

Native Language Teacher Certification Policy

Purpose

The Gila River Indian Community will support and endorse any Community Member that is proficient in the Akimel O'otham language and is seeking a Native Language Teacher Certification by providing a Letter of Proficiency Verification on official Gila River Indian Community Letterhead as required by Arizona Department of Education policies R7-2-614 and R7-2-607.

Policy

1. Any enrolled Community Members interested in becoming a certified native language teacher must submit a complete application to the Tribal Education Department for review and recommendation to the Executive Office.
2. Requirements for the initial Certification shall be:
 - a. Must be an enrolled Member of the Gila River Indian Community (a copy of the applicant's Tribal Identification Card or Certificate of Indian Blood must be submitted);
 - b. Must be at least 18 years of age;
 - c. Must provide a valid copy of applicant's Arizona Department of Public Safety Identity Verified Prints (IVP) Card;
 - d. Must be employed or have recently applied for employment with the Gila River Indian Community or an educational institute which services Gila River Indian Community Members OR intend on teaching language in a community class (i.e. district language class, Community event);
 - e. Must pass a Language Proficiency Assessment through the Tribal Education Department;
and
 - f. Must pay a \$60 Application Fee to the Arizona Department of Education: Certification Unit.
3. Once an applicant has met all the requirements for certification, including passing the Language Proficiency Assessment, the Tribal Education Department shall recommend the applicant to receive a Language Proficiency Verification Letter issued by the Executive Office on official Gila River Indian Community Letterhead. The applicant may then submit their Letter of Proficiency Verification to the Arizona Department of Education: Certification Unit. A copy of the Language Proficiency Verification Letter will be kept on file at the Tribal Education Department.
 - a. Applicants who do not meet the minimum qualifications or do not pass the Language Proficiency Verification Assessment may reapply during the next Assessment time frame.
4. The Gila River Indian Community Tribal Education Department shall process all applications for the Language Proficiency Assessment and store all records.

5. A Language Proficiency Assessment shall be administered two times within a calendar year, the first Thursday in March and First Thursday in the October. A public notice shall be posted no later than one month prior to the date of the Assessment.
6. Once the applicant receives their Native American Language Teacher Certification they shall submit a copy to the Tribal Education Department for record keeping.
7. The Native Language Teacher Certification shall be valid for 6 years. A teacher may apply for recertification six months prior to and up to one year after the Certification expiration date.
8. Requirements for the Recertification shall be:
 - a. Completion of 60 hours of Professional Development; Professional Development requires the completion of activities that shall relate to academic or professional educator standards or apply toward the attainment of an additional Arizona certificate, endorsement or approved area (documentation required).
 - b. Submission of a valid copy of applicant's Arizona Department of Public Safety Identity Verified Prints (IVP) Card; and
 - c. Payment of the \$60 Application Fee to the Arizona Department of Education: Certification Unit.

Creation of Assessment

Select Community Elders and Fluent Speakers who are identified as language proficient shall be issued the Language Proficiency Verification Letter from the Executive Office in order to apply for the Native Language Teacher Certification through the Arizona Department of Education: Certification Unit. These language proficient Community members shall develop the Language Proficiency Assessment in conjunction with the Tribal Education Department, and subject to review and approval by the Executive Office.