TUNICA-BILOXI TRIBE OF LA: 2022 IMLS NATIVE AMERICAN LIBRARY SERVICES ENHANCEMENT GRANTS
FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: NAG-ENHANCEMENT-FY22

Project Justification

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

The Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana IMLS 2022 Native American Library Services Enhancement Grant project will focus on Goal 3: Enhance the preservation and revitalization of Native American cultures and languages and Objective 3.2: Support the preservation of content of unique and specific value to Native communities. Through the implementation of this project, the tribe will meet IMLS agency overall Goal 1: Champion Lifelong Learning and Objective 1.2: Support the training and professional development of the museum and library workforce.

What need, problem, or challenge will your project address and how was it identified? Describe how you have used demographic information, economic circumstances, condition assessments, and other relevant data from reliable sources to define the need, problem, or challenge and develop the scope for the project.

The need this project will address is the lack of library capacity to preserve Tunica language and cultural materials and collection. Prior to the Tunica Language Revitalization Program, for more than a century, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana witnessed its traditional language and culture slip deep into distant slumber. With just over 1,700 titles, the collections complement the Tunica-Biloxi Museum and provide resources on Tunica-Biloxi and other indigenous cultures. The CERC Library hosts ongoing public programs featuring storytelling, music, and demonstrations on local history and culture. As part of an early literacy initiative, LCRP has started a series of Story Time events based on standards from *Every Child Ready to Read*. Traditional Tunica-Biloxi stories and songs are integrated into the story time programs. The Tunica language revitalization has been a crucial link to preserving Tunica-Biloxi culture. Dr. Wesley Leonard describes the Miami Tribe's language reclamation efforts as a way to achieve a level of "cultural fluency," in which "proficiency in the language may ensue but in which proficiency is not the immediate target." In the same manner, continued use of the Tunica language is a natural way to preserve cultural knowledge and a way of expressing it through the language. As the number of fluent Tunica language speakers has decreased over the last century, the need for maintaining Tunica language materials, speaking, teaching and preserving the language has become important.

Prior to development of the Tunica language education program plan, Councilmember Lintinger conducted a community meeting with approximately 50 tribal family members in May 2013 at the Tunica-Biloxi Cultural & Educational Resources Center (CERC) to gauge interest. She received positive comments and overwhelming support from members, especially elders. Councilmember Lintinger noted that there was strong desire across various age groups in the tribal community to learn and speak Tunica from tribal members present. When asked about the value of Tunica-Biloxi cultural programs on the *Member Survey*, a tribal mother's comment exemplified the opinion of many survey responses: "I live in Michigan and, I don't know much about the Tunica tribe. I would love to learn our language, dance, and songs so I can teach my daughter about her ancestors. I think this program would be amazing.

Family members wanted access to cultural programs presented on the reservation. In the Member Survey, one parent commented that, "Many members do not live in Marksville so [cultural programming] should be offered to everyone regardless of their residence… This needs to be offered online." Approximately 92% of those surveyed indicated that they would be interested in having access to cultural educational programming in person as well as via the internet. To address these concerns, Tunica library staff investigated online language learning opportunities through WebEx live classes and recorded video lessons, in addition to current classroom-based language classes. Survey respondents indicated that cost assistance with travel and boarding is a barrier to their children's participation in the summer language camps. Over 37% of respondents are interested in learning the Tunica language but will only be able to do so if they have access training materials via online technology.

Currently, there are 1,650 enrolled Tunica-Biloxi Tribal Members. Approximately 42% live either on or near the reservation and designated tribal lands located in Central Louisiana. Of the enrolled members, 30% are between the ages of 18-34. Elders 55 years and over comprise only 9% of the population and 39% are under the age of 18. Notably, the tribal youth population is double the number of adults (ages 35-54). In addition, 21.5% of the population falls below the federal poverty level according to HUD's Income Statistics 2020. The Economic Policy Institute states that the 2020 unemployment rate for the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe is approximately 12%, which is more than twice the national average. The 2020 school drop-out rate for tribal students is over 40% for Tunica-Biloxi tribal students, whereas, the drop-out rates for Avoyelles Parish (Small Rural School District) were 25% in 2020 and 22% for the State of Louisiana in 2020 (Louisiana Department of Education). Even more troubling, the drop-out rate for tribal youth with disabilities (sub-group) is even higher; nearly 60% of tribal youth with a disability fail to get a high school diploma or HiSet. As a result of these troubling statistics, it is imperative that the CERC/Cemonia Strother Williams Library & Research Center conduct staff training, policy/procedure development, and staff development activities to increase tribal capacity to provide meaningful library resources that address educational and cultural barriers to improve the lives of tribal citizens.

