Chemawa Indian School. Chemawa was one of dozens of residential schools created throughout the country in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. These institutions were explicitly created to eliminate Tribal culture and language by taking Native children away from their families and indoctrinating the youth. By making publications such as yearbooks and newsletters from Chemawa available online, former students and their descendants can reclaim those parts of their and their ancestors' histories.

Digitizing yearbooks and newsletters from Chemawa is the primary initial objective for this work. UO and the State Library worked to identify which institutions around the state and country have the best copies of the documents. The State Library possesses many Chemawa publications materials in formats ideal for digitizing. The Government Services division of the State Library prepared copies of the *Chemawa American*, the school's newsletter, for delivery in early December to UO. Several of these materials first had to be repaired before they could be moved. UO library staff will use the copies to train student workers on digitization.

Once digitized, the newsletters will be available through HON. Some digitized content from Chemawa and its predecessor, the Forest Grove Indian Training School, will also be aggregated into a collection for [Northwest Digital Heritage](#) (NWDH). Pacific University has digitized a number of records from the Forest Grove school. NWDH – a partnership



among the Oregon Heritage Commission, Washington State Library, and State Library of Oregon – collects information from digital repositories throughout Oregon, Washington, and Idaho and makes them available and fully searchable online at no cost.

The State Library and other institutions also hold publications from the boarding school other than yearbooks and newsletters. These publications will be analyzed for digitization in a future phase of the project.

Plans are underway to educate about the project. For instance, State Library Tribal Liaison Buzzy Nielsen regularly reports progress on the project to the Legislative Commission on Indian Service's (LCIS) Cultural Resources Cluster. Justin Spence and Buzzy Nielsen also connected with the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) at the 2024 Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM) conference in November.

### **Information sharing and outreach**

State Library staff share information with Tribal Nations, provide resources from and about Tribal Nations to Oregon libraries, and visit Tribal Nations and affiliated organizations.

- *Tribal library listserv*  
The agency maintains an email list for Tribal libraries and other people who provide literacy and information services in Oregon Tribes. Staff share opportunities for grants, training, and other resources, often from ATALM or the Institute of Museum and Library Services.
- *Information sharing with libraries*  
Staff share information from and about Tribes with academic, public, school, and special libraries. For instance, Jen Maurer, the agency's school library consultant regularly shares information about Tribal History/Shared History curriculum with school libraries.
- *Outreach and training*  
In 2024, Buzzy Nielsen attended the ATALM conference. In addition, Emily Johns, Digital Preservation and Special Collections Librarian in the agency's Government Services division, began the Portland State University (PSU) Certificate in Tribal Relations in December.



- *Tribal Liaison activities*  
Buzzy Nielsen participates in meetings such as the LCIS Cultural Resources Cluster, Governor Kotek's Tribal-State Government-to-Government Summit, and similar activities.

### Goals for 2025

The State Library of Oregon will continue working together with the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon. Below are some projects planned for 2025.

- *Continued digitization of Chemawa publications and Tribal newspapers*  
Digitization of Chemawa materials and Tribal newspapers will continue through 2025, with materials starting to be available online sometime during the year. State Library, UO, and other staff will reach out to the Nine Tribes, other tribes, and boarding school advocacy organizations such as NABS to ensure the project is approached with consultation, compassion, and respect. Staff in the Government Services division will continue working with UO to loan copies of documents for digitization.

CTUIR is close to approving inclusion of the *Confederated Umatilla Journal* in the Oregon Digital Newspaper Program. Approval is anticipated in 2025, including some digitization of back issues. Back issues of the *Siletz News* will also continue to be added to the program. The *Klamath News*, published by Klamath Tribes, has also been identified as potential paper to include in the program.

- *Visiting Tribal nations and conferences*  
As part of the PSU Certificate in Tribal Relations program, Emily Johns will visit to-be-determined Tribal Nations in Oregon. She will also attend conferences for the National Congress of American Indians and ATNI as part of the program.

Buzzy Nielsen plans to visit Tribal Nations to establish closer relationships, including Coquille Indian Tribe and Klamath Tribes.

- *Tribal representative for the LSTA Advisory Council*  
The LSTA Advisory Council advises the State Library on its use of federal LSTA funds. The approximately \$2.5 million in annual funds supports the delivery of literacy and information services by libraries and Tribal Nations throughout



Oregon. The LSTA Advisory Council recently revised their bylaws to include a dedicated tribal representative. Recruitment efforts are underway to fill this slot.

- *Guide for state employees working with Tribes*  
Reference Librarian Natalie Brant and Buzzy Nielsen are in talks with LCIS and Governor Kotek's Tribal Affairs Director Shana Radford to create an online guide for State of Oregon employees who work or consult with the Nine Tribes. The guide will be similar to [other collections of information and resources](#) the agency creates for state employees and Oregon libraries. Content may include background information on the Nine Tribes, historical resources, advice on how to consult with Tribes, and other content that may be useful in facilitating government-to-government relations.
- *Grants*  
The State Library continually seeks opportunities to support Tribal projects with LSTA-funded grants. The expanded outreach will provide opportunities for discussions to see where grants may assist Tribes to provide library, technology, and information services to their communities.

### **Tribal key contact**

For more information about this report or the State Library of Oregon's work with the nine federally-recognized Tribal Nations in Oregon, please contact Tribal Liaison and Program Manager for Library Support Buzzy Nielsen at [buzzy.nielsen@slo.oregon.gov](mailto:buzzy.nielsen@slo.oregon.gov) or 971-375-3486.