



Regalia Making

LEADER GUIDE



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



What Is Regalia?

“Regalia in Indigenous cultures refers to the traditional and often sacred clothing, accessories and artifacts worn or carried during various ceremonies, such as a powwows, celebrations, and pan-national gatherings.” —*thecanadianencyclopedia.ca*

Project Leader Notes

Before you begin, you should have your own personal knowledge of regalia making. This guide is not intended to teach you how to make regalia but instead incorporate experiential learning. This can be adaptable for your community by instilling your local teachings. We all have our own traditional pieces that we wear connecting us to our ancestors, clans, and family designs. The labor-intensive task of making regalia requires patience and community connectedness. Practice consistency and routine creating a welcoming environment for all. It can be helpful to establish a budget prior to starting. Regalia making can be expensive, however, supplies may be donated and shared amongst participants.

Set clear standards of expectations prior to starting. Creating a comforting environment for all participants is key to ensuring respect and mindfulness. It is recommended to host an orientation night to build relationships and answer questions youth might have prior to the class starting. Allow space for flexibility in class times, and pick dates and times that work best for the majority of the

group. Provide healthy snacks and drinks for your participants and play powwow music for inspiration.

Timeline

The suggested timeline for this project is 6–8 weeks. Host weekly regalia making meetings for 2–3 hours per availability of participants or at the discretion of the regalia teacher.

Special Accommodations

This project is recommended for both boys and girls in 5th grade and up. Anyone younger than that should have an adult with them to help. Encourage family participation regardless creating an inclusive learning environment for all. Be sure to ask prior to the meeting if any special accommodations are needed.

Learning Objectives

- Regalia making basics
- Cultural knowledge
- Various powwow dance styles
- Interpersonal knowledge and self-discovery
- Prices and average cost of regalia
- Safety and supply overview
- How to use a sewing machine
- Understanding brainstorming and the importance of planning
- Cutting, measuring and preparing fabrics/materials
- Assembling regalia pieces
- Public speaking and reflection

Sample Budget*

For each participant

Fabric	\$50
Thread	\$3
Zipper	\$2
Heat N' Bond Lite	\$8
Elastic	\$4
Bias tape (3-pack)	\$6
Ribbon/fringe (100-yard spool)	\$6
Total	\$79

Shared supplies

Sewing machine	\$85–\$150
Iron	\$20
Fabric scissors	\$8
Rotary cutter	\$10
Total	\$123

*Prices rounded to the nearest dollar and dated 2021.

Table of Contents

Welcome to powwow dance regalia making! Listed below are three project areas: **Where to Start**, **Creation**, and **Project Completion**. You will need to complete **each of the six activities** to fulfill the requirements of this project. You must attend all in-person sessions and have the ability to work on your own. Good luck and have fun!



PROJECT AREA 1: Where to Start

- Activity 1:** Introduction to Regalia Making..... 1
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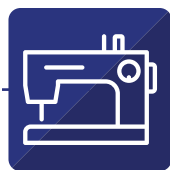


Project Completion Chart

Project Leader Notes

This first activity is a great way to start the regalia making class by reviewing **all six activities** listed below. When participants begin an activity, encourage them to fill in the date from start to finish. Ask them to review what they learned with you and initial when complete. When this chart is complete, provide them with a certificate (a sample certificate is available on [page 15](#)) and host a presentation night. See [Activity 6 \(page 12\)](#) for more information.

	Date Started	Date Completed	Project Helper Initials
 Where to Start			
Activity 1: Introduction to Regalia Making			
Activity 2: Learn to Use a Sewing Machine			
Activity 3: Brainstorm! Sketch Your Regalia			
 Creation			
Activity 4: Selecting and Cutting Your Materials			
Activity 5: Regalia Assembly			
 Project Completion			
Activity 6: Poster Board and Regalia Presentation			



ACTIVITY 1

Introduction to Regalia Making

This section will talk about ways to learn by doing when it comes to making regalia. It will include different ways to research and think about what you've learned.

Complete the next **four steps** for Activity 1.

STEP 1

Learning experiences

What are some learning experiences you could do or have done to show the interesting things you are learning about? Here are some ideas:

- Attend a regalia making workshop
- Go to a powwow or watch one online
- Host a craft night and talk about what you are making

Once you have a few ideas, record them here. Complete **at least two** learning experiences. Then, describe what you did in more detail. You may add or change these activities at any time. Ask your project helper to date and initial in the appropriate spaces below.

