

## **Abstract**

The Penobscot Nation is applying for an IMLS Native American Library Services Enhancement Grant (Educational Programming) to support the education and training of other Native American tribes around intellectual property law. Through a series of intensive three-day workshops we will offer support in the development of tribal governance that increases knowledge about intellectual property and supports the negotiation of control over Native American collections held in cultural institutions. This education and training is for tribal archivists, librarians and museum staff working at the interface between their tribal library/museum and a cultural institution that holds their valuable cultural heritage. Drawing from our own experiences in crafting deliberate strategies to address problems of legal control over collections, and establishing meaningful relationships of collaboration with cultural institutions, the Penobscot Nation is seeking funding to run three (3) intensive workshops for twelve (12) other tribes over two (2) years. With each tribe bringing 2 participants for each workshop, we expect to support increased education on IP issues for 24 tribal archivists, library and museum staff. Participants will receive increased education and training in the following areas – 1) general IP law; 2) identifying IP issues within a community context; 3) negotiations and agreement making with institutions that hold Native American heritage; 4) developing tribal decision-making and governance around IP; and 5) creating strategies and using digital tools for protecting cultural heritage.

The legal ownership of Penobscot cultural heritage collections held in cultural institutions throughout the United States is a critical issue that the Penobscot Nation has been developing strategies to address for the last three decades. As a result of this work the Penobscot Nation now has a multi-directional strategy to negotiate legal and cultural control over its cultural heritage. Drawing upon the Penobscot experience and extending it into general principles of education and practice, through this grant we will support other Native American tribes develop their capacity to engage with intellectual property law and assist in developing tribal infrastructure to support these activities.

Our intensive educational and training workshops for tribal librarians, archivists and museum staff are designed to:

- Provide accessible information about intellectual property law;
- Assist in identifying IP issues within a tribal library and museum context;
- Provide exemplar initiatives from Penobscot, Passamaquoddy and Hopi work on IP strategies;
- Support the development of internal tribal strategies for engaging with IP issues;
- Enhance negotiations between tribes and cultural institutions over access, ownership and control of collections.

This project is part of a decolonial agenda. It is about supporting other tribal communities develop their own frameworks internally for negotiating around the legal and cultural complexities woven into the internal infrastructures of cultural institutions that hold the heritage of our communities.