

Statement of Need

Community Description: The College of Menominee Nation (CMN) library merged with the public library in 2013. The Reservation is located approximately 45 miles northwest of Green Bay, Wisconsin, and shares nearly coterminous geopolitical boundaries with Menominee County. The area is very rural and heavily forested. The residents are mostly Native Americans. Over 40% of the population is under age 18.

Economic Stress Indicators	Menominee Reservation
Food assistance participation	45%
Family poverty level	27.2%
Families with children poverty level	44.8%
Female head of household with children under poverty level	52%

Following a catastrophic period caused by the termination policy enacted in 1953 by the U.S. government, the Menominee Nation achieved restoration in 1973, and since then has been rebuilding to overcome significant challenges that resulted from the loss of its tribal status, as well as generations of historical trauma experienced by its members.

Years of systematic suppression of the language and culture by outside influences resulted in a loss of knowledge and connection to culture, language, self-care, and traditional forms of art, which negatively affected the well-being of the community on all levels. To address this challenge, the Menominee community has taken steps to actively preserve and revitalize traditional ways including Menominee Native art forms and knowledge. Since 1996 the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin (MITW) has recognized the need to move Menominee Language from severely endangered to sustainable and among other things created the Menominee Language and Culture Commission (MLCC). Through a series of grant opportunities MITW has tried a variety of methods to encourage Menominee Language fluency. Some of the efforts have included language tables, continuing education, and most recently training Menominee people to become fluent speakers through their immersion programs. These recruits are placed at the Menominee Tribal Daycare in immersion rooms to teach Menominee babies Menominee language starting from the time they are six-weeks old. The MLCC has done amazing work with the immersion rooms. The babies hear Menominee language the entire time they are at the daycare. The program leaders have created some simple books and song sheets for teachers to use in the immersion classrooms.

Library Description: The Menominee Public Library is located on the CMN campus in a separate three-story building, now called the S. Verna Fowler Academic Library/Menominee Public Library. In late 2012, the Menominee Tribal/County Public Library was relocated and combined with CMN's academic library. It provides books and services to the entire Menominee community Monday through Thursday 8am-7pm and Fridays 9am-4:30pm. Internet services are also available, along with access to computers. Approximately 2485 patrons have library cards. Only 572 of these patrons are under age 18. Monthly circulation statistics document that an average of 943 items are checked out each month by patrons.

Current Library resources include three full-time staff, a three-story facility, and over 35,000 items are in the library collection. The Library's collection is continuously growing to meet the community needs. Patrons are encouraged to request purchases of any item that they feel would be of value to the library. As part of the campus community, the Library has access to the College's resources, which are very abundant.

The Youth Library programming is very vibrant and includes a number of options for a wide variety of ages. Regular programming includes Maker Mondays, Tasty Tuesdays (hands-on cooking experiences for children), Art Underground (an open art studio for teens and tweens), and We-e Time (activities that support infant and toddler development). Through special grant funding, a family program called Katāēs esēhcekasīq

(Let's Do Things Together) is being offered monthly with a Menominee Language and Culture Educator co-facilitating the sessions with Library staff. Each family session features a book written by a native author, an activity relating to the book's theme and time for families to discuss cultural practices along with sharing in a meal together.

Project Proposal:

The Native Language immersion initiative, a program of the First Nations Development Institute, speaks to the importance of language retention and revitalization programs and the benefits they provide to Native American communities. Funding from programs like First Nations seeks to support new generations of Native American speakers. MITW has received a grant that runs from 2018 - 2021 from the Department of Health and Human Services – Administration for Native Americans – Esther Martinez Immersion. Two objectives relate to this proposal: train Menominee Language immersion teachers, and develop 3 language classrooms for children 6 weeks through five.

To support the work the Menominee immersion programs have already accomplished, the Library would create books that would be written in Menominee language. The books would support families in the community including: (1) families with infants attending the immersion rooms at the Menominee Tribal daycare, (2) elementary children attending local schools, and (3) families coming to the library looking for Menominee books for their children.

