

## ABSTRACT

The Seminole Nation of Oklahoma is the lead application for this application. The organizational unit will be the Seminole Nation Cultural Resources Pumvhakv Library. Pumvhakv Library is the current recipient of a Basic Grant for the Seminole Nation.

The Pumvhakv Library Enhancement Program plans to expand access to library services to the tribal community by providing additional collections of books translated in the Seminole language. The Seminole Nation Cultural Resources currently has a database of 70 translated children's books in its collection that could be utilized for this project. Although translated, the copyright has not been secured for each book and cannot disseminated for public use. Securing the copyright and printing the books in the language will increase literacy of the Seminole language while providing access to books in the language.

The time frame for the project is from October 1, 2017, to September 30, 2019.

The current literacy rate in the Seminole language is less than 16%. At least 8 out of 10 Seminoles cannot read in their Native language. The Seminole Nation Pumvhakv Library plans to increase literacy by expanding services into the community by providing access to translated books to the tribal community.

The intended audience for the activities are Seminole tribal citizens.

The project activities will be to send one staff member to the Association of Tribal, Libraries, Archives, and Museums conference to increase access to information related to the program and apply it accordingly. The second and primary activity will be to secure copyright permissions from the 70 books currently translated in the Pumvhakv Library collection. The activities will include printing 10 copies each of the 70 books. Each 12 month period will focus on printing 35 books. The books will be housed at the Pumvhakv Library circulation. Additionally, 3 copies of each book will be sent to the three Seminole Nation Head Start centers located within the tribal jurisdiction for use in early childhood classes.

The Performance Goal will be to develop and provide inclusive and accessible learning opportunities. The goal will be to increase understanding and interest in the Pumvhakv Library Enhancement Program. Performance Measures will be determined by the number of participants checking out the books, number of responses, and number of responses per question.

The tangible product from this program will be 70 books available in circulation at the Pumvhakv Library. This will be the largest collection of children's books translated in the Seminole Language and significantly impact literacy in the Native language in our community.

## NARRATIVE

### STATEMENT OF NEED

The Seminole Nation of Oklahoma is a federally recognized Tribe located in Seminole County, Oklahoma. The Seminole people were once part of the Creek Confederacy and comprised of numerous small tribes and band with their own languages within the Muskogean language family. The surviving Oklahoma Seminoles were granted land in Indian Territory that was eventually reduced to what is now Seminole county.

Tribal enrollment, verified with the Seminole Nation Tribal Enrollment Department in March 2016, totals 20,294. Approximately 6,500 Seminoles live in or around Seminole County. The Seminole Nation has four community centers located throughout the county and multiple tribal complexes. Many families continue to retain their original allotments granted through the Dawes Commission in 1887-1910. The Seminole Nation provides services to its members such as social services, education, public transit, elderly nutrition, food distribution, tribal youth programs, cultural resources and health/wellness programs.

The impacted service area of the Seminole Nation jurisdiction makes up 97% of Seminole County and is located approximately sixty miles southeast of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Seminole County is 12<sup>th</sup> among the most economically disadvantaged communities in Oklahoma (Census.gov). Poverty levels among tribal children are even higher than the county average.

The Seminole Nation headquarters is located in Wewoka, OK, which is also the County Seat and is situated in the east central part of the county. The Seminole Nation jurisdiction is classified as rural area, with a population density of thirty-nine people per square mile. Most of Seminole County resides in rural areas with eight towns scattered throughout the county and, according the *US Census Bureau American Fact Finder* demographic profile, has a population of 25,482 people of which 18%, or 4,638 have identified as Native American only.

The Seminole Nation administration strongly supports providing cultural opportunities to the community to increase self-identity and ensure tribal sovereignty. The Seminole Nation established the Cultural Resources department in 2008 to increase cultural and language access to the community. The Seminole Nation administration strongly supports providing cultural opportunities to the community to increase self-identity and ensure tribal sovereignty.

In September 2010, the current Chief began his tenure and fully supported cultural and language initiatives and returning to a tribal citizenship, fluent and literate in Seminole. The motto of this Administration is based upon three basic tenets of Seminole beliefs: **Vrakkuecetv**-treating others with respect, **Vfastecetv**-to care for others, **Fvccetv**-to to be truthful and honest. The Administration has pledged their wholehearted support to Cultural Resources and language related endeavors and has demonstrated their support by providing necessary assistance in the development of the program.

One way the Seminole Nation Cultural Resources department can advocate to increase language literacy in our rural communities is through IMLS funding. With IMLS funding, the Seminole Nation has received the Basic grant for at least 10 years. For the last 8 years, the Basic Grant has benefitted the Cultural Resources Pumvhakv Library. Pumvhakv, pronounced “*pooh-muh-hah-guh*”, means Our Way of Learning in the Seminole Language. The Library is currently open Monday through Friday from 8am – 5pm. A staff of 4 currently works with the While not currently a circulating library, in August of 2017, the Library will begin implementing a circulation system to allow patrons to check out books.

The Library has been amassing collections and working in conjunction with the Language program in producing materials for language perpetuation. The Library currently has the capacity to produce materials such as, book marks, posters, booklets, and coloring books in-house. While not professionally printed, the items are able to be used in increasing language awareness but no necessarily for language literacy. One of the requests that the Library continually receives, is for books and materials in the Seminole Language to increase literacy.

