

## NARRATIVE

### PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

#### **Project Need, Problem, or Challenge:**

The Forest County Potawatomi Community (FCPC) is respectfully seeking support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in the amount of \$150,000 to hire an Assistant Librarian position for its Cultural Center, Library & Museum that was terminated last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project will also support efforts to strengthen library programming and essentially “re-engage” the community after the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like other Tribal communities, the economic impact of COVID-19 on the FCPC has been devastating. Due to safety concerns revolving around COVID-19, the Tribe closed its businesses for several months. This left Tribal leaders struggling to provide even the most minimal services in health, government and social services, with the abrupt interruption of revenue for an entire fiscal quarter. Financial setbacks continued throughout the summer, leaving FCPC’s FY 2021 budget covering only the most essential programs to ensure the health and safety of the community.

When COVID-19 initially hit the community, the Cultural Center, Library & Museum completely shut down for a significant portion of the year and staff was cut down to only one employee. Library services were essentially eliminated during that time. In the summer of 2020, the Department was able to hire a few more positions to re-initiate partial services while following social distancing guidance. In April 2021, the Cultural Center, Library & Museum re-opened to the public at its normal operating hours. While the library is currently opened to the public during normal operating hours, services are being administered by the existing Cultural Center, Library & Museum staff, who rotate their time to ensure the library is open to the public.

Unfortunately, the lack of a dedicated librarian prolongs the deficiency of library programming, such as reading programs, workshops and classes. Prior to COVID-19 the Cultural Center, Library & Museum averaged approximately 1,000 to 1,200 visitors annually, and circulation averaged 596 patrons annually. Since the Cultural Center, Library & Museum’s re-opened this summer, there have only been a handful of visitors, and circulation has decreased to 58 patrons in the past year. It is imperative that a dedicated librarian is hired to actively re-engage the community and increase utilization of the library and its resources.

The challenges above were identified through the FCPC annual strategic planning process. Each department is required to complete a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis and develop a strategic plan for the upcoming fiscal year. The Cultural Center, Library & Museum gathered information from multiple data sources to identify four weakness that this project wishes to address. These include: severe decrease in patron participation, loss of staff due to COVID, low public visibility, and lack of programming.

**Who or What Will Benefit from Project:** First and foremost the project will benefit Tribal Members from the Forest County Potawatomi Community. The Cultural Center, Library & Museum purpose is to research, collect, preserve and disseminate historically significant information about the roots of the Forest County Potawatomi to support and strengthen understanding of Potawatomi history, for Tribal membership, community members and the general public. It furthers this purpose by also providing historical information on other Tribal nations in the Americas. There are approximately 1693 FCPC enrolled members.<sup>1</sup> Over 730 reside in Forest County, of which 37% are youth. Many of these members have families and descendant children who also reside in the

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<sup>1</sup> Tribal enrollment data retrieved from enrollment office 02/09/2021

community. Another 704 Tribal members live in other Wisconsin counties. The Cultural Center, Library & Museum is currently collaborating with other FCPC departments, such as the Tribe's Pre-School and Summer Youth Programs to coordinate efforts to re-engage the Potawatomi youth at the library in the upcoming year.

Local residents are another key beneficiary of the project. The FCPC reservation (and library) is located in Forest County Wisconsin. Surrounded by the Nicolet National Forest, it is one of the most rural counties in Wisconsin. While the region is vibrant with outdoor opportunities, there are few opportunities to engage in intellectual and humanities experiences. The library is designed to help visitors discover the powerful history and culture of the Potawatomi and other Tribal nations in an effort to respect different worldviews and ways of being in the world. The U.S. Census documents that there are nearly 7200 adults and 1800 children residing in Forest County.<sup>2</sup> The library also regularly collaborates with the three local school districts to provide resources and services that assist them in meeting Wisconsin's Act 31. This Act requires schools to include curriculum aimed at educating youth about Wisconsin Tribes. The Tribe wishes to share its specific story with these area schools to increase understanding of the Potawatomi, and ultimately expand community connection. However, without the Assistant Librarian to provide the support, these collaborative learning efforts will be limited in the upcoming academic year.

