



**State Library**  
*of Oregon*

# Government-to-Government Report 2025

Wendy Cornelisen  
State Librarian

## Contents

About the agency .....	2
Agency priorities .....	2
Activities supporting Tribal Nations and Indigenous peoples .....	3
Digitization .....	3
Information sharing and outreach.....	5
Access to State Library collections.....	5
Tribal Cultural Items Survey.....	6
Goals for 2026.....	6
Tribal key contact.....	7

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 other items related to Oregon. 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 help Oregon's 1,900 academic, public, school, special, and Tribal libraries better serve 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 due to visual, physical, or reading impairments.
- [Operations](#)  
The Operations division supports the agency's other three divisions by assisting with administration, information technology, finance, volunteering, and communications.

## Agency priorities

The State Library is honored to work with the nine federally recognized Tribal Nations in Oregon and affirms their sovereignty. This commitment is reflected 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." That program is discussed later in this report.
- [2023-27 Library Services and Technology Act \(LSTA\) Plan](#)  
The 2023-27 LSTA Plan lays out priorities and objectives on how the agency uses annual federal LSTA 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 advances this objective.

### Activities supporting Tribal Nations and Indigenous peoples

In 2025, the agency continued to support Tribal Nations by providing funding to digitize publications, sharing information, and improving access to State Library collections of interest to Tribes.

#### Digitization

The State Library funds digitizing Tribal newspapers and public-facing historical documents from Chemawa Indian School in Salem. University of Oregon Libraries (UO) is digitizing the materials. The Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) endorsed the project in [Resolution #2023-04](#).

Justin Spence at UO coordinates this work. His position is partially paid 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 helps Justin to work with Oregon’s Tribal Nations. Elizabeth Peterson, coordinator of UO’s Oregon Digital Newspaper Program, supports Justin in this work.

#### Tribal Newspapers

UO is adding digitized newspapers published by the Nine Tribes to [Historic Oregon Newspapers](#) (HON), a digital platform of past and present Oregon news. Settler perspectives generally dominate online newspaper archives like HON. Adding Tribal newspapers provides important perspective, context, and correction to those settler narratives.

Thanks to current and prior digitization efforts, five newspapers from four Tribal Nations are available online via HON.

- [Klamath Tribune](#), 1956-1961 (Klamath Tribes)
- [Siletz News](#), 1998-2025 (CTSI)
- [Siletz New II](#), 1989-1993 (CTSI)
- [Smoke Signals](#), 1978-2025 (Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde [CTGR])
- [Spilyay Tymoo](#), 1976-2025 (Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs [CTWS])



More papers may be added next year. The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) are considering an agreement to add the [\*Confederated Umatilla Journal\*](#) to the program. UO also is working with CTWS and the State Library to digitize issues of the [\*Warm Springs Reservation Tomahawk\*](#), a newsletter published in the 1950s and 60s.

### Chemawa Indian School materials

This digitization project also widens 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.

The State Library holds 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 to UO. Several of these materials first had to be repaired before they could be moved. UO library staff trained student workers to digitize the publications. There are now hundreds of issues the *Chemawa American* available via HON:

- [\*Weekly Chemawa American\*](#), 1901-1912
- [\*The Chemawa American\*](#), 1912-1986

UO currently is digitizing the annual yearbooks from Chemawa Indian School. Once again, they are relying on the State Library's collections. The digitized yearbooks also will be available via HON.

Some digitized content from Chemawa and its predecessor, the Forest Grove Indian Training School, also are aggregated into a collection for [\*Northwest Digital Heritage\*](#) (NWDH). 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. Pacific University has digitized a number of records from the Forest Grove school and made them [available online](#). Pacific University's records also are found in NWDH.