The need for books in the Seminole language is important to language survival for the Seminole Nation not just culturally but to retain tribal sovereignty. Without the Seminole language, maintaining cultural identity is difficult. By utilizing basic readers in the home, literacy increases which in turn will increase language comprehension.

The Pumvhakv Library has the staff and translations to meet the need of the tribal community. Staff has worked diligently to translate 70 children’s books into the

Seminole language. The books are translated by printing the sentence onto copy paper and taping over the English sentence. While the collection is extensive and most likely the largest collection of Seminole translated children's books, the books cannot currently be used for the public due to copyright laws.

Cultural Resources recently conducted a survey in March of 2017 to determine language status and needs. No other institution has surveyed the language literacy of the Seminole Nation in recent time. The survey determined that 83% of households cannot read or write in the language. 96% of households do not use the language on a daily basis. By providing households a children's book, would be the best solution to increase literacy in the household not just for children but for beginning language learners. The targeted audience would be all ages of tribal citizens from early childhood to adult readers.

## **PROJECT DESIGN**

The goal for the Seminole Nation Pumvokv Enhancement Program will expand services for learning and access for all ages in the format of the Seminole language. This will be achieved through printing 70 children's books in the Pumvokv Library collection for dissemination to tribal citizens in the area. Dissemination will be conducted through the circulation library and providing copies to the three Seminole Nation Head Start centers, which has an enrollment of 200 3-4 year olds each year.

The project will track progress and outcomes by collecting the number of patrons checking out books and number of children utilizing the books in Head Starts. The

number will be collected annually, broken down by age group, location, and frequency of use. The report will be compiled at the end of each year and presented in IMLS reporting as well as in the annual report to the General Council of the Seminole Nation.

The activities required will be to hire one Program Coordinator. The Coordinator will be familiar with the Seminole language and have knowledge of graphic arts, publishing layouts, and book printing. The Cultural Resources department has previously published language curriculum and will utilize the partnerships with printing houses to execute this program.

Possible procedures that may develop from this program is the request for additional printed books from other tribes that have the same language such as the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Seminole Tribe of Florida or universities that teach the language and could open many opportunities for additional printings. In the future, the books could be used in digital reading applications. For this application, only print copies are being utilized.

## **IMPACT**

. As previously mentioned, the goal of the current Chief is to return the Seminole Nation to a fluent, literate community in both Seminole and English. This program will move the Seminole Nation closer to that goal by increasing literacy in Seminole households. During the Boarding School era, tribal children were beaten for speaking and reading in their language. This shame has carried over for generations. This program has the potential to impact the perception of the language not just to the tribal

community but to the community as a whole. This would be the large collection of professionally printed children's books in the Seminole language in this area, if not, nationally. Having mainstream children's book printed in the Seminole language would validate the importance of language survival and increase language perpetuation.

While the risk is that no one will be interested, the Cultural Resources department feels that the requests over the years for more books in the language will provide a base group of people that will utilize the program.

The impact of this program will be evaluated by conducting an assessment at the beginning and end of the year for each patron when possible. Their literacy skills will be assessed as well as their attitude toward the program.

## **COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

The audience the program will target is all age groups of tribal citizens as well as other researchers in the language. The audience will be reached by advertising in the tribal newspaper, tribal website, social media, and the tribal radio station. Additionally, the program will set up a booth at the annual tribal celebration held in mid-September to conduct outreach about the program and new additions to the library collection. The tribe regularly holds outreach meetings throughout the year and the program will take every opportunity to set up to engage the audience and build up community involvement for the Pumvhakv Library Enhancement Program.

Audience engagement will involve sign in sheets at each outreach meeting to determine the number of people interested. Patron sign-ins at the library will also be

kept by staff. Patrons will be sent a survey at the end of the year to measure audience engagement and outcomes. This will continue even after the program funding ends.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

The program will continue to support the project by keeping the books in circulation at the Pumvhakv Library. The Cultural Resources will continue to house the Library and staff it. If the demand for more books is high at the end of the project, the Coordinator will present the findings to the General Council and submit a request for additional allocation for funding. Since the General Council is results-driven, it is possible in the future additional funds could be allocated if the tribal citizens demand it. Additionally, staff will work with the grant writing arm of the Seminole Nation, Program Development, to continue to expand the program by looking for grants for more advanced books, as well as, digital versions and applications.

## **CONCLUSION**

With the support of IMLS, the Seminole Nation Pumvhakv Library can provide increased access to cultural services to tribal citizens and prepare tribal citizens to fully participate in the community.



## SCHEDULE OF COMPLETION

### YEAR 1

ACTIVITY	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
SECURE COPYRIGHT PERMISSIONS FOR 35 BOOKS	█					█						
FINALIZE EDITS AND PRINT 35 BOOKS	█					█						
ADD BOOKS TO CIRUCLATION AND DISSEMINATE TO HEAD START CENTERS	█									█	█	
STAFF ATTEND TRAINING TO INCREASE KNOWLEDGE	█										█	█

## SCHEDULE OF COMPLETION

### YEAR 2

ACTIVITY	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
SECURE COPYRIGHT PERMISSIONS FOR 35 BOOKS	█					█						
FINALIZE EDITS AND PRINT 35 BOOKS	█					█						
ADD BOOKS TO CIRUCLATION AND DISSEMINATE TO HEAD START CENTERS	█									█	█	
STAFF ATTEND TRAINING TO INCREASE KNOWLEDGE	█										█	