



Dän K'í Intensive Language Program Overview

2026 – 2029 YNLC Adult Language Program

Program Overview

The Dän K'í Intensive Language Learning Program is a multi-year program aimed at raising adult language speaking and comprehension proficiency in Dän K'í (Northern Tutchone) and strengthening cultural proficiency through hands-on, land-based language applications. This program follows seasonal cultural cycles to learn various topics in the language and includes weekly and monthly on-the-land learning opportunities that uphold and center the major 6 areas of life for Yukon First Nations - Spirituality, Land, Leadership, People, Story, Creations (Arts & Technology).

The weekly program activities take place in Whitehorse, YT at the Yukon Native Language Centre and in various Northern Tutchone communities monthly. In-person participation is required throughout all three years of the program.

This three-year program runs from September 2026 – March 2029.

Program Goals

Year 1 – September 2026 – September 2027

- Increase conversational speaking proficiency from a low to high-beginner language proficiency through 8 seasonal cultural units on various culturally relevant topics while building cultural skills.
- Teach language topics through a Yukon First Nations lens, inclusive of story, land, people, leadership, spirituality, and creations (arts & technology).
- Learn context-specific vocabulary in full conversational sentences, story, task-based learning, and land-based learning on a weekly and monthly basis.
- Provide a learning environment that uses immersion methodology to keep learners in the language.
- Increase the number of Northern Tutchone learning and teaching resources.
- Strengthen learner confidence in speaking and presenting in Northern Tutchone.

Year 2 – September 2027 – September 2028

- Increase conversational speaking proficiency from a low to mid-intermediate language proficiency through 8 seasonal cultural units on various culturally relevant topics while building cultural skills.

Year 3 – September 2028 – September 2029

- Increase conversational speaking proficiency from a mid-intermediate to high-intermediate language proficiency through 5 seasonal cultural units on various culturally relevant topics while building cultural skills.



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Program Schedule - Year 1

Year 1 of the Dän K'í Intensive Program runs over eight months of the year between the weeks of September 21, 2026, and September 4, 2027.

The eight, 4-week cycles of the program for Year 1 are:

September 21 - October 17, 2026

October 26 - November 21, 2026

January 4 - January 30, 2027

February 8 - March 6, 2027

April 5 - May 1, 2027

May 10 - June 5, 2027

July 5 - July 31, 2027

August 10 - September 4, 2027

Non-program times are program breaks where there will not be scheduled classes. Students must be able to commit to all dates to be accepted into the program.

Additional Schedule Information

- Three-years of intensive language learning with specified breaks throughout
- Eight months of intensive learning per year (44 in-person hours per month)
 - 9 hours of in-person learning per week at YNLC (36 hours of learning throughout each monthly cultural cycle)
 - Full-day community-based language sharing (8 hours per month)
 - Minimum of 3 hours of personal study per week

Year 1 - Program Schedule

September 21 - October 17, 2026 (Unit 1)

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM at YNLC

Land-based Community Camp on October 17, 2026 (All-day)

October 26 - November 21, 2026 (Unit 2)

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM at YNLC

Land-based Community Camp on November 21, 2026 (All-day)

January 4 - January 30, 2027 (Unit 3)



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Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM at YNLC

Land-based Community Camp on January 30, 2027 (All-day)

February 8 - March 6, 2027 (Unit 4)

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM at YNLC

Land-based Community Camp on March 6, 2027 (All-day)

April 5 - May 1, 2027 (Unit 5)

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM at YNLC

Land-based Community Camp on May 1, 2027 (All-day)

May 10 - June 5, 2027 (Unit 6)

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM at YNLC

Land-based Community Camp on June 5, 2027 (All-day)

July 5 - July 31, 2027 (Unit 7)

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM at YNLC

Land-based Community Camp on July 31, 2027 (All-day)

August 10 - September 4, 2027 (Unit 8)

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM at YNLC

Land-based Community Camp on September 4, 2027 (All-day)

Program Accreditation & Fees

This program is free for Yukon First Nation citizens that participate. This program is unpaid - does not pay language learners to participate - however, a small stipend is available to students who achieve specific, predetermined oral proficiency benchmarks throughout the program to celebrate language learning milestones. Students are responsible for covering costs such as accommodations, food, mileage and per-diems throughout the program. Students must provide their own tablets/laptops.



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YNLC partners with Simon Fraser University's (SFU) Indigenous Languages Proficiency Program. Learners who achieve a high-beginner oral language proficiency level will receive a Certificate of Indigenous Language Proficiency (Year 1), and those who achieve a mid-intermediate oral language proficiency level will receive a Diploma of Indigenous Language Proficiency (Year 2). Further accreditation is being researched for high-intermediate oral proficiency and higher levels (Year 3). University credits will be available to students the term after they complete the oral proficiency and learning outcome requirements for each course.

If program participants require financial support to participate in the program, they are encouraged to reach out to their Yukon First Nation or employer. This program is considered a full-time post-secondary program and can be supported through a Yukon First Nation's post-secondary funding with YNLC provide letters of support and enrolment.