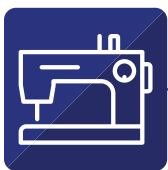
Project Leader Notes

There are **four steps** to Activity 1: Introduction to Regalia Making—Learning Experiences, Research, Interview an Elder, and Self-Reflection. Each step can be done individually or as a group.

Learning experiences are adaptable and can be tailored differently for each class. Be flexible on this one.

Learning experiences are meant to complement regalia making activities, providing the opportunity for youth to learn more on their own outside of this class.

Plan to Do	What I Learned	Date Completed	Project Helper Initials



ACTIVITY 1

STEP 2

Research: ***What does it all mean?***

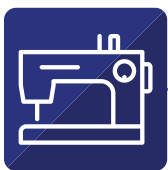
It is now time to do some research on regalia making and explore more ways to learn. The activities below will help you learn more about making regalia and becoming a dancer. Let's explore the following topics:

Project Leader Notes

Provide information and resources for your participants.

- You could bring in a few guest speakers to talk about their dance styles or host a powwow dance class. Some kids may not know what style they want to do yet.
- You could even create a PowerPoint and present on dance styles to the group.
- It is important to explore styles prior to creating regalia and understand the meanings of each.

Activity	Date Completed	What I Learned
Talk with family and friends about your regalia.		
Use the internet to find history, regalia designs, and styles.		
Interview a regalia maker. See page 3 for interview questions.		
Host or attend a dance class with a local dancer and try various styles.		



ACTIVITY 1

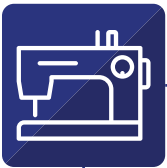
STEP 3

Interview an elder or local crafter

Always ask permission when interviewing someone, and if you can, give a small gift to thank them. Let them know you are learning to make regalia and if you could ask a few questions. Be polite, make sure you have something to write with, and smile!

Name of the person you are interviewing: _____

Questions	Responses
Can you tell me about a favorite item you made?	
What sparked your interest in learning how to make regalia and who taught you? What did you make?	
What challenges you the most when making regalia?	
If you could give me advice on regalia making, what are some things I should know?	



ACTIVITY 1

STEP 4

Self-reflection

Share: What have you learned about regalia making so far?

Project Leader Notes

Encourage youth to document and write down their learning experiences. Self-reflection is a very important piece when learning something new. This could be a great opportunity for a **talking circle** or **mindfulness moment** where participants can share out to the group what they are learning.

Reflect: What were some creative ideas you discovered for your regalia making project?

Generalize: What are you most looking forward to and what is one thing you are nervous about?

Apply: Why do you think we begin by visualizing our regalia before we make it?



ACTIVITY 1



What you should know...

When you are creating regalia, remember that these are not clothes. You are creating and designing something that is sacred to us as Native people. Every regalia is unique in its own design and is pieced together by you. Always remember to never sew when you are angry and to think positive thoughts. Your regalia will reflect how you felt when you made it.

You are now ready to begin sewing!



Did you know?

Being a regalia maker is a life-long position and the creations you make can be sold or donated to those in need. Giving or receiving regalia is a high honor and can help uplift a person's spirit.

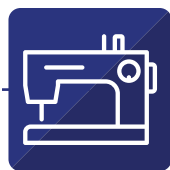


CONGRATULATIONS!



Activity 1 is complete.

Mark this in your [project completion chart](#).



ACTIVITY 2

Learn to Use a Sewing Machine

Learning how to use a sewing machine is an important part of making regalia. Once you get the hang of using it, you can try new techniques and improve your skills to create even better regalia.

First things first—You must learn to use a sewing machine before you can make regalia. This is a very important step. Listed below are examples of activities you can try. If you already know how to use a sewing machine, that's great! It can be helpful to practice using new techniques. Once you learn the basics on how to use a sewing machine, record them on the chart below:

Project Leader Notes

Using a sewing machine for the first time can be scary. It is important to understand how the machine works and to be safe while doing so. It is recommended to have a safety review prior to practicing. Here are a few resources to help you on your way:

- Let's Sew! 4-H Curriculum
- Youtube — Find tutorials for the make and model of the sewing machine you are using.
- Demonstrate for the youth how to use the machine.

