

**Tier 1 Pilot Grant Application: Laying the Foundation
Autumn 2025 Cover Sheet**

Project Title	Puyallup Tribal Family Data Reclamation Project
Budget Request from Initiative	\$24,931
Budget Match (if applicable)	N/A
Total Project Budget	\$24,931

Applicant Information: Co-Lead Investigators

- **Puyallup Tribe: Amber Taylor** – Assistant Director/Collections Manager, Puyallup Tribal Historic Preservation Department (Amber.Taylor@puyalluptribe-nsn.gov)
- **University of Washington: Dr. Theresa Rocha Beardall** – Associate Professor of Sociology, College of Arts and Sciences (tyrb@uw.edu). Dr. Rocha Beardall will serve as lead co-investigator for administration purposes if awarded grant funding. Our finance point-of-contact for the Department of Sociology is **Fatema Mookhtiar Charawala** who can be reached at fatemakm@uw.edu.

Abstract: The Puyallup Family Data Reclamation Project is a partnership between the Puyallup Tribal Historic Preservation Department (THPD) and the University of Washington to recover, digitize, and return archival records documenting the Tribe’s experiences with the federal Indian boarding school system. Centering tribal authority and Indigenous data sovereignty, the project will create a tribally governed digital archive and conduct two community validation sessions within eight months. The pilot advances tribally directed research in three phases: (1) identify and digitize school records in regional, state, federal, and church repositories; (2) extract and systematize metadata so records are searchable, culturally grounded, and tribally governed; and (3) validate materials through facilitated sessions with Puyallup cultural historians to confirm accuracy, cultural integrity, and community priorities.

Together, these phases improve population health outcomes by addressing the legacies of boarding school trauma, including family separation, disrupted kinship, and educational and health inequities that persist in Washington State today. The project develops participatory methods, including metadata systems and validation practices, that advance community data sovereignty as a public health intervention. It engages four undergraduate and two graduate students in meaningful public service, preparing them to contribute to human rights and health equity.

Finally, it builds infrastructure for tribally governed archives and validation practices that support long-term healing, truth-telling, and education, all central to improving population health. By combining archival research, participatory methods, and public service, this project addresses immediate tribal needs while creating a durable model for Indigenous-university partnerships to advance health equity through truth-telling and data sovereignty.

Tier 1 Project Research Plan – Please provide a narrative description of your proposed project. Your description must include your project aims, description of the problem to be addressed, and your proposed plan, design, and methods.

Project Aims and Central Problem: From the 19th through the mid-20th century, the Indian boarding school system was a primary instrument of U.S. assimilationist policy. These schools forcibly removed Native children from their families, languages, and cultures to erase Indigenous identities and sever ties to community and land. Washington State was home to 17 such institutions, each of which had a direct and lasting impact on the state’s Native Peoples. The harmful legacies of this system for the Puyallup Tribe remain visible today in intergenerational trauma, disrupted kinship networks, and persistent educational, economic, and health inequities.

Federal investigations in 2022 and 2024 by the Department of the Interior documented the extensive abuse, family separation, and cultural destruction within the boarding school system. Intergenerational trauma, disrupted kinship networks, and persistent educational, economic, and health inequities. Tribal nations like the Puyallup are still fighting to retrieve fragmented records, restore narratives of survivance, and reclaim the histories that settler institutions tried to erase.

Plan, Design, and Methodology: The project will proceed in three phases across two years.

- **Phase 1: Archival Research and Digitization** – The Puyallup Family Data Reclamation Project closes these gaps by recovering, digitizing, and repatriating archival materials under Puyallup direction. Building on our existing abstract description above, we will identify, prioritize, and digitize relevant materials in Washington State Archives, National Archives at Seattle, and church-run boarding school collections, alongside regional repositories. Student researchers will be trained in archival handling, digital preservation, and metadata capture. **Outputs:** an inventory with notes, digitized files to tribal specifications, and a governance log.
- **Phase 2: Metadata Development and Systematization** – We will design a tribally governed, culturally grounded metadata schema with controlled vocabularies approved by THPD, enabling search while protecting sensitive knowledge. Methods include authority lists for Puyallup place names and kinship terms, fields for cultural sensitivity flags, and access tiers (community-only, restricted, etc). Student researchers receive training in archival handling, digital preservation, and Indigenous research ethics. Feedback loops will adjust schema as needs emerge.
- **Phase 3: Community Validation and Narrative Support** – Facilitated sessions with Puyallup cultural historians will verify accuracy, add cultural context, and set access levels. Honoraria compensate community expertise. Validation outcomes will directly update metadata and access permissions. Where appropriate and with consent, community members may contribute preliminary narratives that inform future remembrance and educational work under tribal direction. Validated summaries are prepared for tribal review.
- **Deliverables:** A foundational digital archive of prioritized boarding school records and student research reports alongside community-validated archival summaries. The Puyallup THPD co-leads all decisions, defines priorities, approves outputs, and holds authority over data use and access through formal governance agreements.

