

Eastern Shoshone Tribe Revitalizing Indigenous Language Amidst Pandemic

Eastern Shoshone speakers will spend two weeks creating a comprehensive dictionary database of the Indigenous language in a race catalyzed by the pandemic.

BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA, UNITED STATES, January 12, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Eastern Shoshone speakers, Elders, community members, and a team of linguistic experts will spend two weeks creating a comprehensive dictionary database of the Indigenous language in a race against time catalyzed by the ongoing pandemic.

The Eastern Shoshone people, like every Native Tribe, have lost Elders and other language activists to COVID-19. The global pandemic's impact on Indigenous languages is significantly worse when coupled with the fact that most of the estimated 2,211 Eastern Shoshone speakers remaining are over 60-years-old creates significant concern about the language's continuation. With these compounding factors at play, community members are ensuring future generations of learners have a record of their Indigenous language by taking part in Rapid Word Collection.

This method of word collection employed by the tribe from January 10-21 expedites the overall language documentation process. Documenting an extensive lexical database once took years; however, the methodology utilized by [the Eastern Shoshone tribe](#) completes the process in just weeks. During Rapid Word Collection, groups of Indigenous speakers and Elders answer prompts facilitated by linguists. To maintain COVID safety standards, the team of linguists tasked with documenting the Eastern Shoshone will join these language revitalization efforts remotely via Zoom.

The completed database is fundamental for future language-learning materials, which the Wind River Reservation community is determined will follow, including an online and mobile dictionary.

The Eastern Shoshone Tribe now lives on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming.

[The Language Conservancy](#) (TLC) is a nonprofit organization that supports Indigenous language revitalization by developing programs, materials, and technologies in close partnership with Indigenous communities.

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