

Minimum Requirements of Library Service (Materials, Hours, Staff)

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation operates a library within its Cultural Heritage Center (CHC). The library offers more than 7,000 mixed-media resources, giving tribal members access to one of the most diverse collections of Eastern Woodland American Indian ethnology, language, and ethno-history in both the region and among tribal libraries nationwide. The library provides print, digital, audiovisual, and online resources to users including CPN community members and residents of Shawnee. The library also holds a quantity of resources about other tribes of the United States, though the primary focus is on *Neshnabek* (Ojibwe; Odawa; Potawatomi) culture and history. The library is open from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday thru Friday and 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM on Saturday throughout the year, with hours differing slightly around the CPN Family Reunion Festival held in June. The current CPN Library and Archives staff includes a Library Manager, Archival Lab Technician, Family History Specialist, and an Ethnology Collections Manager. Emphasizing Potawatomi, *Neshnabek*, and Algonquin cultures, the archival collections include historical and cultural documents, manuscripts, maps, photographic and genealogical material, and various forms of multimedia. These are irreplaceable items that document a wide array of cultural practices, historical events, and community gatherings detailing the culture and history of the Potawatomi well before the reservation era.

Project Justification

Which program goal and associated objective of the Native American Library Services Enhancement Grants program will your project address?

This project will address program goal one, the improvement of digital services, objective 1.2, support of preservation and access to information and resources through digitization.

What need, problem, or challenge will your project address and how was it identified?

The Potawatomi are among the Algonquian-speaking people who occupied the Great Lakes region from prehistoric times through the early 1800s. During the Removal Period of the 1830s, the Mission Band, today known as the Citizen Potawatomi Nation (CPN), were forced to leave their homelands in the Great Lakes region. They came to reside in Kansas, but after the Treaty of 1867, a group of Citizen Potawatomi relocated to what is today all of Pottawatomie County, half of Cleveland County, and a portion of Oklahoma County, Oklahoma. These Tribal members were granted exclusive access to these areas in the late 1800s. Allotment to individual Potawatomi in 1890 placed 275,000 acres into the federal domain, and the area was opened to non-Indian settlement in 1891. Since the original reservation purchase, land runs and other pressures dispersed tribal members throughout the United States. As of 2022, approximately 38% (14,271) of the Tribe's members reside in Oklahoma. Therefore, most of the Tribal members (23,286) live outside of the state. Forced relocation and resulting diaspora of Potawatomi peoples crippled the cultural and familial ties the Citizen Potawatomi had with their Great Lakes ancestors, causing severe loss of history, cultural connection and ceremonial practices. Throughout the past two decades, CPN tribal leadership has been working diligently to recover from these damages while still cultivating the Nation in the 21st century by modernizing the governmental system that unites Tribal members regardless of location. Still, the

losses have been profound.

Through the removal and assimilation process, much has been lost. Many people are connected to each other and the tribe through the land that was allotted to their ancestors in 1872 and 1887. Records belonging to Citizen Potawatomi individuals are currently in possession of the Kansas Historical Society (KSHS). Boxes of archival materials were obtained by KSHS from the National Archives because of paternalistic behavior by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which prohibited tribal stewardship of their own records. This means that KSHS holdings on the Potawatomi are significant in both size and scope, covering portions of tribal history for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. KSHS holds approximately 40,800 pages of tribal historical documents including records of the superintendency of Indian Affairs, Indian mission schools, as well as the personal papers of several figures with ties to the Citizen Potawatomi. People can visit the KSHS Research Center to view these materials for free or order copies of the files for a charge. The CHC Library desires to have these resources available to community members who cannot make the journey to Topeka, KS or who cannot pay a fee to access the materials.

This project responds directly to shareholder and community needs and desires that reveal a growing interest in personal stories, ethnology, and culture of those who lived before the generations of today. The project endeavors to assure Potawatomi cultural history is not neglected and forgotten merely because people do not have adequate access to the information, ideas, and networks which could possibly lie within the KSHS collection.