## PROJECT WORK PLAN

**Project Objective, Activities, Timeline, Responsibility, Risks, Mitigations, Data and Measures:** The design for the proposed project is based on the development of clear, measurable, and attainable objectives and outcomes that directly address the identified needs. The project also addresses IMLS goals and objectives, including:

- Development and implementation of classes and other educational services related to specific topics and content area of interest to library patrons and community-based users;
- Enhancing the preservation and revitalization of Native American culture and languages;
- Sharing of content within and/or beyond Native communities.

The specific project objective is “by August 2023, to increase patron participation and utilization of the library to pre-COVID participation and use.” This will be accomplished through the following activities.

**Activity 1:** In month one, the Project Director will work with the FCPC Human Resources (HR) Department to hire an Assistant Librarian who will carry out the majority of the project activities. Possible risks include hiring a qualified candidate in a timely manner. To address the issue, the position description has already been developed (see attachments), graded by HR, and approved by the Executive Council should the grant be awarded. This ensures that the position can be posted immediately. The measure for this activity is the hiring of an Assistant Librarian to coordinate the project. Data to be collected includes the application, resume and hiring notice of a qualified candidate. FCPC HR collects this data and will provide it to the Project Director for the project file.

**Activity 2:** In month two the Project Director will train the new Assistant Librarian on the operations of the FCPC library. This will include, but not be limited to, circulation, collections, archives, technology, software, and programming. It will also involve a review of policies and procedures. Possible risks involve the librarian not comprehending components of the operations, however, the Project Director and other Cultural Center, Library & Museum will be available to assist the librarian with any challenges she encounters. The measure for this activity is the ability of the librarian to effectively complete responsibilities independently by the end of the

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<sup>2</sup> U.S Census American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, *Sex by Age*. Table S0101

first six months. Data that will be collected includes: training provided, number of training hours, and the six month evaluation of the Assistant Librarian. This will be tracked in a project excel sheet by the Project Director.

Activities 3 and 4: Throughout the project, the librarian will be required to purchase collection items and provide circulation assistance to library patrons. FCPC will be applying a large portion of its Basic Library Grant to purchase books, DVDs, and CDs pertaining to American Indian History, culture and all fields within the realm of American Indian Studies for Tribal nations in the Americas. Risks include the possibility of patrons still not checking out library items. To assist with promoting the reading and use of existing and new materials, the librarian will submit a monthly article in the Tribe's newspaper, and a notice on the Tribe's Facebook page called, "What's New." In addition, the library will continue to offer curbside pick-up of checked-out items. This service mitigates the possibility of COVID becoming an issue again. The measure for activity four is an increase in library collections. Data to be collected includes the number of items added to the collection. The measure for activity five is an increase in patron circulation. Data to be collected is monthly patron circulation. Both of these measurements are entered into the library's software system and can be pulled for analysis and reporting at any time.

Activity 5: The librarian will also provide research assistance throughout the project. FCPC has an extensive archive for patrons to access. It will also be purchasing two new research subscriptions with the Basic Library funds. The first is Ancestry Library, and the second is newspaper.com. By having a dedicated librarian available during operation hours, patrons will have access to research assistance as needed. Risks include the possibility that patrons will not utilize this service or COVID may become an issue. To mitigate this, the services will be advertised in the library's "What's New" newspaper article and Facebook post. Patrons will be encouraged to utilize the subscriptions at the library. In addition, the Ancestry Library subscription allows FCPC patrons to utilize the subscription from the comfort of their homes. Should COVID-19 become an issue during the project, patrons will be allowed to utilize the subscriptions at the library by appointment. The key measure for this activity is a continuous increase in patron usage throughout the project. Data to be collected includes the number of patrons utilizing the archives, Ancestry Library and newspapers.com subscription use, which will be tracked through a sign in sheet in the library. The librarian will compile the numbers monthly and track them in the project excel tracking sheet.