Activity	Date Completed	What I Learned
Learn to thread a bobbin and top thread		
Practice sewing a straight line, a wavy line, and a zigzag on paper (see "Practice Sewing" on page 7)		
Practice sewing on fabric scraps		
Apply a hem to an edge and or use bias tape using a straight stitch and zigzag		

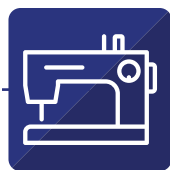


CONGRATULATIONS!



Activity 2 is complete.

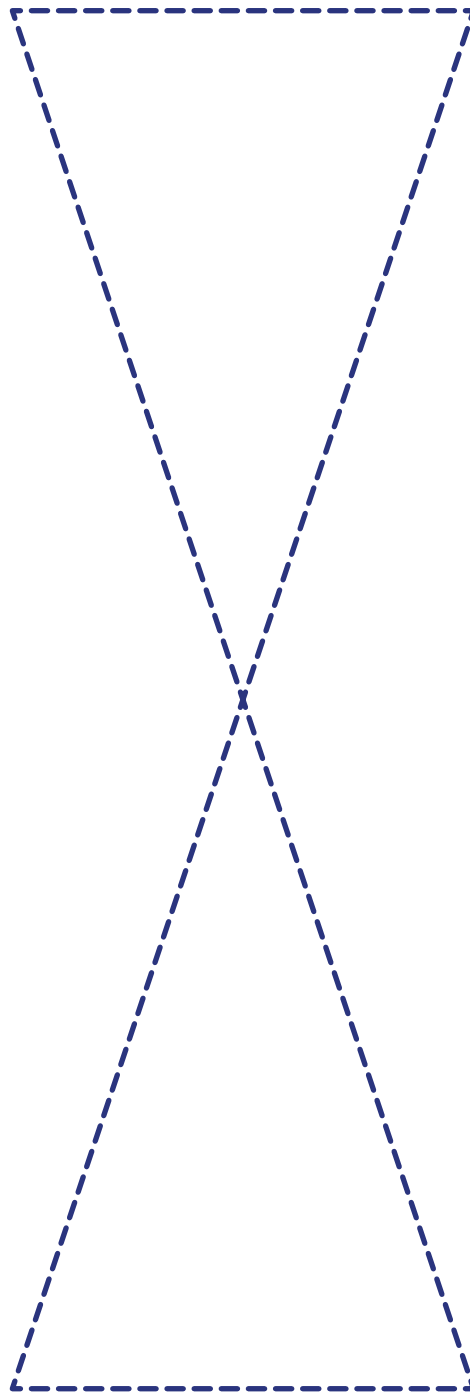
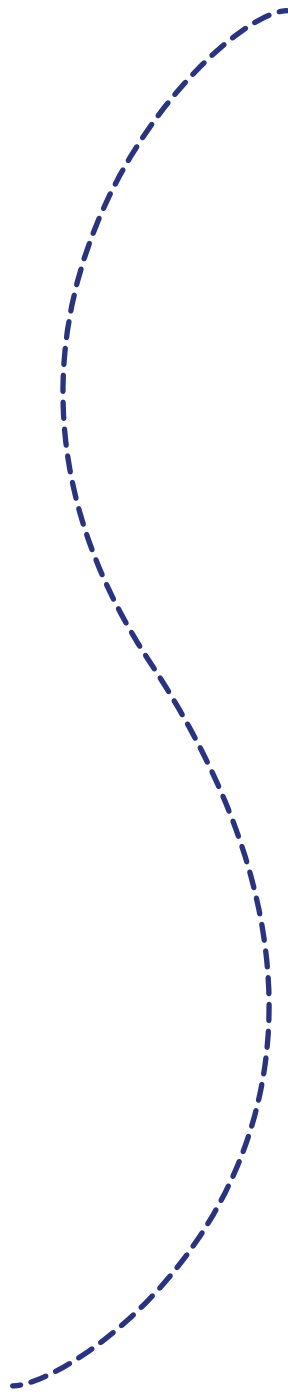
Mark this in your [project completion chart](#).



ACTIVITY 2

Practice Sewing

Directions: Practice sewing on paper following the lines below. Be sure to try out various stitches on your machine.





ACTIVITY 3

Brainstorm! Sketch Your Regalia

Brainstorming is an important part of creating your vision. You will think about creativity, colors, and design ideas. This section might ask you to review your notes and research from Activity 1 to help come up with ideas.

