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Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository
215 Mission Road, Suite 101, Kodiak, AK 99615
Phone: 844-425-8844
Home page: alutiiqmuseum.org

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CONTACT: Curator of Collections Amanda Lancaster
amanda@alutiiqmuseum.org

Grant Funds to Enhance Koniag Cultural Library at Alutiiq Museum

KODIAK, Alaska—A \$149,451 grant to Koniag from the Institute of Museum and Library Services will help the Alutiiq Museum make improvements to its library. The funding will support the Liigwik—Learning Place project, an effort to enhance public use of the Koniag Cultural Library by outfitting a new library space in the renovated museum building and hosting a series of library events.

“This project is part of our broader efforts to invite more public use of the museum and its resources,” said Executive Director April Counciller. “Many people don’t realize we have a research library. For many years, the collection was in the museum basement. It was difficult to access and patrons had to make appointments. With the museum’s renovation, we are able to put the library in a larger second-floor space and offer public hours.”

Founded in 2018, the Koniag Cultural Library is the official tribal library of Kodiak’s regional Native corporation, Koniag. The Alutiiq Museum owns and manages the collection for the benefit of the tribal community and the public. At present, the library contains over 3,800 pieces of printed material, 208 audio-visual items, 2.4 linear feet of vertical files, and 11,000 photographs reflecting Kodiak, the Alutiiq world, and the museum’s work. Curator of Collections Amanda Lancaster serves as the librarian.

The Liigwik—Learning Place project will rehouse and share library materials. In the coming months, staff members will move the library into its new home in the Alutiiq Center. Grant funds will provide furnishings—shelving, tables, seating, signage, and two computers. Starting next fall, staff will host library events to connect patrons to library resources, including genealogical resources.

“Our goal is to create a better functioning library,” said Counciller. “We receive hundreds of requests for information about the Alutiiq world each year, requests that demonstrate a deep interest in exploring Alutiiq history, language, and traditions. Liigwik will transform our library into a learning center. It will elevate the library program to the level of other AMAR programs. And when Kodiak learns about Alutiiq people, we address lingering stereotypes, elevate respect for Native people, and build a stronger community.”

The Alutiiq Museum is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the history and culture of the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq, an Alaska Native tribal people. Representatives of Kodiak Alutiiq organizations govern the museum with funding from charitable contributions, memberships, grants, contracts, and sales.