Activity 6: Activity six focuses on the implementation of library programs that will be ongoing throughout the project. It is anticipated that the librarian will develop and implement programs that will encourage the community to engage in reading. One activity to engage the community with the library was developed and will be funded through the Basic Library grant. This activity is Reading Bingo. Participants will be given reading bingo cards that they can check off. Squares may include activities, such as "reading under a tree." For every bingo, the participants will be included in a weekly drawing for a prize. This activity will be on-going through the year regardless of any future COVID outbreaks. The main risk to this activity is lack of participation. To mitigate the risk, the librarian will advertise the programs monthly in the Tribe's newspaper, and a notice on the Tribe's Facebook page called, "What's New." In addition, the library will continue to offer curbside pick-up of checked-out items. Furthermore, the bingo card activity was one of the most popular activities in the past. The key measure is a continuous increase in patron participation in the library programs. Data to be collected includes: the number/type of programs developed/implemented and the number of participants for each program. This will be tracked by the librarian using the project excel tracking sheet.

Activity 7: Another key activity to draw patrons in is the provision of cultural programming. The librarian will coordinate a cultural program at least once each quarter. Some past programs include: star quilting, ribbon

shirts, ribbon skirts, and war club classes. This will require the librarian to contract with a Tribal member to conduct the classes. Supplies will also be provided to participants. Both will be funded under the IMLS Enhancement grant. Because these classes were popular in the past, the only anticipated risk is the possibility of COVID restricting social gatherings. Should this occur, the classes will be recorded and provided to the community online via the library website and Facebook. The key measure is a continuous increase in patron participation in the cultural programs. Data to be collected includes: the number/type of programs developed/implemented and the number of participants for each program. This will be tracked by the librarian using the project excel tracking sheet.

One cultural activity to be funded under the Basic Library grant is a community gathering during the winter solstice where an elder will tell traditional Potawatomi stories. The stories will be recorded and posted to the Tribes Facebook for viewing. The measure for this will be included in the cultural measure above. Data to be collected includes the number of participants attending the winter solstice event or watching the recording (if unable to attend in person).

Activity 8: The librarian will research, develop and implement programs that the library can achieve online for the community, as the culture of library services are changing due to COVID. At least one on-line program per quarter will take place. Some initial online programs anticipated include the provision activities six, seven and nine in an online format. Possible risks include improperly functioning technology and lack of community internet access. The FCPC Informational Technology department will assist with mitigating internal technology risks. The Tribe does offer Wi-Fi in all of its facilities, which will help provide community internet access. Furthermore, the library intends to provide the programs via its Facebook profile, as a large majority of people have access to smart phones. The use of Facebook will also allow the library to easily track the number of viewers in order to measure the increase in patron viewing of online programming.

Activity 9: Another new endeavor for the FCPC library is the offering of workshops, which will focus on digital literacy and employment skills. At least one workshop each quarter will take place, and may include such topics as: using the Ancestry Library, using an IPAD (for elders), and resume writing. The main risk is the lack of participation. To mitigate this, the librarian will work with other FCPC programs, such as the Elderly Program, Social Services and Education, to advertise the workshops and encourage and/or support their clients to participate in them. The key measure is a continuous increase in patron participation in the workshops. Data to be collected includes: the number/type of workshops developed/implemented and the number of participants for each workshop. This will be tracked by the librarian using the project excel tracking sheet.

Activity 10: During the school year, the librarian will collaborate with the three local school districts to provide resources and services that assist them in meeting Wisconsin's Act 31. The Tribe wishes to share its specific story with these area schools to increase understanding of the Potawatomi and ultimately expand community connection. Past efforts have included provision of resources for curriculum, and library/museum tours. The librarian will work with FCPC's Education Department, who closely work with the schools, to develop additional ways to collaborate. In addition, the library has already scheduled collaborative efforts with the Tribe's pre-school and daycare to provide regular visits to the library for story time. There is no anticipated risk with this activity. The key measure is the number of collaborative efforts taking place each month. The type of collaboration, assistance, and participation (if applicable) will be tracked by the librarian using the project excel tracking sheet.