Who are the ultimate beneficiaries for this project?

All CPN tribal members are the ultimate beneficiaries for this project. The Citizen Potawatomi Nation is headquartered in Shawnee, Oklahoma – approximately 40 miles east of Oklahoma City (OKC). As the largest group of Potawatomi descendants from the Great Lakes region, CPN has roughly 37,557 tribal members total, also making it the eighth-largest American Indian tribe in the United States. Almost every state in the Union and some foreign countries are home to CPN members. This IMLS Library Enhancement Grant will allow for the proposed project to be developed in Shawnee at the CPN Cultural Heritage Center (CHC) Library. It will be completed with the help of the Kansas State Historical Society, located in Topeka, KS. The project will ultimately impact the Tribal community throughout Oklahoma, Kansas, and the greater United States.

The CPN CHC assists Tribal members with education about their history and culture to provide for current and future generations. The facility offers access to the library to help research family history specific to individual members and the allotments their families received when they came to Oklahoma. *Neshnabek* beliefs, heritage, and teachings are a foundation from which the Nation builds.

Project Work Plan

What specific activities will you carry out and in what sequence?

One

The CHC places an order with KSHS for records (51 boxes, 40,800 records) to be scanned.

It is essential that document scans be done in the desired resolution and file format (600dpi TIFF) of the CHC. KSHS conducts projects like these regularly, so there would be no problem with completing this step for the first stages of the project. This should take about a week to receive as an invoice to the CHC.

Two

The contracted document processor digitizes the individual records at KSHS.

An assessment of the records held within the KSHS Research Library will need to be completed before anything was transferred to the CPN CHC. KSHS's Senior Archivist would oversee the scanning of the records at KSHS by a contracted document processor and send copies to the CHC. The Senior Archivist at KSHS and contracted employee would be the primary staff members working with the CHC Library. This portion of the project is estimated to last about five months. The CHC Library will receive the records as they are digitized to enable the Family History Specialist to begin processing the material as soon as possible.

Three

The CHC Family History Specialist processes the records.

CHC Library staff will already have an indication of what is in the collection because KSHS's archivist has provided indices and overseen digitization of the documents. However, CPN would like for its staff to be able to dig deeper, revealing tribal characteristics that would not be apparent to KSHS. An informal assessment would be done to discover what is contained in each batch of documents. Then, the Family History Specialist will digitally process the records received by the CHC Library. That entails organizing the records into discernable groups, collecting and recording details about each record, and then entering that metadata into the CHC Library database. Because there are so many documents within the individual boxes, this step will take about ten of the total 24 months of the project. Once the records have all been properly scanned, the incorporation of document scans with associated metadata begins.

Four

The CPN IT Department migrates the scanned data to the CHC Library database.

CPN IT will facilitate the migration of all scanned data into the CHC Library database. Each document group will be migrated and added to the CPN IT backup schedule before data testing begins. CPN IT will ensure that each file is correctly linked and discoverable. The estimated time for this step is three months.

Five

Data testing by IT, the CHC Family History Specialist and the Project Director.

There will be various methods of testing between Library and IT staff. Their mission would be to create full entries of all document types for each individual represented in the database. The aim

of this project is to be not only a collection of library materials, but also an expansion of a digital exhibition with interactive maps and biographical profiles. This could also include a photograph collection when the collection will support it, as the aim of the project is to humanize the individuals who received allotted land in the past. CHC and IT staff would need to ensure that all files are available and working, while also being presented in a manner that effectively conveys the story of the person in the record. This objective of the project plan would take six months.

Six

Publish new data to the public.

The final step allows the CPN community to experience the new project's result. The portal allows community members to search for their family members and view pictures, deeds, lists, and other documents associated with their family names from the source materials scanned and transferred by KSHS. It connects allotted individuals to more personal documents that have not previously been available to the CPN community in this capacity. This portal is available via a link on the CHC's webpage. When significant new entries from KSHS materials are finalized and added to the portal, tribal members will be notified by *Hownikan* (tribal newspaper), community presentations, workshops, Facebook, and more.