Student Team and Roles: Four undergraduate (Nora VanRees, Haylee Weisner, Marina Cavalli, and a fourth in progress) and two graduate RAs (Todd Nobles and Adam Visokay) support collection, metadata, validation logistics, and content development under direct PI supervision and ongoing THPD collaboration.

Tier 1 Project Evaluation Plan

1. What are your measures of success for this project?

- **Tribal Governance and Data Sovereignty:** Recovery and digitization of at least 4,000 pages of data under Puyallup THPD governance, with formal protocols for custody, permissions, and access established. A fully functional metadata schema that is culturally grounded and tribally approved will be in place to govern future access and expansion.
- **Community Validation and Cultural Integrity:** At least two facilitated validation sessions with Puyallup cultural historians will confirm the accuracy, cultural integrity, and access levels of digitized materials. Documented validation outcomes, including community-authored narratives where consented, will demonstrate the project's alignment with tribal priorities.
- **Student Training and Public Service Impact:** Four undergraduates and two graduate students trained in Indigenous research ethics, metadata creation, and participatory methods, documented through reflective reports and supervisor evaluations. Success is defined not only by technical deliverables but by evidence of strengthened tribal governance, community authority, and student public service engagement.

2. How are you planning to utilize the results of your work to pursue a future project to generate proof-of-concept once the eight-month project is complete?

By the end of the eight-month project, the Puyallup Tribe will hold a tribally governed digital archive of priority records, complete with validated metadata and access protocols. This pilot archive will function as a proof-of-concept for tribally directed data reclamation. Using this platform, the Tribe and UW will pursue external funding to expand digitization, develop curricula, and scale healing initiatives. Public funders such as NIH and NSF support population health research under Indigenous governance, while the Mellon Foundation has prioritized truth and reconciliation. Private philanthropies, including the Ford Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and W.K. Kellogg Foundation, are investing in racial equity, Indigenous rights, and community health. The evaluation data, student training reports, and governance protocols produced in this project will strengthen multi-year proposals to these funders, ensuring sustainability and growth.

Project Timeline

- **Months 1-2:** Finalize partnership agreements; recruit and train student researchers; initiate archival research and digitization.
- **Months 3-4:** Complete digitization of 4,000 records; draft metadata schema; community review
- **Months 5-6:** Conduct two community validation sessions with cultural historians; update metadata and access protocols.
- **Months 7-8:** Deliver proof-of-concept digital archive to Puyallup governance; prepare evaluation report; draft proposals to federal and foundation funders for expanded multi-year project.

Biographies

Amber Taylor is the Assistant Director and Collections Manager of the Puyallup Tribal Historic Preservation Department. She specializes in stewarding tribal collections and cultural resources, including conservation, ethical curation, community access, and repatriation compliance.

Theresa Rocha Beardall is an Associate Professor of Sociology specializing in policing, child welfare, and tribal-federal relations. Her community-driven work appears in *Criminology* and the *Native American and Indigenous Studies* and supported by the Ford, William T. Grant, and Spencer Foundations.

Tier 1 Project Budget

	Requested from Initiative	Funding Match
Salaries		
Faculty	N/A	
Staff	N/A	
Student	\$13,244	
Benefits Based on Payroll Load Rate in Effect	\$3,669	
Supplies and Materials Supplies, Equipment Under \$2,000, etc.	N/A	
Equipment Equipment Over \$2,000	N/A	
Tuition	\$8,018	
Other		
Total Direct Costs (PHI-requested funding cannot exceed \$25K)	\$24,931	

Budget Justification: This budget supports two graduate research assistants who are essential to the success of the Puyallup Tribal Family Data Reclamation Project. One student will be funded at 50% FTE for one quarter and the other at 25% FTE, providing critical capacity for archival research, metadata development, and coordination of community validation sessions. Salary costs total \$13,244, with benefits calculated at the University’s established rate of 27.7% (\$3,669). Tuition support for the graduate assistants is included at \$8,018, ensuring their full participation in the project. These expenses directly sustain graduate training in Indigenous research ethics and data governance while providing the skilled labor necessary to complete project deliverables under Puyallup Tribal Historic Preservation Department leadership.

Funding Match: The University of Washington Center for Human Rights will separately cover all undergraduate research assistants as an in-kind contribution, so this budget is restricted to graduate labor, benefits, and tuition necessary to meet project deliverables and timelines. Guided by its legislative mandate, UWCHR works alongside organizations on the front lines of human rights struggles, placing the university’s resources in direct service of practical justice. In this project, UWCHR extends that mission by supporting undergraduate researchers, ensuring they receive training and mentorship while contributing meaningful labor to the Puyallup Tribal Family Data Reclamation Project. This partnership strengthens the project’s capacity while aligning with UWCHR’s commitment to education, research, and collaboration that advances human rights in both local and global contexts.