Activity 11: FCPC will be opening its new museum exhibition in 2021. Part of the museum tour includes a brief tour of the library's collections, to assist residents to learn about the unique collection and encourage use of the library. The librarian will assist with providing the library portion of the tour. The main risk for this activity is the possibility for COVID to inhibit touring of the facility. To mitigate this risk, the Cultural Center, Library & Museum staff will work collaboratively to develop a virtual tour for upload on its website and the option of scheduled tours should COVID occur. The key measure is the increase in tours throughout the project. Data to be tracked includes the number of tours taking place each month, along with the number of people in the tours. This will be tracked by the librarian using the project excel tracking sheet.

Activity 12: Promotion of the above activities is critical to the success of the program. The Assistant librarian will promote the programs through advertisement on the FCPC website, social media platforms, the local newspaper, in-house posters, FCP newspaper, word-of-mouth, flyers, newsletters, surveys, mail and email. The library will submit a monthly article in the Tribe's newspaper, and a notice on the Tribe's Facebook page called, "What's New." This advertisement will include new collections, services provided, and upcoming programs and workshops. No risk is anticipated with this activity. The key measure is the number of people reached. Data to be tracked includes the number of subscribers receiving the Tribal newspaper and the number of views on the Facebook notice. This will be tracked monthly by the librarian using the project excel tracking sheet.

Activity 13: The last activity is the Assistant Librarian mentoring one or more summer youth assistants. This program is coordinated through the Tribe's Education Department. Summer Youth participants often desire to work at the Cultural Center, Library & Museum. The main risk is the lack of time to dedicate to the youth. To mitigate this the librarian will have them assist during programs and workshops when additional support is needed. They will also have opportunities to work with other Cultural, Library & Museum staff. The key measure is the number of summer youth working with the librarian and their hours worked. Data is simply tracking the number of youth in the project excel tracking sheet.

**Project Management:** The project will take place under the Cultural Center, Library & Museum, which falls under the Cultural Division. The Museum Manager/Tribal Librarian will serve as the Project Director and will be responsible for completion of all aspects of the project, including the hiring of staff, completion of activities, and writing required project reports. She will also be responsible to oversee the project budget and collaborate with other FCPC departments and divisions. Samantha Smith is the Project Director. She has worked at the Cultural Center, Library & Museum since September 2012, with a slight furlough during the pandemic. She has a Bachelor's degree in English and a minor in Native Studies. She also has extensive experience managing grant programs, including IMLS grants. A copy of her resume is in the appendix.

During the initial months post award, the Project Director will focus on establishing the management framework of the project. This will include creating both electronic and hard copy project files, as well as working with FCPC's finance office to create a financial account for the grant. In addition, in year one, the grants department will provide a "pass-the-torch" training that includes a general grants management training and on-on-one training that reviews all pertinent documents and regulations that will ensure that the Project Director is prepared for managing the grant project.

Also each quarter, the Project Director will meet with project staff working on the project to ensure they are aware of their responsibility to the project and understand project expectations. It will also assist the project team review data, measure progress, identify issues, and work together to solve any concerns. This will ensure that the project maintains course and stays within the projected timeline.

The Assistant Librarian will be responsible for the coordination of activities noted in the above section. This position will be hired upon award. A copy of the job description is in the appendix.

**Project Resources Needed:** The FCPC is respectfully seeking support from IMLS in the amount of \$150,000 to assist with the costs of hiring a dedicated librarian to coordinate library programs and provide consistent services. The enhancement grant will also assist with the cost of the proposed cultural programming. The Basic library services grant and Tribal budget will assist with other program costs.

**Sharing Project Results:** The Tribe hopes to continue the proposed program services and librarian position. Project data will be compiled into a report that will be utilized for decision making. The goal is that documented increases in utilization of the library's resources and increased patron participation will justify sustaining the librarian position through Tribal dollars.