Making Menominee language books available to families with infants is essential to achieving the Tribe's goals of language retention and revitalization. In a series of trainings funded by IMLS for public library staff in California, Joshua Sparrow, MD, of the Brazelton Touchpoints Center and Harvard Medical School, identified a critical window of language development that occurs with infants between the age of nine months and one year. (YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOPtgw2DJmo>)

According to Dr. Joshua Sparrow, this time between 9 months and one year is a key stage for infants to be exposed to language sounds. He cited research that reports that if a baby is exposed to certain language sounds at 9 months, (and in the case of this project, of Menominee language) at this age, they will recognize/distinguish these sounds as they grow and develop their language skills. Conversely, a baby's ability to distinguish language sounds that have NOT been introduced by 12 months is significantly lessened. The study he cites also emphasized the importance of a live person speaking the language and how hearing the sounds from a video did not have the same results.

The importance of introducing language sounds by the time an infant reaches 12 months of age and the need for infants to hear these sounds from a live person strongly support the need for Menominee language books for infants and young children that can be read to them at home by their families. The books developed through this project will emphasize the Menominee language words on each page and provide a phonetic pronunciation directly below, along with a third line with the English translation. A challenge for learning a language is saying the word correctly. Incorporating the phonetics for the Menominee words will allow parents or caregivers to read a book to their child and have a much better chance of saying the word correctly than to guess on their own. This supports the goal of the MLCC of encouraging parents and caregivers to speak Menominee with their children.

While some useful resources have been created for the Menominee Language Immersion program, the Library and the immersion rooms at the daycare do not have professionally created books using Menominee language. Making books available for families who are interested in learning Menominee language would allow non-Menominee speakers to grow their vocabulary and interact with their children who are learning words at daycare and the reservation schools.

Assessment

A major focus for the Library has been around efforts to increase community use of the Library. To date, the Library has been successful reaching adult populations. Adult card holders are using the library on a regular basis checking out an average of 809 library materials each month. Building on this success, the Library Director and Staff would like to increase participation with the Library's wide variety of programming opportunities.

The Library Staff debated the best approach for community engagement. The most successful programs in the Library are family-friendly. The Youth Librarian offered regular story times for young children, but the program was not well attended. The families that did attend brought children of a wide age range. Seeing the need for an all-ages approach, she changed the format to a family supper book club in 2018. In 2019, she applied for two grants, one being a Talk Story grant through the American Indian Library Association and the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association. Talk Story promotes basic and cultural literacy by engaging children and their families in story time, storytelling, books, art, music, dance, and other cultural activities.

The additional funding made it possible to hire a Language and Culture Educator to facilitate part of the session, purchase a copy of that session's featured book for every participating household, and offer a meal with the program. The program was given a new name by the MLCC. Now called *Katāēs esēhcekasīq* (Let's Do Things Together) Family Program, participating families have a meal, hear a story, share family experiences related to the session theme, and do an activity. One of the aspects that attracts families is the fact that the featured books are written by Native authors or are Native themed. The program curriculum is based on a cultural calendar format developed by the Language and Culture Educator. The format has been well received and with the limited space, registration usually fills up quickly with about 16 – 25 participants each month.

This program has been successful in drawing intergenerational participation. Through these sessions, participants create something together, providing valuable experiences for building relationships among family members. Participant feedback showed that there was equal excitement and value placed on what was made and the time spent together making it. Intergenerational participation achieves multiple goals, including lifelong learning, strengthening family relationships, and expanding the reach of library services. Consistently, the feedback received for this program has been very positive.

Through communications with families, the Menominee Tribal Daycare Director, and MLCC members, the Library has identified a gap in the need in the community for Menominee language print resources and what currently exists. At this time, there are no high-quality printed books available using Menominee language, thus underscoring the need for this project.

The Library Director will serve as the Project Leader, working with Library staff, an illustrator or photographer, MLCC, and a Language Immersion Teacher assigned by the MLCC. This Project Team would create books using Menominee language with phonetics and English. The target audience is families that want to learn to use Menominee language in their homes with their children. Including the phonetics and the English words in the publications will support families in their learning at home. Combining the language expertise of an Immersion Teacher with the Library Director's vision for the illustrations and formats for the books, the Project Team will work together to create books that will be of interest for Menominee families on and off the reservation. The books created through this project could also serve as models for other tribes engaging in similar immersion programs and creating resources for their families.

Project Design:

Work plan:

The Library Director will take simple concepts (such as colors, seasons, woodland animals, food, counting) and use photographs taken by a local photographer. To meet the needs of young children simple story books will

also be created. Picture books can be used to describe important cultural activities like maple sugaring, wild ricing, the importance of sturgeon, historical events, or family activities like hunting and gathering. The Library Director will work with an MLCC immersion teacher for additional ideas on what materials would support children and families at the daycare and at home. The MLCC immersion teacher will assist with the Menominee language word selection and the phonetics for the books. The library director will also work with an artist as needed to determine the best way to illustrate the concepts.

