

# Fall 2023 Community Engaged Faculty Minigrant

*Provide a short narrative describing the research/project the minigrant would be supporting, how the funds would support the goals of this project, and how the research/project incorporates community engagement or service learning. (500-750 words)*

**Description of the project:**

For too long, Alaska Native history and the trauma that Alaska Native people have endured have gone unrecognized. This trauma includes war, colonization, medical experimentation, and forced assimilation. The results of said trauma (and the lack of recognition of this history) have contributed to significant consequences for Alaska Native physical, mental, and spiritual health. Significant trauma has occurred through assimilation efforts by the United States government, religious and educational systems that attempted to “kill the Indian.” This included stripping Indigenous children from their homes, communities, and culture to attend residential schools (schools referred to today by some Elders as “assimilation camps”). Children were often severely abused for speaking their language or practicing ceremonies while attending these schools. Sadly, some children died while attending the residential schools; their bodies were laid to rest on the school grounds, and their families were left unnotified of the passing of their child. This trauma is a principal reason Alaska Natives distrust governmental, educational, and medical organizations. The mistrust of health organizations contributes to the statistical data that shows Alaska Natives to have some of the highest rates of diabetes, heart disease, cancers, substance misuse disorders, and suicides. This mistrust contributes to elders’ reluctance to access health care.

The Nughejagh project aims to live up to its Dena'ina meaning, "To become healed," by providing an avenue to healing from the trauma Alaska Natives have endured through efforts to integrate what has been lost: a sense of family, community, and pride in culture. This would include integrating cultural ceremony practice into current medicine practice at the Eklutna Community Clinic.

### **Community-Engaged Research Through Partnership**

Through my efforts as an Alaska Native scholar, I will partner with the Native Village of Eklutna to develop an Elder Steering Council, the members of which will provide valuable feedback on Culturally Responsive and Trauma Informed (CRTI) training. This training, which I am developing in an online training format for the public and academic programs, will be offered to the medical professionals and staff at the Eklutna Community Clinic. The Elder Steering Committee will also oversee and assist with the cultural affirming and trauma healing activities that the clinic will host for the community and that will contribute content to the CRTI training modules. The Community Engaged Faculty Minigrant would support the Nughejagh project by providing support for recording interviews with Elders from the Steering Council who are comfortable sharing their stories of trauma and resilience that helped them endure the suffering they experienced.

A partnership where Alaska Native Elders can collaborate on addressing trauma in their communities will be critical to the establishment of the health and well-being of this marginalized group. The five one-hour interviews I will conduct will allow the opportunity to include these reflections and perspectives in the Culturally Responsive and Trauma Informed training modules, extending this knowledge to current and future health professionals who can

benefit from the sharing of the Elders' perspectives. Eklutna Elders will influence the interventions of trauma in healthcare practice, an empowerment theory that can give them a sense of ownership and autonomy over their well-being.

**Use of Community Engaged Faculty Minigrant Funds:**

Nughejagh calls for the help of investigators and student assistants who will engage with the Dena'ina community to carry out interviews, assist in training, and in the implementation of cultural-affirming community events. The funds from this minigrant will aid in the completion of interviews and in acquiring, analyzing, and disseminating of the data collected from recorded interviews of the Elders. The video and audio recordings will contribute to content to be included in the final CRTI training modules and manual that the Nughejagh Project will offer online through collaboration with the Human Services Department and Alaska Native Studies program at UAA

The sustainability and dissemination of the Nughejagh Project relies on all funding to ensure that materials and data collected are genuinely culturally relevant and representative of Alaska Native values and beliefs, and are implemented in ways Elders find respectful and meaningful.

***Community Partner Organization & Contact\****

Native Village of Eklutna Tribal President Aaron Leggett and/or Tribal Administrator Brenda Hewitt

***Provide a letter of support from the community partner, indicating their willingness to collaborate on the proposed project. An email of support is fine.***

Letter from President [Aaron Leggett](#)

*In the space provided, please include a break-down of your proposed project timeline -- we understand that these things may evolve and change. Include your best estimates as to the timeline of your project.*

Breakdown of project timeline using Community Engagement Faculty Minigrant:

Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Recruit elders	X	X												
Conduct Interviews			X	X	X	X	X							
Conduct Followup Interviews							X	X	X	X	X			
Analyze recordings for thematic content on trauma and resilience			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Involve Elders in editing content for modules and manual			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Prepare modules and manual for assessment by elders								X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Prepare for next phase of Nughejagh													X	X

*In the space provided, please include a break-down of your proposed project budget breakdown.*

**Budget and Justification:**

Item/Position	Activity	Total Expense	Justification
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Jessica Ross MEdTL, RDH  
Department of Human Services

Elder Participant honoraria (5 total)	Interview on trauma, concerns and desires from healthcare professionals	500	Each Alaska Native Elder will receive a \$100 honorarium for participation in interviews
Recording software	Acquire and edit interview content	300	Software to record, edit recordings
Editing software	Edit and decipher how to present data	200	Upload and edit interview data to training module presentations and manual publication
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>1,000</b>	