QUAPAW TRIBAL LIBRARY
IMLS – NATIVE AMERICAN LIBRARY SERVICES ENHANCEMENT GRANT
PROJECT NARRATIVE

1. PROJECT JUSTIFICATION
   a. The needs the project will address relating to the goals/objectives and chosen categories.

Today, more than ever, libraries are extremely important for the preservation and improvement of our culture, and bridging the information gap within communities, by providing access to information to all. Librarians and the services of the library help guide people in their quest for knowledge, including technology-based resources, by providing that all people have equal access to information. The vision of this project is to transform the library into a "valued institution" that strengthens the community by providing citizens the tools to harness the power of information.

The mission of the Quapaw Tribal Library is to provide the Tribal community and others with access to information about American Indian history and culture; to support citizens of the community in their efforts to achieve self-sufficiency; and to assist Tribal programs in providing service to the community. The Quapaw Tribal Library serves both tribal and non-tribal people of the community. The library is open five days a week, from 8:00 to 5:00 pm. The library currently has a little over 9,000 volumes, which include print materials, videos, photographs, and audiobooks. The library provides free internet access, six computer workstations and laptops, interlibrary loan service, and one literacy-based workstation for children, as well as three literacy-based tablets for children.

The needs for this funding were determined by carefully studying past resource usage in the library and the library's present collection, comment cards filled out by patrons, surveys filled out by participants at all programs or events, demographic information including household size, poverty and literacy statistics provided by the United States Census Bureau and working with local school officials and other tribal departments to determine specific needs of the surrounding community. The Quapaw Nation's Library Director also worked carefully with the local school librarian and dietitian to determine the actual number of students with learning disabilities, their literacy needs, and individual household demographics. Some surprising results evolved from all our research. It was determined that the greatest need for literacy-based programs and resources needed to target preschool and elementary age students, to jumpstart and reinforce learning habits in their formative years. Unexpectedly, we also discovered that many parents lacked literacy skills, so they felt inadequate to help their children. Therefore, literacy resources for adults are also needed. A program to address the need was initiated in 2016 on a small scale using previous IMLS funding, which was extremely successful. Both tribal members and community members readily embraced the programs and requested more programs like it. STEAM programs for the kids have been enormously successful and is now more important than ever due to the pandemic.

The Quapaw Tribal Library was established in 1989, but due to its location and very limited collection of materials, few tribal members utilized the library and even fewer community members used the library. The library relocated into the newly opened cultural center in December 2008, which increased the size of the library greatly, and made it much more accessible to residents. When the library moved to its new facility, there were 40 registered patrons. We have seen a steady growth in the patron count and circulation statistics, especially from 2013 to 2017. In 2018 the statistics showed an increase of about 12%, while in 2019 we saw an increase again of about 10%. After 12 years in the new location, we now have 973 patrons, of which 150 use our online resources exclusively.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 changed everything. The library was forced to close its doors from February to May due to the rising number of COVID cases in the area. Fear and caution gripped the nation. We opened the library in June 2020, but with strict restrictions to all coming into the facility. All patrons had to have their temperature taken upon entering and masks were required while in the facility. Due to rising COVID numbers, the library again had to shut down to the public

in November 2020 until March 2021. During the first shutdown all library staff worked from home. During the second shutdown library staff worked at the library and made curbside assistance to patrons. As a result, our physical statistics for 2020 took a dramatic downward turn. We checked out only 2,756 physical materials, however, we saw our online checkouts increase dramatically. Before the pandemic our online checkouts averaged 100 checkouts per month. During the pandemic we saw online checkouts increase 2X to 3X. As the pandemic is beginning to come under control both in our community and nationwide, we truly believe better days are ahead, however, the pandemic has left lasting changes and our libraries must be willing to embrace them in order to meet the needs of our communities. Online and technology-based resources as well as programming has changed for libraries across the nation. We believe it is imperative that we find ways to strengthen our library through increasing safety precautions and adding new and safe alternatives for our patrons.

The library initially was staffed by one full-time librarian only. Thanks to a previous IMLS grant the library has added an additional full-time library assistant to the staff, which was very much needed as the library continues to grow and more and more patrons utilize the library. The role of the library assistant is essential in providing backup for the librarian and helping in the various programs and services of the library. As we continue to expand collections, programs, and services the role of the library assistant is even more important to ensuring the library remains a valued institution in the community for all patrons, both tribal and non-tribal.

Blending physical and digital resources is crucial to ensuring that the library is meeting the needs of all citizen in the community and beyond. The pandemic, while devasting for the entire country, was also a wake-up call for us. It forced us to evaluate every aspect of the library and its role in the community. The increase use of digital materials and databases has been increasing for a number of years; however, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated these resources to the point that many patrons seen them as the only option during periods of lockdown. It is imperative that we look beyond the doors of the library to ensure that we are meeting the information needs of the entire community, regardless of whether they come into the library or not. The library is committed to serving the entire community and beyond by offering high-quality physical resources as well as expanding our online resources.