Who is the target group for your project and how have they been involved in the planning? "Target group" refers to those who will be most immediately and positively affected by your project. Be specific by identifying particular age groups, community members with particular needs, and/or other types of target audiences. Identify the number of individuals in the target group or in each target group, if you identify more than one.

In the short-term, this project will primarily target CERC/Cemonia Strother Williams Library & Research Center staff through workforce development activities including staff development, trainings, and policy development. Long-term, the CERC/Cemonia Strother Library is a valuable information resource for all tribal families and the local Avoyelles Parish community. The library targets age groups pre-school through adult for education programing. The library compliments the Tunica-Biloxi Museum and provides opportunity for more in-depth study and research on Tunica-Biloxi and Southeast indigenous cultures. In addition to reference services, the library coordinates public education programs for the tribal and local communities including access to

online services where tribal adults can complete skill/workforce development activities. Community youth enrolled in the Tunica-Biloxi education and cultural revitalization activities would benefit from library resources. Elders and adults would have better access to information on social and cultural information for personal enrichment and support of their children's development.

Who are the ultimate beneficiaries for this project? "Beneficiaries" refers to those who are likely to be aided in the long-term by your project. They may or may not be the same as your "target group." Identify the number of individuals who will benefit from your project in the long term, if reliable and defensible counts are possible. Otherwise describe the characteristics of the beneficiaries you expect to be served eventually by your project.

The beneficiaries for this project are the same as the target group. This includes 1,650 tribal members, tribal youth pre-school through 12th grade, and the local community that visit the library.

Project Work Plan

What specific activities will you carry out?

The Tunica-Biloxi Tribe seeks funding to support and maintain existing library operations and core library services. The Library will focus on the following:

<u>Library Workforce Development</u> - Continued development of library staff to improve library reference services. Funding will support a full-time library assistant for reference, administrative and cataloging support for the CERC Library. The library assistant will take part in ALA e-courses and training opportunities at the Louisiana Library Association annual conference. Staff will access ALA e-courses such as:

- Privacy, Libraries, Patrons, and the Law – The 4-week eCourse provides clarity and order on what can be a complex topic. Students will learn about the legal framework for upholding patrons' right to privacy when it comes to both physical and digital sources of information.
- Supporting Teen Services: Fostering Community, Programming, and Outreach – This 4-week eCourse offers a fresh perspective on teen services teaching how to use teen personalities, psychology, and innovative communication strategies to enhance library services and help teens take ownership of their library.
- Instructional Design for Online Teaching and Learning – This 4-week eCourse will provide insights on how to compose, organize, and personalize online lessons for your learners. The instructor will lead students through everything from the first steps of design to assessment after the event has occurred.

In addition, Library staff will develop policies and processes for cataloging, storing, and accessing materials from the Tunica-Biloxi Language & Culture Program and tribal library resources. Library staff will also amass copies of tribal community photographs, oral history, culture and music. Staff will create guides to promote various subject areas of library collections and acquire titles to compliment core Native American and early literacy collections.

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

During the implementation of this project, there may be risks including staff turnover and long-term funding. The biggest risk to this project is a potential loss of project staff. This is potentially debilitating issue with this project since we will hire only one new staff member while using current staff that are highly qualified and have been doing working with the library for some time. In the event of staff turnover, the tribe will recruit highly qualified individuals from within the tribe or tribal partners that are familiar with the program to fill vacancies. For example, the library may recruit Tulane University and Northwestern University of Louisiana graduate students that have worked with the Tunica language program to replace project staff. In addition, the tribe will conduct on-the-job training and professional development to continue library and archive functions.

