

FOR RELEASE
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Statement from the premier on National Aboriginal Languages Day

Premier Sandy Silver issued the following statement about National Aboriginal Languages Day:

"I'd like to recognize that today is National Aboriginal Languages Day. Yukon is home to eight First Nations languages which are Gwich'in, Hän, Kaska, Northern Tutchone, Southern Tutchone, Tagish, Tlingit and Upper Tanana. The diversity of languages in Yukon brings a richness to our cultural heritage that we cannot afford to lose.

"The Government of Yukon is committed to working with linguistic experts and First Nations to develop and preserve First Nations languages, traditional knowledge, and culture.

"Let's all celebrate the languages of our territory and think about our role in revitalizing, maintaining and celebrating Aboriginal languages.

"Thank you to all of the organizations and individuals who are working hard to keep these languages alive. Aboriginal languages are an important part of Yukon and Canadian culture.

"Happy National Aboriginal Language Day."

THANK YOU LANGUAGE		WHERE TO USE
Kwànáschis Shāw níthän	Southern Tutchone	Whitehorse and south-west Yukon (Carmacks, Destruction Bay, Haines Junction, Carcross)
Máhsin cho	Northern Tutchone	Mid-east Yukon (Mayo, Stewart Crossing, Pelly Crossing, Faro)
Gunat̨ch̨ish	Tlingit	Teslin and Swift River area
Gùnèlch̨ish	Tagish	South-east of Carcross and north-west B.C.
Sógá sénlá'	Kaska	South-east Yukon and north-east B.C. (Ross River to Watson Lake)
Màhsi' choo	Gwich'in	Old Crow and northern Yukon
Màhsi' cho	Hän	Dawson area
Tsin'j̨i choh	Upper Tanana	Beaver Creek area

Quick facts

- According to the 2011 Census, almost 213,500 people reported having an Aboriginal mother tongue of whom nearly 213,400 people reported speaking an Aboriginal language most often or regularly at home.
- Seven of Yukon's eight languages are from the Athapaskan language family.
- The majority of Yukon Self-Governing First Nations assumed responsibility for Aboriginal languages under section 17 of their Self-Government Agreements in 2008.
- Yukon's Languages Act recognizes Canada's official languages and Aboriginal languages.
- The Department of Education, in collaboration with Yukon First Nations, the Council of Yukon First Nations, and the Yukon Native Language Centre, supports the teaching of seven of these languages in school-based programs that involve nearly 2,000 Yukon K-12 students every week.
- The Yukon Native Language Centre provides a range of linguistic and educational services for Yukon First Nations and the general public.

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