



Request for Proposals

Pre-apprenticeship and Totem Pole Design and Carving for Sealaska Heritage Institute Building Bridges Program and Kootéeyaa Deiyí/Totem Pole Trail

Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI) is seeking Mentor carvers to participate in a 2-year project to train 2 emerging young artists in the skills needed to apprentice in a totem pole in a “pre-apprenticeship”, then work with these apprentices to carve a totem pole to be raised in Juneau as part of the Kootéeyaa Deiyí/Totem Pole Trail project along the Juneau waterfront.

The selected Mentors will be experienced Alaska Native carvers with a solid background and body of work in the formline style employed in traditional Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian art of Southeast Alaska and a history of carving full-sized totem poles as principal designers and carvers. One pole shall be created in Hoonah, Alaska and one in Sitka, Alaska.

Interested mentors will submit a proposal to SHI. Selected mentors will collaborate with SHI and partners to recruit and select apprentices for the project. Apprentices will be local to the mentor’s community.

Overview of Project

Both the pre-apprenticeship and the totem pole project will be set up as courses for credit through the University of Alaska Southeast in partnership with UAS, and with support from SHI staff, meaning that specific Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) will be established by the Mentor, in collaboration with SHI and UAS staff, and progress toward these objectives will be tracked by mentors, apprentices, and SHI staff. SLOs must include but will not be limited to: enhancing the apprentices’ skills and understanding of formline design and wood carving- especially 3-dimensional carving, understanding of cultural protocol and history connected to the work they are creating, as well as developing basic business understanding.

SHI’s *Kootéeyaa Deiyí*/Totem Pole Trail project is planned to comprise 30 red cedar totem poles, carved with the ancient crest design of our region’s tribal clans and the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples of Southeast Alaska. In partnership with the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ), the poles and accompanying storyboards will be installed along an existing 2-mile pedestrian thoroughfare along Juneau’s downtown

waterfront. This pathway is heavily used by residents and by more than a million annual cruise ship visitors who debark at the dock where the trail will begin. In these ways, the project is helping to perpetuate an at-risk art form, grow the next generation of Alaska Native carvers, and address the historical removal and subsequent and long-standing omission of our peoples' Indigenous art and culture from the civic landscape of downtown Juneau – Alaska's capital city—as well as fostering SHI's long-term goal of making Juneau the Northwest Coast Arts Capital.

Phase I of the project, the first 12 poles, is completed and phase II of the next 10 poles is currently underway.

Scope of Work

Each selected proposer will be contracted by SHI to serve as a mentor for the pre-apprenticeship and work with their apprentices to design and create one full-sized totem pole.

Estimated length of the Pre-apprenticeship is equivalent to 3 months of full-time work, or 450 hrs each for Mentor and apprentices. Mentors are paid at \$50 per hour and apprentices at \$15 per hour for this portion, and the work will take place in the Mentor's home community.

Estimated length of the totem carving apprenticeship is equivalent of 9 months of full-time work, or 1,350 hours each for Mentor and apprentices. Mentors are paid \$108,000, and apprentices are paid \$27,000 for this portion, and the totem carving will take place in the Mentor's home community.

The log will be greater than twenty-five (25) feet in length and thirty-six (36) inches in diameter at the base end. Each pole will consist of a minimum of three (3) major figures. One pole will be designed to represent the Chookaneidí clan, and one pole will be designed to represent the Kiksadí clan. The finished poles shall be 25' in length, painted, and shall have a copper cap fabricated and attached to the top of the pole.

The Mentor, with support from their apprentices will:

1. Determine, in consultation with SHI, which clan, moiety, or phratry will be represented by the pole and which figures will be depicted
2. Submit a design sketch to SHI for approval
3. After approval of the design sketch, create a wooden model of the pole for review by SHI

A log of western red cedar suitable for carving will be provided to each artist by SHI. SHI covers the expenses for carving tools for the apprentices, the cost of the log, and the transportation of the log to the carving location, and the transportation of the log to Juneau, and expenses related to raising the totem in Juneau. SHI also covers travel expenses for the Mentor-Apprentice team to participate in a Juneau-based ceremony for the completed totem.



Artist Qualifications

Artists submitting proposals should have the following qualifications:

- Alaska Native (Legally authorized to represent their work as Indian art under the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 and either eligible for an Alaska State Council on the Arts Silver Hand permit or would be eligible but for residing outside the state of Alaska.
- Demonstrated expertise and ability in employing the principles of formline design in the tradition of the Tlingit, Haida, or Tsimshian peoples of Alaska.
- Demonstrated experience as principal designer and carver of no fewer than five (5) Alaska Native totem poles of full size (20 feet tall or taller.) This experience should include all aspects of totem pole creation, from preparation of the log to delivery of the finished, painted product.
- Demonstrated experience in working as a mentor to two or more apprentices on a totem pole carving project.
- Demonstrated experience in managing budget for own projects.
- Qualify to be an approved Adjunct with University of Alaska Southeast
- Be prepared to work either in Hoonah, AK or Sitka, AK

Proposal Requirements

Interested Native artists should include in their proposals:

- A biographical statement describing the proposer's background, experience mentoring, training, and experience in the design and execution of Alaska Native carving projects, including full-sized totem poles. The statement shall also indicate the installed locations of no fewer than five (5) completed totem poles.
- A photographic portfolio showing a selection of the proposer's work, including a minimum of five (5) full-sized totem poles.
- A draft outline of student learning outcomes for 1) the pre-apprenticeship and 2) the totem apprenticeship.

Please submit a proposal to Crystal Cudworth, Art Program Manager – crystal.cudworth@sealaska.com

RFP will be extended to October 15, 2024

Questions can be addressed to Crystal Cudworth, Art Program Manager – crystal.cudworth@sealaska.com