## PROJECT RESULTS

### **What is the Project's Intended Results and How Project Will They Address the Need, Problem, or Challenge:**

The main project results will include an increase in community member participation in the library programming and services. The project also expects that the project will stimulate continuous learning and actively engage the community in programming efforts. Specific outcomes include:

- **Activity 1:** Ability to provide library services and programming at the pre-COVID level and re-engage the community.
- **Activity 2:** Provision of a dedicated individual who has the ability to deliver robust library services and programming.
- **Activities 3 and 4:** Documented increases in collection items and patron circulation.
- **Activity 5:** Documented increases in patron use of the library for research.
- **Activity 6:** Documented increases in available library programs and patron participation in those programs.
- **Activity 7:** Ability to conduct cultural programming that will draw patrons in, and ultimately increase participation in cultural programs and library usage.
- **Activity 8:** Provision of new online programs that will reach new audiences. Documented participation in those new online programs.
- **Activity 9:** Provision of new workshops that assists the community increase their employability skills and technology skills. Documented increases in patron participation in those workshops.
- **Activity 10:** Outreach to educational institutions that will increase knowledge and understanding on the Potawatomi history and culture.
- **Activity 11:** Provision of tours that increase the community's knowledge and understanding of the library's vast resources, which will ultimately increase the number of patrons and library use.
- **Activity 12:** Promotion of all activities, services and programming, that will ultimately increase the number of patrons and library use.
- **Activity 13:** Provision of in-depth involvement with FCPC youth to encourage engagement with the Cultural Library & Museum and the Potawatomi history and culture.

**Anticipated Change in Knowledge, Skills, Behaviors and Attitudes of Beneficiaries:** The library project is focused on changing the community attitude and trust in the library that was damaged during the COVID-19 pandemic. Programs will encourage the passing of Potawatomi values, traditions, and beliefs to the next generation, and encouraging local residents and visitors to discover the powerful history and culture of the

Potawatomi. Programs will stimulate a desire to engage with the library and restore the community's belief that the library is a valued resource to the community. Specific changes in attitudes and behaviors include:

- Activity 1: The community will change their attitude towards the library, and begin to actively engage with services and programming.
- Activity 2: The community will begin to trust in the abilities of the library to provide them with supportive services and programming.
- Activities 3 and 4: Patrons will have faith in regular library circulation services and trust that they will not be interrupted or decreased by the lack of staff or events. The community will also begin to desire to learn more about the history and culture of the Potawatomi and other Native tribes with the new collection items.
- Activity 5: Patrons will have faith in regular library research services and trust that they will not be interrupted or decreased by the lack of staff or events. The community will also begin to desire to conduct more research on their history and culture and other Native tribes.
- Activity 6: Patrons will exhibit a positive change in their attitude towards reading and participating in library programs. Patrons will find the library programs engaging and trust that they will not be interrupted or decreased by the lack of staff or events.
- Activity 7: The activity will stimulate continuous learning in the community to know more about their own history and culture. More importantly, the community will feel actively engaged in the library through the programming.
- Activity 8: Patrons will exhibit a positive change in their attitude towards library programming. Patrons will find the online library programs engaging and trust that they will not be interrupted or decreased by the lack of staff or events.
- Activity 9: The community will begin to feel that the library is a useful resource for learning beyond history and culture.
- Activity 10: Local children will increase their knowledge and understanding on the Potawatomi history and culture and other Native nations.
- Activity 11: The community will increase their knowledge and understanding of the library's vast resources, which will ultimately increase their desire to utilize the library.
- Activity 12: The community will become knowledgeable on the library services and programming available.
- Activity 13: FCPC youth will become actively engaged with and knowledgeable of their history and culture.

**Data Collection and Measuring Project Success:** Each quarter, the Project Director will meet with project staff to review project data, measure progress, identify issues, and work together to solve any concerns. This will assist with the project maintaining course and staying within the projected timeline. Specific data and measures of success for each activity follows:

- Activity 1: The measure for this activity is the hiring of an Assistant Librarian to coordinate the project. Data to be collected includes the application, resume and hiring notice of a qualified candidate. FCPC HR collects this data and will provide it to the Project Director for the project file.
- Activity 2: The measure for this activity is the ability of the librarian to effectively complete responsibilities independently by the end of the first six months. Data that will be collected includes: training provided, number of training hours, and the six month evaluation of the Assistant Librarian. This will be tracked in a project excel sheet by the Project Director.
- Activities 3 and 4: The measure for activity four is an increase in library collections. Data to be collected includes the number of items added to the collection. The measure for activity five is an increase in patron circulation. Data to be collected is monthly patron circulation. Both of these measurements are entered into the library's software system and can be pulled for analysis and reporting.