Another major risk for the project is lack of funding to sustain project activities beyond the grant performance period. Due to budgetary constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the tribe implemented several strategies to ensure project sustainability. In prior years, tribal programs received funding from revenues generated by the tribe's casino, Paragon Casino Resort; however, due to increased competition, market saturation, sluggish economic growth, and stagnant wages, casino revenues and profits have decreased significantly. This was compounded by the state-wide mandatory closures caused by COVID-19. Throughout the 24-month performance period of this grant, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe will seek funding and partners to assist with the continuation funding of initiatives taken under this grant. The Tunica-Biloxi Tribe has partnered with a local grant writer to seek funding for future project years. With support from a professional grant writer, the tribe will seek alternative funding streams to continue this project after the project period. In addition, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribal Council have implemented fundraising strategies to provide additional resources. These efforts include seeking corporate partnerships, quarterly fund-raising events, and outreach to philanthropic organizations. The Tunica-Biloxi Administration and grant writer work with the Tribal Council to develop and implement a strategic fundraising plan that will incorporate an expanded annual giving program. Building a larger individual donor base will complement tribe's successful grant seeking program and help ensure our financial future. Through these efforts, the tribe will be able to continue the activities after the completion of this project.

Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?

John Barbry (Director of CERC Library) will serve as the project director. The Project Director is responsible for the overall program operations, including oversight of daily program activities, compliance with all federal, tribal, and state laws and regulations, staffing, and fiscal oversight. The Project Director also manages all inter-agency communication and workgroup meetings and functions related to the project goal and objectives. The Project Director will also assist with community outreach and awareness events.

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

Tribal government personnel policies and procedures will be utilized to oversee staff and contractors. Overall project oversight, including the oversight of federal funds, will be coordinated by Clarence Brown, CPA, (Tribal CFO) and John Barbry, MA (Director of Development & Programing). This project will be operated under the principles set forth in OMB Uniform Guidance to ensure full compliance with all federal regulations and laws. The Tribe utilizes the Abila Accounting Software System, which encompasses the overall accounting processes including its Budgeting, Financial Reporting, General Ledger, Accounts Payables, Accounts Receivables, and Payroll. Abila MIP Accounting Software can maintain all financial transactions and records, and maintain a cash balance for multiple federal grants. It can also generate Monthly Financial Report. Abila is capable of tracking multiple budgets for multiple grants for multiple grant years, and of tracking variable degrees of detail, including maintaining past balances. The Tribe is fully compliant with all standards set-forth in U.S. GAAP, Uniform Guidance Cost Principles, and Uniform Guidance Procurement standards. The CFO is responsible to the timely submission of all financial reports for all federal and non-federal programs quarterly and annually.

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

The CERC Library will oversee performance through staff and library user satisfaction surveys, number of policies developed as well as staff completion certificates for e-learning modules. The CERC will collect satisfaction surveys from library users during the implementation of this program. These surveys will allow library users to identify library services that are meeting expectations and those that need improvement and/or not meeting the tribal community needs.

Programs findings will be disseminated among regional library partners, Louisiana tribal organizations, and Tunica-Biloxi community members. During the implementation of project, the Program Director will provide interim quarterly reports to IMLS and the tribal council to provide progress updates on program operations. In addition, Program Director will provide an annual report progress report and host an annual workshop with the Tunica-Biloxi tribal community to discuss program results.

Project results will be disseminated as follows: detailed reports to all stakeholders on program progress and successes, program web-page, monthly tribal community meetings, and emails blasts to supporting community members. To ensure program findings are utilized by its intended audience, the Program Director will make all findings available to employees, tribal members, council members, and service providers (those most likely to implement changes based on efforts under this project).