You may begin sketching your design and regalia. At this point, it is good to start drawing out your basic ideas on paper. Using the next few pages, draw out your designs. It is recommended you also think about what colors you would like.

Recommended supplies

- Crayons or colored pencils
- Pencils
- Rulers
- Measuring tape
- Regalia samples

Directions

1. Sketch out your regalia in full detail on the following page.
2. With assistance from a partner, begin measuring out length and width of regalia pieces.
3. Don't forget to add some color to your designs.



CONGRATULATIONS!



Activity 3 is complete.

Mark this in your [project completion chart](#).

Project Leader Notes

This can be difficult at first; you may need to take time to think about this step. Taking a walk in the woods or meditating can help. Researching design ideas online can be inspiring but be careful not to copy. Think about your clan, names, and family designs.

SUPPLY CHECK!

This would be a good time to review supplies on hand. Do you have the fabric colors you want? If not, you may need to visit a fabric store such as Joanne's, Hobby Lobby, or Walmart and purchase the supplies you need. A list of craft vendors is available on the back cover.



ACTIVITY 3

Sketch Your Regalia

Project Leader Notes

Participants may use this sheet as brainstorming paper. It is recommended to provide more sheets with perhaps grids, rulers, and stencils. Allow space for creativity and provide examples. You may also provide a few patterns for them to follow and use as guides.



ACTIVITY 4

Selecting and Cutting Your Materials

In this section, you will learn how to cut and measure materials using different tools. Safety is very important, so make sure to follow all the steps to cut your regalia pieces correctly.

Now that you have an idea of what your regalia will look like and all of the supplies needed, you may begin cutting out your pieces! This step will require the most help from the project leader.

Recommended supplies

- Fabric scissors
- Roller cutter
- Roller cutter mats
- Iron
- Ironing board or ironing table
- Patterns
- Pins
- Fabrics
- Large tables
- Extension cords
- Trash bin

Project Leader Notes

It may be helpful to have pre-cut patterns for participants to follow. Use poster board or store-bought patterns that they can follow and cut on their own based on measurements. Do a demonstration on how to cut specific pieces.

SAFETY TIPS

You may be using sharp objects to cut materials at this point. Be cautious and provide watchful support to all participants to avoid an accident. Also, if you are using an iron at this point to ensure fabric lays flat for cutting, be cautious of this as well.



CONGRATULATIONS!



Activity 4 is complete.

Mark this in your [project completion chart](#).



ACTIVITY 5

Regalia Assembly

It's important to have all the supplies you need for this section. Putting your regalia together is the last step, and you'll need to review everything you've learned in the guidebook to make sure all the pieces come together correctly.

Once everything is cut, you may now begin applying your designs and sewing together the pieces. This is considered to be one of the most difficult portions of regalia making. You will now need to transfer your designs to your regalia.

Recommended supplies

- Fabric scissors
- Roller cutter
- Roller cutter mats
- Iron
- Ironing board or ironing table
- Your design patterns
- Pencils and pens
- Fabrics
- Heat n' Bond or Wonder-Under
- Large tables
- Extension cords
- Trash bin



Project Leader Notes

At this point, you may want to call in extra helpers to assist. This is considered to be one of the most time consuming activities and requires the most attention from helpers/leaders.



CONGRATULATIONS!



Activity 5 is complete.

Mark this in your [project completion chart](#).



ACTIVITY 6

Poster Board and Regalia Presentation

Celebrating the completion of your regalia is the most important part of this guidebook. This section gives you a chance to reflect, express gratitude, and share what you've learned from the experience of making regalia.

Everything should now be complete and ready to be danced in, yay! Congratulations!

Recommended supplies

- Poster board
- Photos
- Markers
- Glue
- Scissors
- Tape
- Digital presentation equipment
- Display tables
- Your regalia

Presentation tips

- Dress nice
- Smile
- **Stand tall and be proud!**



Project Leader Notes

This may be a good opportunity to host an event where participants can receive a completion certificate. Allow them to invite friends, family, and elders who you interviewed. You may also have a mini-powwow or grand entry for participants to showcase what they made. Allow space for them to talk about it as a group and reflect. Invite elders to help with blessing their regalia pieces and thank everyone who helped them in their regalia making journey. Provide a completion certificate to those who completed all six activities.





ACTIVITY 6

Poster Board and Regalia Presentation

Directions

1

Using a poster board or digital PowerPoint, create a presentation of what you made either individually or as a family. If you have pictures, use them.