In addition to producing materials for babies and young children, a second goal of the project is to create a book for older readers. There is a pressing need for cultural resources for a wide variety of ages. The Library Director has been contacted asking for a book to teach youth about Menominee culture. The Youth Librarian has been contacted with numerous similar requests from community members, as well as wanting to incorporate Menominee Language books into library programs. Currently, there are no books to fill this need.

One way to fill this gap would be to create a book of short stories, following a common format that pairs a story with a photograph and brief note about the person who shared the story. The primary language for this book would not be Menominee, but it would tell Menominee stories for young readers and emphasize cultural values and traditions.

Katāēs esēhcekasīq (Let’s Do Things Together) Family Program meets monthly and would serve as a place to distribute the Menominee books that have been created. The program would also serve as a space to share and collect stories from families that could be used to create a book of short stories.

In addition to the family program a series of writing workshops will be held for youth and adults. The workshops will create short stories from a variety of sources that can be incorporated into the short story collection.

After the workshops have taken place and stories have been shared at the Katāēs esēhcekasīq (Let’s Do Things Together) Family Program and transcribed; a panel of at least 4 people along with the library director will review and select stories for inclusion in the short story book. Some stories may require editing before being included in a book. The panelists will come from the College of Menominee Nation (CMN) faculty, a CMN staff, and include a representative from the MLCC.

Project Design:

The project will have constant oversight and management from the Library Director. The Library Director will meet regularly with a Language and Culture Immersion Teacher assigned by MLCC and an illustrator or photographer for each book. Library staff will provide feedback at regularly scheduled weekly meetings. The Youth Librarian will work with a facilitator on programming for Katāēs esēhcekasīq, Let’s Do Things Together Family Program. Below is a chart outlining the proposed objectives, along with activities necessary to achieve the project objectives.

Obj.	Outcomes	Activities/Methods	Time Frame
Create Menominee Language picture books	books for babies and picture books will be created and self-published	Meet with immersion teacher for guidance on word selection and phonetics	Month 1-3
		Determine medium for book design. (illustrations or photographs)	Ongoing
		Identify potential artists to illustrate books	Ongoing

		Identify best avenue for photographs (taken by library staff, available from local collections, photographer contracted)	Month 1-3
		Create page design/layouts with artist/photographs using Menominee words	Month 1-3
		Share draft with immersion teacher, library staff, MCC	Ongoing
		Revise draft based on feedback	Ongoing
		Use Simon & Schuster Archway Publishing self-publishing for support in preparing picture books	Every 4 – 5 months
		Upload book to Amazon book creation setting price for a small profit	Starting month 4,
		Purchase books for library collection, daycare classrooms and families, school libraries, and MLCC	Ongoing
Offer a Menominee Cultural family program where stories are shared	Katāēs esēhcekasīq = Let's Do Things Together Family Program will be offered monthly	Identify facilitator for family program	Ongoing
		Select books for monthly theme	Month 1
		Purchase materials for programs	ongoing
		Register participants	ongoing
		Plan meal for participants	ongoing
		Host monthly program	ongoing
		Offer families the opportunity to share stories to be included in library collections with potential to be part of a published book – take picture of participants	Each event
	Share Menominee books created	As they are published and purchased	
Create a book of short stories for elementary aged children	Offer writers workshops to a variety of ages to create/share stories	Offer a series of writing workshops for adults to learn about the writing process, write a story, and make final edits	Spring year 1
	Offer writers workshops to youth to create/share stories	Offer a summer writing camp for youth to learn about the writing process, write a story, and make final edits	Summer year 1
	Panel convenes	Short stories are selected from the writer's workshops and the family program	Year 2
	Edit and format short story collections	Meet with library staff to evaluate stories collected from family program and writers workshops	Year 2

		Use Simon & Schuster Archway publishing for support in putting the short story collection together	Year 2
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Objective One: To create Menominee Language picture books for pre-readers and emerging readers. The focus of these books will be simple concepts and stories for infants and children birth to seven year olds. Artwork for the books will either be illustrations created by an artist or photographs taken by library staff or community members. The MLCC will have the opportunity for feedback at their monthly meetings. Since the concepts are simple ones, the online Amazon book creation tool will be used. There is limited support with this method of publishing, so the costs are very low. The price can be determined by the person creating the book. The cost of printing is calculated by Amazon with a 50% markup. The library can choose to purchase a certain number of books at cost. Once the price is determined by Amazon, further purchases can include profit. If the books were to sell and profits were made, the money would be put toward future book project expenses once the grant funding has ended.