Project Results

What are your project's intended results and how will they address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified?
The main result for this program will be improved library service delivery by library staff upon the successful completion of library workforce development activities. Through additional staff skill development, the CERC library will be able to provide expanded library services in future years for our tribal community and the residents of central Louisiana. In addition to improved service delivery as a result of library workforce development, there will be several secondary results:

- Creation of illustrated book guides promoting various subject areas of the CERC Library collections (i.e., Pre-literacy books; Southeastern Archaeology; Tribes of Southeastern U. S.; Native American Crafts; Native American stories and folklore)
- Increased usage of the CERC Library by tribal and non-tribal communities
- Increased usage of the CERC Library by tribal teenagers.
- Increased usage of pre-school section of the library
- New/Updated Operational Policy Handbook
- Improvement of reference service through continued staff training and familiarity with library collections.

Through this IMLS project, the Tunic-Biloxi Tribe will increase community library capacity to preserve language and cultural materials as well as increased library services. For example, the CERC Library hosts ongoing public programs featuring storytelling, music, and demonstrations on local history and culture. As part of an early literacy initiative, the library has started a series of Story Time events based on standards from *Every Child Ready to Read*. Traditional Tunica-Biloxi stories and songs are integrated into the story time programs. This will support the tribe's early education efforts to ensure tribal students are able to adjust to education norms. In addition, for tribal members seeking employment but lack access to the internet and computing services, the CERC library will provide these resources at no cost. Library staff will compile lists of available online certification and education resources for patrons. This will allow for unemployed and underemployed tribal members to conduct job searches, apply online for employment, and complete job training courses to improve their chances of finding living-wage employment. For tribal students that lack access to the internet and computing services at home, the library will provide these critical services for all tribal youth in need.

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

The library and archives will expand access to published sources to support academic projects and independent research on Tunica-Biloxi and Native American projects. Standardized archive collections will document the development of language and culture revitalization, preservation, and training resources. Further, the Cultural Program Coordination (aka library coordinator) will receive professional development opportunities that will build information science skills and access to valuable resources in Native American lifeways. Access to reference service, finding

aids, and reference guides will be promoted through tribal and non-tribal communication channels building usage of our library collections.

What tangible products will result from your project?

As a result of this project, there will be two tangible products created:

- Creation illustrated book guides promoting various subject areas of the CERC Library collections (i.e., Pre-literacy books; Southeastern Archaeology; Tribes of Southeastern U. S.; Native American Crafts; Native American stories and folklore)
- A general resource guide to published and un-published collections of the Cemonia Strother Williams Library & Research Center in printed and digital formats.
- Online resource guide linked from Tunica-Biloxi website and social media sites.
- New/Updated Operational Policy Handbook

How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance?

As previously stated, throughout the 24-month performance period of this grant, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe will seek funding and partners to assist with the continuation funding of initiatives taken under this grant. The Tunica-Biloxi Tribe has partnered with a local grant writer to seek funding for future project years. With support from a professional grant writer, the tribe will seek alternative funding streams to continue this project after the project period. In addition, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribal Council has implemented funding raising strategies to provide additional funding. These efforts include seeking corporate partnerships, quarterly fund-raising events, and outreach to philanthropic organizations. The Tunica-Biloxi Administration and grant writer work with the Tribal Council to develop and implement a strategic fundraising plan that will incorporate an expanded annual giving program. Building a larger individual donor base will complement tribe's successful grant seeking program and help ensure our financial future. Through these efforts, the tribe will be able to continue the activities after the completion of this project.

Tunica-Biloxi of Tribe of Louisiana
2022 IMLS Native American Library Services Grant Schedule of Completion

	9/1/2022	10/1/2022	11/1/2022	12/1/2022	1/1/2023	2/1/2023	3/1/2023	4/1/2023	5/1/2023	6/1/2023	7/1/2023	8/1/2023	9/1/2023	10/1/2023	11/1/2023	12/1/2023	1/1/2024	2/1/2024	3/1/2024	4/1/2024	5/1/2024	6/1/2024	7/1/2024	8/1/2024
Task 1 - eCourse 1 Privacy, Libraries, Patrons and the Law	■																							
Task 2 - eCourse Supporting Teen Services		■																						
Task 3 - eCourse Instructional Design for Online Teaching and Learning			■																					
Task 4 - Policy and Procedure Development				■	■	■	■	■																
Task 5 - Tribal Works Cataloging						■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Task 6 - General Library Operations			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■