2

Your presentation should include:

- Your name(s)/family name
- Grade(s) and age
- Tribe/clan(s)

3

Add in challenges you faced and list areas of improvement.

4

Share and reflect on Activity 1: Self-reflection (page 4).

5

Discuss how will you use this new skill and how you will share it with others.

6

Showcase and display your regalia for your presentation and leave time for questions. Thank everyone for listening and the project leaders.

CONGRATULATIONS!



All activities are complete.

Mark this in your [project completion chart](#) to receive your certificate of completion!

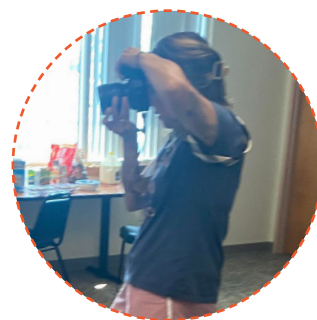


Special Acknowledgments

This regalia activity guide was put together with lots of support from many crafters, organizations, and various tribes across Wisconsin. There is no greater feeling than watching what you have created in the powwow circle. In my time working as the 4-H educator for UW–Madison Extension, I have been able to coordinate sewing classes for youth and families on the Menominee Indian Reservation. The first sewing class was held in 2016 for ribbon skirt making. Our classes have since then evolved into frameworks of teaching life lessons within these classes. The purpose of this guide is to inspire and encourage young people to continue their sewing journeys in life and to teach others.

I would lastly like to give special recognition to the following individuals and organizations who helped provide valuable feedback and shared their knowledge with me during the creation of this guidebook.

- **Sirella Ford** • LCO OJIBWE • General Feedback and Pilot
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- **Rose Wayka** • MENOMINEE • Pilot and Feedback
- **Leslie Kaquatosh** • SENECA • Pilot and Feedback
- **Dr. Candy Villagomez** • MENOMINEE • General Feedback



CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION



THIS CERTIFICATE IS PRESENTED TO

FOR SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING

Regalia Making



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Project Leader

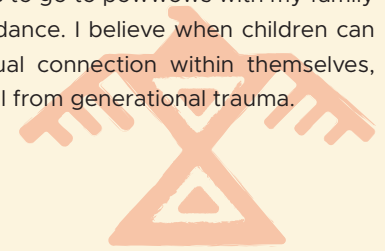
Date



About the Author

Posoh! My name is Sofie Teller, *Penaesiahkiw*, which means **Golden Eagle Woman** and I am the Positive Youth Development 4-H Educator for Menominee County/Nation in Wisconsin. I represent the Menominee and Oneida Tribal nations. I joined UW–Madison Division of Extension in March of 2016. My primary focus is to oversee the 4-H program serving youth and families on the Menominee Indian reservation. The youth I work with build on strengthening family connectedness through culture, healthy living, and physical activity. I grew up in Keshena, WI and have lived in many places throughout my travels such as Oklahoma, Kansas, Chicago, and New York. I began my career as a substitute

teacher and found that I loved the classroom. I studied early childhood education at the College of Menominee Nation which included field work at our local reservation schools. I received a bachelor's degree in business administration with an emphasis in management from Haskell Indian Nations University in 2013. I received a master's degree in organizational leadership and administration from Concordia University Wisconsin – Green Bay in 2017. My master's degree research capstone focused on culturally responsive programming for Native American people. I love to go to powwows with my family to sing and dance. I believe when children can find a spiritual connection within themselves, they can heal from generational trauma.



Online regalia making resources for patterns, supplies, and photos

- powwows.com
- papermart.com (ribbon in bulk)
- powwowsupply.com
- crazycrow.com
- powwowfabrics.com (patterns)
- prairieedge.com
- sharpsindianstore.com
- amazon.com
- nocbay.com



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Photos courtesy of Lindsay Besaw and Sofie Teller.

Connection to the National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences Education

Interpersonal relationships—

13.3 Demonstrate communication skills that contribute to positive relationships.

Textiles, Fashion, and Apparel—

16.3 Demonstrate textiles, fashion, and apparel design skills.

16.4 Demonstrate skills needed to produce, alter, or repair textiles, fashion, and apparel.

Visit 4h.extension.wisc.edu for more information about Wisconsin 4-H.

Regalia Making Leader Guide

R-05-2025