What are the risks to the project and how will you mitigate them?

Because this project is following a tested method and will be rolled out to an existing, stable system, the risks are minimal. The primary risk to this project is an unforeseen loss of access to KSHS records due to COVID-19 activity. At the time of submission, the pandemic continues, and future surges and related closures are impossible to forecast. If facility closures limit the rate at which records may be processed, the project implementation schedule will be changed to accommodate the required task changes. In the unlikely event that facility closures are long-term and extend beyond the award period, the Project Director will request a no-cost extension.

Who will plan, implement and manage your project?

This project will be planned and managed by Blake Norton, the Curator of the CPN CHC. In his nearly twenty years of service to cultural resource education and protection at CPN, he has developed and overseen five IMLS grant projects, all successfully implemented and closed. He is key staff for this project and has a resume included in the application attachments.

The CPN CHC Library has a dedicated staff member working as a Family History Specialist, Czarina Thompson. She has honed her skills in the last 17 years since she began at the CHC, as she is a tribal member who grew up in the tribal community around Shawnee and has been actively engaged in that community throughout her life. Czarina will be responsible for day-to-day tasks of the project, including file verification, metadata entry, and data testing with CPN IT.

What time, financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?

CPN expects this project to require two years to complete. With \$108,136 in financial assistance from IMLS, CPN will pay the personnel costs of one employee to process records, and one full

time contractor in the first year of the project to scan and submit documents at KSHS. All of the other resources necessary, such as the online database to make records available to tribal members, are already available at no additional cost.

How and with whom will you share your work's general findings and lessons learned?

This project will publish all new records created to the CPN CHC Library online database. They will be available to tribal members at no cost, anytime.

Whenever the CHC Library unveils a new collection, it goes through all of the proper avenues necessary to notify the community. The Director of Public Information and the Director of the Cultural Heritage Center ultimately have the authority to release information involving the Cultural Heritage Center and the Tribe as a whole. The CHC Library has a partnership with multiple departments, so anything a department creates for the community will receive the press it deserves. Some of the outlets include the Tribal newspaper, the *Hownikan*, which is sent out monthly to CPN members; the CPN Facebook page; and the CPN Instagram. This allows for both open and CPN specific platforms to provide the information about the results, benefits, impact, and lessons learned from the project. Members of the community would be encouraged to provide feedback about the collection and how it impacts them; these personal contributions would also be distributed through the many outlets of communication.

Project Results

What are your project's intended results and how will they address the need, problem or challenge?

The purpose of the proposed IMLS project is to continue the library's digital resource expansion efforts to provide community members with the best resources possible to learn about their history and culture. Through the implementation of the activities outlined above, the primary results of this project will be the preservation at the archival level of new holdings from KSHS in the CPN CHC Library.

All digital materials will be uploaded to the CPN CHC Library database, where tribal members will have complete access to the files. The CHC will ensure the release of the collection is properly advertised, as the goal is to reach those who may not have been otherwise able to access these individualized records. Through collaboration with individuals, educators, and tribal legislators in outlying districts, the materials will help CPN to experience a process of local repatriation of tribal historical knowledge. CPN CHC will strive to inform individuals local and non-local to Oklahoma of the content and processes used in creating the collections and their meaning from a Potawatomi perspective. This process will allow for increased access and meaning for culture, heritage, identity, and understanding for those within and outside the reservation borders.

How will the knowledge, skills, behaviors, capabilities or attitudes of the target group change as a result of your project?