Program Applications

Program seats will be prioritized for:

1. Learners who are Yukon First Nation citizens – Northern Tutchone speaking First Nation citizens prioritized.
2. Learners who are 18 years of age and older.
3. Learners with an absolute commitment to teaching Dän K'í to others through various programming on the life-long learning spectrum in their Yukon First Nation or Yukon First Nation-led Language Organizations.
4. Learners who have a goal of working in a language-related career such as curriculum development, archiving and digitization, language governance and leadership, language teacher, language documentation, etc.
5. Learners who 100% committed to advocating for, and strengthening, the visibility, use, and fluency development for their language in their community and throughout the Yukon.
6. Learners who demonstrate a commitment to sharing created language resources with all Northern Tutchone First Nations, other Northern Tutchone language and teachers, and the Yukon Native Language Centre.
7. Learners who commit to the multi-year program requirements:
 - Three-years of intensive language learning with specified breaks throughout
 - Eight months of intensive learning per year (44 in-person hours per month)
 - 9 hours of in-person learning per week at YNLC (36 hours of learning throughout each monthly cultural cycle)
 - Full-day community-based language sharing (8 hours per month)
 - Minimum of 3 hours of personal study per week
8. Have an established relationship with a fluent speaker of Dän K'í

Application closes August 19, 2026, at 4:30 PM.



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[Apply to the Program Here!](#)

Program Contact Information

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is the program available via Zoom or online?

A: No – The program is only available in-person in Whitehorse to ensure relationship building, on-the-land activities, and task-based learning can occur.

Learners wishing to take part in language programming in their community can reach out to their Yukon First Nations Language Department staff. YNLC will actively be working with Northern Tutchone speaking Yukon First Nations to ensure they have access to created materials through the program, program methods, and structure if community-based learners request them.

Q: Do learners get paid to take part in the program?

A: No – Learners do not receive monetary compensation for participating in the program. Learning Achievement Stipends will be available throughout the program when students meet pre-determined language proficiency goals.

Q: How can I access funding to financially support me taking the program?

A: Learners can reach out to their respective Yukon First Nation Post-Secondary Advisor as the program would enable students to receive funding at a full-time student status. YNLC will ensure the advisor is provided with the needed information about the program. If a student leaves the program, they are responsible for communicating with their YFN Post-Secondary advisor

If a learner has exhausted their personal post-secondary funding available through their Yukon First Nation, there are grants available to support through external organizations.

Q: What ages is the program for?

A: The Dän K'í Intensive Language Program is for adults, aged 18 and higher. We welcome all applications from individuals who are committed to learning and teaching their language in the future!

Q: What if I have plans that I am unable to change that fall on programming days?



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A: Learners are strongly encouraged to plan vacations around breaks in the program.

Learners who commit to being available for all dates of the program will be prioritized in the application selection process.

Learners who have days that they will be away over the programming dates, are responsible for catching up on missed work throughout the program and during program break times. Learners will need to complete missed tasks to be able to move into the next unit.

Q: I work a full-time job and am unsure if I can get off early to make the 3:00 PM class start times. What can I do?

A: YNLC is happy to write a letter to employers speaking to the utmost importance of language learning for strengthening Yukon First Nations identity, increasing the number of adult Dän K'í speakers, and sharing the benefits of the program.

Students who are unable to make the 3:00 PM class start time, cannot stay for the full 3-hour class time, or will consistently miss a class per week will not be prioritized during the in the application selection process.

Q: I have a high-beginner/low-intermediate language proficiency in Dän K'í. Do I have to take the program from the beginning?

A: If a learner has completed an oral assessment and met the requirements of high-beginner/low-intermediate oral proficiency with YNLC and a Fluent Speaker, they will be able to join into the program at the end of Year 1 (July or August 2027) or at the beginning of Year 2 (October 2027).

Q: I am a silent speaker who understands Dän K'í but do not feel comfortable speaking my language. Is this program for me?

A: This program welcomes everyone! However, it is important to note that language instructors do not have Cognitive Behavioral Therapy training, or any other psychological training, that you may need to feel successful in the program. YNLC is currently researching Silent Speaker programs that are specifically aimed at working with therapists, fluent speakers, and silent speakers to support silent speakers in gaining confidence and finding their voice again.



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Q: I want to learn my language, but I don't want to teach my language in the future. Am I able to apply to the program?

A: Due to the current state of the Dän K'í language – all fluent speakers are in their 70's or older, most individuals learning the Dän K'í language remain at the beginning proficiency stages, and a drop in individuals able to teach the language – this program will prioritize in the applicants who have a strong desire to teach in the program selection process.

It is important to note that YNLC looks at teaching and learning Dän K'í as life-long process and recognizes many interpret the being a teacher and teaching means teaching in a K-12 system. We believe that teaching for life-long language learning is community-based, and individuals who are interested in teaching through land-based language camps, language nests, adult courses and classes, prenatal programs, day home programs, etc. are considered language teachers.