Objective Two: To support family engagement in cultural activities through the monthly Katāēs esēhcekasīq (Let's Do Things Together) Family Program. Feedback from this monthly program has been positive from the participating families who see the benefit of doing things together. The family program will serve as an avenue to share the Menominee Language books as items in the take-home kits, as well as providing a space for families to share their stories. The stories could potentially become a book of short stories sharing Menominee experiences. The target audience for the short story collection will be elementary aged children.

Objective Three: To create a book of short stories for elementary aged children. There are two ways that stories will be collected. A writer's workshop will be offered for adults in the spring, and a youth summer writing camp will be offered in the first year. Stories will be created during these workshops that will be edited and incorporated into a book. Stories will also be collected from families who attend the Katāēs esēhcekasīq (Let's Do Things Together) Family Program and members of the MLCC. Library staff and the Immersion teacher will look at the stories collected and organize the stories by emerging themes. Since this type of book is different from the simple picture books, the Library Director will use Simon & Schuster's Archway Self-Publishing option. Archway has a cost but offers author support and cover design assistance. These are key elements to creating a book that appeals to the target audience of elementary-aged children. Once stories are finalized, photographs will be taken of the storytellers and any other aspects of their story that can be captured visually.

Preliminary work has been completed. The Library Director contacted the MLCC Director, Joey Awonohopay, who voiced his support. The Library Director presented drafts of sample books to a MLCC meeting in March 2020 and the Commission endorsed the idea of the book project. The MLCC agreed to support the project with an Immersion teacher. The sample books that were shared used photographs found online but they are not free of copyright. The images were simply place holders until an artist can be brought into the project.

Impact:

The overall goal for this project is to have Menominee language and cultural books for families to read and share together that support the development of language in the home. Menominee language books will support families with children who attend the Immersion rooms at the daycare, children at Head Start and elementary children at the local schools. There are teachers at every school who work to teach youth Menominee language. Not every parent or caregiver knows Menominee language, so these books will allow parents and caregivers to learn words along with their child. Having the phonetics included will be a key part for parents and caregivers to say the words correctly. The simple books created will allow families to identify

concepts with their child as they spend time together. Being able to say “look at the animal/color/body part” in Menominee will help the language become part of everyday interaction for more families. The expectation for participants is increased confidence in speaking Menominee language with their children.

Two key family groups would be surveyed to measure the success of the book project: (1) the families with children attending the Immersion Rooms at daycare and (2) the families that attend the monthly Katāēs esēhcekasīq (Let’s Do Things Together) Family Program. To determine the impact the books will have on use of Menominee language in the home, a pre-project questionnaire will be created to get baseline results. Families will be asked to reply to a follow-up survey after a month to see how the book was received and get feedback on other topics the families would recommend for book themes.

Communications Plan:

The library has developed the following Communications Plan to provide information to the target audience. The activities outlined in the Communications Plan will continue throughout the life of the project.

Activity	Target Audience	Why Chosen
1. Create a calendar of events.	Menominee Community	Provide written and digital materials for distribution to invite participation.
2. Create flyers to be shared in the community for each event, these flyers can be printed and posted as well as shared on MITW monitors	Community members who may not attend CMN or with no access to newspapers, computers, and who are not on any CMN mailing lists.	Menominee community is rural and access to information is often limited due to distance and lack of internet access.
3. Write articles for tribal/local newspapers, highlighting programs and new books.	Menominee tribal community	Local tribal newspapers are main advertisement method.
4. Compose letters about the Menominee Language book project.	Families with children enrolled in the Immersion daycare program.	Direct letters to the families about the project to inform them of the purpose of the project in order to engage their support and participation in project surveys and provide feedback.

Sustainability:

The library will be able to sustain the creation of books beyond the grant by developing a relationship with the MLCC and an Immersion teacher. Any profits made from the sale of the books created through this project will be put towards the creation of future book projects. Forming this partnership with the MLCC is key in seeking funding for this project. With the Commission’s support, this project will be able to continue beyond the course of the grant. This project will lead to positive changes in the community because books in the home increase vocabulary, develop literacy and learning skills, and expand horizons. By increasing the practice of using Menominee language in their homes, Menominee language books will support families and enrich their lives as they deepen their connection to their culture.

