



CENTRAL COUNCIL

*Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Tlingit Haida Central Council Signs Cooperative Agreement  
with State of Alaska and Microsoft**

Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit Haida Central Council), the State of Alaska, and Microsoft Corporation have formalized their collaboration to coordinate specialized training and workforce development in the area of Information Technology (IT) to promote economic development in Alaska. The cooperative agreement was signed October 15, 2014 during the National Indian Education Association's convention in Anchorage and is an annex to a Memorandum of Agreement signed by the State of Alaska and Tlingit Haida Central Council in August.

The annex identifies four areas of collaboration:

1. Cooperate and discuss education and job opportunities related to IT.
2. Facilitate an exchange of information regarding current and anticipated developments in IT and work cooperatively toward coordinating training programs.
3. Facilitate cooperation and improvement in training for IT careers using all available vocational – technical institutions, including Alaska tribal institutions.
4. Host a "Technical Education" conference each year for at least the next two years to share data and views regarding IT training and employment opportunities.

In total, Alaska will receive 25 Microsoft IT Academy licenses and 10 free assessments for certificates per site from Microsoft Corporation. Tlingit Haida Central Council will receive one of five licenses to be issued to tribal vocational institutions. Licenses will also be issued to public schools, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development job centers, Division of Juvenile Justice, Alaska Military Academy, and the Office of Children's Services' Independent Living Program.

Microsoft IT Academy was developed to bridge the gap between education and the real world by empowering students to gain the IT skills needed for college and a career in today's technology-driven job market. The program

also provides educators with the professional development resources needed to be successful in the classroom.

“Online certificate programs such as the Microsoft IT Academy particularly serve the needs of rural Alaskans who may not live near technical schools,” Department of Education Commissioner Mike Hanley said. “As Alaska seeks to graduate students who are ready for careers and postsecondary education, online education and training programs provide a key path to career readiness.”

“This is a wonderful opportunity for our communities and tribal citizens,” said President Richard Peterson. “Providing this training to our young tribal citizens gives them a relevant set of skills to be competitive in the job market.”

Governor Sean Parnell’s Special Counsel and Policy Director Randy Ruaro, Department of Education Commissioner Mike Hanley, and Department of Labor Dianne Blumer represented the State of Alaska and Western Region General Manager Kristin Rhodes and Director of Strategic Initiatives Adrian Wilson represented Microsoft at the signing ceremony.



L-R: Mike Hanley, Dianne Blumer, Kristin Rhodes, Randy Ruaro, and Richard Peterson

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