This project will allow members of the community to feel a greater connection to ancestors with whom they have not been able to previously identify. Over the years since the allotment period, there has been a disconnection from Native Americans being seen as individual people. Not only because they were Native, but also because it is difficult to connect to elders and ancestors who have passed away; much of what is maintained about them are only the stories that have been passed down through the years. Although the oral tradition is very important to CPN, deciphering deeds, reading letters, and being able to put a face to a name can have an irreplaceable impact on the connection community members feel to those who came before them. Tribal members understand that those who lived in Kansas and were eventually allotted land in Oklahoma had to endure a lot of animosity and had work extremely hard to provide for future generations. The materials provided by KSHS would help emphasize the depth of this history of CPN, but also help members understand the daily lives of their relatives from generations ago.

This project will also help bridge the gap between the old and new generations. CPN is starting to see a generational change and a desire to be more active in the community. The Tribe has experienced people coming back to Oklahoma to be mentors and leaders. This can partially be attributed to the growth of information which has become available to them over the years. If members do not know who they are and how they are connected, then they do not truly know themselves. To see one's ancestors' names in Potawatomi, to know they spoke Potawatomi, they were writing in Potawatomi, makes an individual of today more whole. This project will open doors for them to start learning more, in a way that was not available to the parents and grandparents of current young adult Citizen Potawatomi.

What tangible products will result from your project?

This project will result in a significant increase in the size of the CPN CHC Library online database. These additions will add thousands of primary source documents to the entries for Citizen Potawatomi ancestors in the database, expanding the potential for the CPN tribal community to conduct research.

How will you sustain the benefits of your project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance?

The sustainability of the project is centered on CPN's continued commitment to the perpetuation of Potawatomi – and ultimately *Neshnabek* – history and culture. The CHC Library holds a strong commitment to maintain cultural materials for current and future generations, reinforced by support of the CHC mission by CPN elected leadership. At the core is the Seven Fires Prophecy, which begins in prehistoric times and spans to present-day. It is believed that the Potawatomi are currently in the Seventh Fire, a revival of traditional culture, language and teachings. To fulfill the prophecy, the Potawatomi must embrace the knowledge, experience, and past of their *Neshnabek* ancestors. It is through the people of today that the heritage lives on. This project follows CPN's reputable approach to cultural projects that has proven to result in systemic change within the community. The sustainability of current projects and collections continues to make a difference for CPN constituents, and this project will undeniably have a similar if not a greater impact. Past outcomes created strong connections that continue to transform how community members view themselves and the world around them. This is a

model for success. Because of these great accomplishments, there is overarching support within the CHC, CPN, and the Potawatomi community for maintaining the project after the grant's conclusion.

This project will expand a born-digital collection with maps, biographical profiles, pictures, letters, deeds, lists, and other personal documents which connect people to the allotted land and humanize these tribal ancestors and their place in history. The costs of maintaining access and backup of materials is included in a recurring, secure tribal budget for the CPN CHC. The longevity of this project opens the door to other materials from KSHS and to records held in other institutions that could be added to the CHC Library database collection over time.

CPN Digital Products Plan
IMLS Native American Library Enhancement Grant Application FY22

Type

This project will create digital content via digitization of typed and handwritten archival records as well as photographs over the course of the award period. These records will be added to an existing database of CPN family history with searchable metadata attached to each record.

Products will be a combination of internally hosted webpages with text and images. The expected format for images is 600dpi TIFF files.

Availability

Because this project will create digital research products for family history research at the CPNCHC library, all digital products created by this project will be available to all visitors, free of charge, through an online portal available 24 hours a day.

The materials in the database will be available via computer in the CPNCHC library, and will be housed on internal servers housed at CPN Administration and connected to the CPNCHC via a fiber optic network link.

Generally, there will not be limitations on availability of digital products made by this project during normal operating hours. Exceptions are expected for maintenance, repair, cleaning or other routine temporary library closings.

Access

CPN will not make these new products available under any license. They will not be available for other uses or for reproduction. These products will not implicate privacy concerns or cultural sensitivities.

Sustainability

The digital products created by the project will be long-lived. They will serve as primary source research materials for in perpetuity after the end of the award period. Additionally, they will be permanently preserved on the servers of the CPNCHC, which is supported by the larger enterprise-quality multi-site digital backups created for all departments at CPN.