

December 15, 2025

Dear Language Teachers, Language Program Coordinators, and Parents:

Greetings from the Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair (ONAYLF)! We are so pleased to announce that the **23rd Annual ONAYLF** will take place *in-person* on **April 6 and 7, 2026**, at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History on the University of Oklahoma campus in Norman, Oklahoma. The poster art theme for 2026 is **“My Language is My Home”**. There is no charge to participate in the Fair and admission to the museum is complimentary on Fair Days.

The PreK – 5th grade performances will take place on **Monday, April 6th** from 8:00 a.m. (check-in) to around 2:00 p.m. The Grand Entry at the Opening Ceremony will begin at **9:00 am**. If your students are planning to participate in the Grand Entry, please bring a flag, poster, and/or banner announcing your school or program. Students and teachers will start assembling in the Foyer at **8:45 am**.

The 6th – 12th grade performances will take place on **Tuesday, April 7th** from 8:00 a.m. (check-in) to around 2:00 p.m. We will start the Opening Ceremony at **9:00 am**, with a special speaker and presentation of awards to material submission category winners.

Online Fair components

In addition to the in-person ONAYLF on April 6th and 7th, we will be posting all video submission categories to the ONAYLF YouTube channel. See the ONAYLF website for details. <https://www.youtube.com/@oklahomanativeamericanyouth3680>

Registration

On-Line Registration will open **Monday, January 12th** and will close **Friday, February 27th at 5:00 p.m.** The On-Line Registration System will be utilized for the 2026 ONAYLF. Access to the system will be through the ONAYLF website. You will need to create a new username and password for the system. Access to the system will be through the ONAYLF website: <https://samnoblemuseum.ou.edu/collections-and-research/native-american-languages/oklahoma-native-american-youth-language-fair-2022-2/>

If you have trouble with the registration, *or you know of a teacher who does not have access to the web*, please call us at 405-325-7588.

We will be needing volunteers for the in-person April 6th and 7th Fair days and judges (in-person and electronic) for the 2026 ONAYLF. If you know someone, please encourage them to check out the volunteer and judge webpages on the ONAYLF website and register beginning **on January 12, 2026**. Judge and Volunteer registration closes on **March 6, 2026**.

ONAYLF Office Hours

We will have staff available to assist you on Wednesdays from 9:00 am to 1:30 pm after January 15th. The office schedule for February and March will be posted on the webpage in January. If you have questions or need information, please feel free to call 405-325-7588 or e-mail us at onaylf.samnoblemuseum@ou.edu. Please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible. The ONAYLF office will be closed from December 22, 2025 through January 7, 2026 for the Holidays. The office will reopen on January 7, 2026.

Information for the Fair is on our homepage: <https://samnoblemuseum.ou.edu/collections-and-research/native-american-languages/oklahoma-native-american-youth-language-fair-2022-2/>

We also have a Facebook page -- Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair. If you 'like' or 'follow' our page, you can get updates quickly. Feel free to share the news about your students' preparations for the Fair on our Facebook page.

Performance Categories and Submission Deadlines

Please view or download the **2026 Category Guidelines** from the ONAYLF website to make sure the submissions and performances from your students meet the guidelines.

The 2026 performance and material submission categories and eligible grade levels are:

Live (In-Person) Performance Categories

- Spoken Native American Language (PreK – 12th)
- Spoken Native American Language – Skit/Short Play (PreK-12th)
- Spoken Prayer in Native American Language (PreK – 12th)
- Spoken Poetry in Native American Language (PreK – 12th)
- Traditional Song in Native American Language (PreK – 12th)
- Modern Song in Native American Language (PreK – 12th)
- Master Performers in Native American Language (Language and Song) (3rd – 12th)

Material Submission Categories

- Books (PreK – 12th) (includes comic books and graphic novels)
- Cartoons & Comics (PreK – 12th)
- Poster Art on Theme: "Languages All Around Us" (PreK – 12th)

Electronic Submission Categories (Posted on ONAYLF YouTube Channel)

- Spoken Language – Puppet Show (PreK - 12th)
- Spoken Language – Mobile Video (PreK - 12th)
- Film/Video (3rd – 12th)

Guidelines and forms for each category can be viewed and downloaded from the ONAYLF website. Each submission to the books, cartoons & comics, film/video, and poster art categories must be accompanied by a **Material Submission Form**. Each submission to the electronic submission categories (Puppet Show and Mobile Video) must be accompanied by an **Electronic Submission Form**. All entries to the poster art category must have a title (can be the poster art theme) and a statement about the artwork on the Material Submission Form. *Posters larger than 11x17" will not be accepted*. Material and electronic submissions received without a submission form will not be eligible for prizes.

Comics & Cartoons, Film/Video, Spoken Language-Puppet Show and Spoken Language-Mobile Video may be submitted to the ONAYLF Dropbox™ or Goggle Drive. Instructions for using the ONAYLF Dropbox™ and Google Drive will be posted on the ONAYLF website. Make sure to add the Material or Electronic Submission Form to the Dropbox as well. Make sure the file name includes the student's full name or clear identifier for the group and matches the name(s) on the Material Submission Form.

Pre-judged categories (books, posters, comics & cartoons, film/video, spoken language-mobile video and spoken language – puppet show) must be uploaded on the Dropbox™ or Google Drive, at the museum or postmarked by **Friday, March 6th**.

Miscellaneous Items

Please remember the museum requires one (1) adult chaperone per five (5) PreK through 5th grade students and one (1) adult chaperone per ten (10) 6ths through 12th grade students. Please plan to bring the necessary number of parents or other chaperones with you. Admission to the Museum is complimentary during Fair days for chaperones, parents, family members and guests.

Students who perform in a performance category at the 2026 ONAYLF in-person will receive a t-shirt and medallion(s) for their participation. Students who submit only Material and/or Electronic Submissions will receive a backpack or similar item for their participation. Students who submit only Material and/or Electronic Submissions who attend the Fair in person but do not participate in an in-person performance category will receive a medallion.

There will be seating areas for lunch available for everyone. Lunches must be sealed in Ziploc® bags, Tupperware® style containers, or contained in coolers. There will not be cold storage available, but we can store coolers in the first-floor kitchenette. We will have people at the door to help you with these. The Museum no longer has a café.

In order to promote a safe environment, hand sanitizer and masks will be available for use by your students and their guests at ONAYLF. Please be aware of your students' COVID, Flu and other respiratory disease status before arriving at the Museum.

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We look forward to welcoming you and your students to the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History! For questions, please call the ONAYLF staff at 405-325-7588 during the office hours listed above. You can also e-mail questions to onaylf.samnoblemuseum@ou.edu. We hope to see all you and your students in April!

Sincerely,

Raina Heaton, Program Director, Oklahoma Native American Language Youth Language Fair / Assistant Curator of Native American Languages, Sam Noble Museum / Assistant Professor of Native American Studies

William Madison, Collection Manager, Native American Languages / Sam Noble Museum

Nancy Coleman, Registrar, Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair / Sam Noble Museum

The University of Oklahoma

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P.S. Please feel free to share this email and the attached letter with other teachers, parents, learners, or other interested persons that you know.