- Activity 5: The key measure for this activity is a continuous increase in patron usage throughout the project. Data to be collected includes the number of patrons utilizing the archives, Ancestry Library and newspapers.com subscriptions, which will be tracked using a sign in sheet in the library. The librarian will compile the numbers monthly and track them in the project excel tracking sheet.
- Activity 6: The key measure is a continuous increase in patron participation in the library programs. Data to be collected includes: the number/type of programs and the number of participants for each program. This will be tracked by the librarian using the project excel tracking sheet.
- Activity 7: The key measure is a continuous increase in patron participation in the cultural programs. Data to be collected includes: the number/type of programs and the number of participants for each program. This will be tracked by the librarian using the project excel tracking sheet.
- Activity 8: The use of Facebook will also allow the library to easily track the number of viewers in order to measure the increase in patron viewing of online programming.
- Activity 9: The key measure is a continuous increase in patron participation in the workshops. Data to be collected includes: the number/type of workshops and the number of participants for each workshop. This will be tracked by the librarian using the project excel tracking sheet.
- Activity 10: The key measure is the number of collaborative efforts taking place each month. The type of collaboration, assistance, and participation (if applicable) will be tracked by the librarian using the project excel tracking sheet.
- Activity 11: The key measure is an increase in tours throughout the project. Data to be tracked includes the number of tours taking place each month, along with the number of people in the tours. This will be tracked by the librarian using the project excel tracking sheet.
- Activity 12: The key measure is the number of people reached. Data to be tracked includes the number of subscribers receiving the Tribal newspaper and the number of views on the Facebook notice. This will be tracked monthly by the librarian using the project excel tracking sheet.
- Activity 13: The key measure is the number of summer youth working with the librarian. Data includes tracking the number of youth and hours worked in the project excel tracking sheet.

**Project Tangible Products/Results:** Specific tangible results per activity follow:

- Activity 1: A dedicated librarian position who can focus on strengthening library services and programming.
- Activity 2: A well-trained librarian.
- Activities 3 and 4: Consistent circulation services, visible patron usage and new collection items.
- Activity 5: Consistent research assistance, visible patron research, and two new research subscriptions.
- Activity 6: Regularly scheduled library programs and visible patron participation in those programs.
- Activity 7: Quarterly cultural programs taking place and visible patron participation in those programs.
- Activity 8: Quarterly online programs taking place and visible participation in those programs.
- Activity 9: Quarterly workshops taking place and visible patron participation in those workshops.
- Activity 10: Documented collaborations. Partnerships strengthened.
- Activity 11: Documented tours and visible increases in tour participation.
- Activity 12: Promotional items.
- Activity 13: Summer Youth Positions at the library.

**Sustainability of Project Benefits:** The Tribe hopes to continue the proposed program services and librarian position. Project data will be compiled into a report that will be utilized for decision making. The goal is that documented increases in utilization of the library's resources and increased patron participation will justify sustaining the librarian position through Tribal dollars.



Forest County Potawatomi Community

**SCHEDULE OF COMPLETION**

ACTIVITIES	2021				2022												2023								Responsibility	
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Ma	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Ma	Jun	Jul	Aug		
<b>Project Management Activities</b>																										
Conduct project team meetings																										Project Director
Collect/compile project data																										Assistant Librarian
Analyze/evaluate project data																										Project Director
Write performance reports																										Project Director
Share Project Results																										Project Director
<b>Project Activities</b>																										
1. Hire Assistant Librarian																										Project Director
2. Train Assistant Librarian																										Project Director
3. Purchase collection items																										Assistant Librarian
4. Provide circulation assistance																										Assistant Librarian
5. Provide research assistance																										Assistant Librarian
6. Implement library programs																										Assistant Librarian
7. Implement cultural programs																										Assistant Librarian
8. Implement on-line programs																										Assistant Librarian
9. Implement workshops																										Assistant Librarian
10. Collaborate with schools																										Assistant Librarian
11. Provide library tours																										Assistant Librarian
12. Promote library																										Assistant Librarian
13. Work with summer youth																										Assistant Librarian