### 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 Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums or the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The State Library itself also offers continuing education and grants available to Tribes.
- *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.
- *Training*  
Emily Johns, Digital Preservation and Special Collections Librarian in the Government Services division, completed the Portland State University (PSU) Certificate in Tribal Relations in August. As part of the program, Emily attended the National Congress of American Indians Executive Council Winter Session in Washington, DC, and the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians Midyear Convention in Spokane, hosted by the Kalispel Tribe of Indians. She also visited CTGR, CTSI, Coquille Indian Tribe, and the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians.
- *Tribal Liaison activities*  
Buzzy Nielsen, Tribal Liaison and Program Manager for Library Support, participates in and shares resources at meetings such as the Legislative Commission on Indian Services' (LCIS) Cultural Resources Cluster, Governor Kotek's Tribal-State Government-to-Government Summit, and similar activities.

### Access to State Library collections

As part of her PSU certificate program, Emily Johns completed a capstone project titled "From Archives to Access: Curating the Chemawa Collection at the State Library of Oregon." Emily curated Chemawa-related materials in the agency's collection by



gathering items across collections, arranging and describing them, and entering them into a searchable archival database. Work has begun on digitizing items that will be accessible via the State Library's [Digital Collections](#) and in NWDH. The ultimate goal is to contribute these items to the [National Indian Boarding School Digital Archive](#).

### Tribal Cultural Items Survey

In 2019, State Library staff inventoried the agency's collections to locate cultural items associated with Oregon Tribes. Staff determined that the agency has no such items. Only one object had a significant Tribal relationship: a Pendleton blanket gifted to a State Librarian by CTUIR. No additional items have been added to the collection since the 2019 inventory.

While the agency does not hold Tribal cultural items, its collection of state documents, federal documents, and materials related to Oregon may be valuable to Tribes. Examples of materials can be found in the State Library's [Tribal Cultural Inventory Report](#) or on its [online guide to the 2019 inventory](#).

Emily Johns is the State Library's Tribal cultural items contact person. She is available at [emily.johns@slo.oregon.gov](mailto:emily.johns@slo.oregon.gov) or 503-930-1422.

### Goals for 2026

In March, a [federal executive order](#) threatened the agency's annual allocation of LSTA funds, about 25% of the agency's total revenue. Agency staff were occupied by the executive order and several subsequent actions. In addition, federal funds were inaccessible during part of 2025 due to the executive order and federal government shutdown in the fall. As a result, the agency did not make as much progress as anticipated on its 2025 Government-to-Government goals. Several 2026 goals continue or repeat last year's goals.

- *Continue digitizing Chemawa publications and Tribal newspapers*  
UO will continue to digitize Chemawa materials and Tribal newspapers in 2026. The university has shifted focus to digitizing the boarding school's yearbooks, using copies from the State Library's collection. They also will continue to seek copies of the *Chemawa American* that have not yet been digitized.

CTUIR is close to approving inclusion of the *Confederated Umatilla Journal* in the Oregon Digital Newspaper Program. The *Klamath News*, published by Klamath



Tribes, has also been identified as potential paper to include in the program.

- *Promote digitized Chemawa materials*  
Staff are beginning to promote access now that several Chemawa materials have been digitized. Outreach will be to the Nine Tribes, ATNI, organizations such as the Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, and other interested parties. The agency wants to approach promotion of the newly accessible documents with consultation, compassion, and respect. Buzzy Nielsen plans to report about the project to the LCIS Cultural Resources Cluster in early 2026.
- *Find a Tribal representative for the LSTA Advisory Council*  
The LSTA Advisory Council advises the State Library on its use of federal LSTA funds. The \$2.6 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. Staff will renew efforts to recruit a Tribal representative after the agency receives clarity about the future of its federal funding.
- *Create 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 useful to facilitate government-to-government relations.
- *Provide grants*  
The State Library continually seeks opportunities to support Tribal projects with LSTA-funded grants. Expanded outreach will provide opportunities to see where grants may assist Tribes to provide library, technology, and information services to their communities.

### Tribal key contact

For more information about 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.