Related Goals/Objectives

i. Goal 1. Objective 1.1: Support digital technology

A well-balanced, diverse collection is essential to ensuring the informational needs of the community are being met and helping improve reading literacy skills for all ages. With previous IMLS Basic Grant funding the library was able to begin aggressive collection development and build upon strengthening our collection each year. However, much more technology and online resources are needed to transform our library into a well-balanced information center to meet the ever-growing needs of all community members. Although the town of Quapaw has a population of 847, according to the 2020 census, the surrounding area's population is approximately 2,532, of which 44% are under the age of 30. The Quapaw School, which is less than 2 miles from the library, has 559 students enrolled for the 2020-21 school year, with an additional 70 virtual students. The number of students qualifying for free or reduced lunches stands at 67%. Only 15% of the homes in the area have access to reliable Internet service in the home, however, most have smartphones which offer limited data service. In view of the pandemic this figure is particularly grave, as more and more teachers are teaching virtually or requiring assignments to be done virtually. The nearest city owned public library, while only 12 miles away, is inaccessible to many of the people in this area. As we strive to meet both the educational and recreational needs of the community, it is essential that both the physical and online collections contain materials that will encourage and stimulate not only existing readers, but also new readers as

they learn, and to make reading and learning an integral part of their lives. Having a more robust online presence in the community is essential to helping area children succeed.

ii. *Goal 2. Objective 2.2: Support the development of classes and other educational services*

Literacy is a life-long process that begins in early childhood and continues throughout a lifetime. With the library being so close in proximity to the Quapaw Public School, we know the library will make a visible difference in the lives of both children and adults in this area by providing more literacy-based programs. According to school statistics, there are presently approximately 159 students (28% of the student body) who suffer from some form of learning disabilities, autism, or special needs. Another 18 – 25% of the students are "latchkey" children. While the school has a wonderful special education program, and very qualified and caring teachers, we believe by partnering with the school, we can develop programs that will further increase the literacy skills of elementary age children, thus reducing the number of "at risk" children in the district. The O-Gah-Pah learning center has a total of 25 to 30 students (ages 6-11) who come to the center each day after school.

We are also committed to partnering with area schools, parents, and students themselves in promoting STEAM education. STEAM education creates critical thinkers, increases science literacy, and enables the next generation of innovators. Innovation leads to new products and processes that sustain our economy. With continuing advances in the technological areas, we need to be able to keep up with the rest of the world and be competitive in these fields! STEAM teaches skills the way they will be used in the workforce, and the real world. Rarely does a job require only one skill set like math. Picture an architect, they use science, math, engineering, and technology to do their jobs. The subjects do not work on their own, instead they are woven together in practical and seamless ways allowing the architect to design complex buildings. Therefore, these sessions will focus more on the importance of teamwork. Most importantly, by incorporating inquiry based principles and an adaptable framework to suit students of various needs, we believe these STEAM sessions will help to foster a love of learning. And the most important gift an education should give a student is a love of learning. In the 21st century, scientific and technological innovations have become increasingly important as we face the benefits and challenges of both globalization and a knowledge-based economy. To succeed in this high tech and ever-changing information-based society, it is becoming more important than ever that students develop new capabilities in STEAM to levels beyond what was considered acceptable in the past. The STEAM classes proposed in this project are designed to foster creativity, curiosity and critical thinking in a fun, relaxed setting.

Funding from a previous IMLS grant helped create after-school STEAM sessions, which were enormously successful. The first class had ten children in attendance, and all the children seemed to thoroughly enjoy the session. Through word of mouth, the class began to grow and grow. By the third session we had 36 students in attendance, and they all remained active throughout the remainder of the summer sessions. These classes far exceeded our expectations both in attendance and participation. The students were enjoying learning STEAM principles and begging for more. Many of them told me the classes were the best part of their day. With funding from this grant, we would like to expand the program utilizing more STEAM principles, to include more advanced projects to a wider age range of children, as well as adding art to the equation. We believe this is an excellent way to highlight the resources, programs, and services of the library, as well as encourage the students to think about pursuing careers in the science and technology fields, as well as highlighting the benefits of art, and its importance to many skilled professionals. We also would like to offer a "Virtual STEAM Fair", open to all Native American students in the area, as well as tribal members living outside our service area. In light of the many challenges both adults and children are forced to endure due to the pandemic, we feel that a virtual STEAM Fair is a better option at this time, and a way to broaden our resources to an

even greater number of children. This would allow all youth of the tribe to participate in the fair, no matter where they live. It will also open opportunities for youth of other tribes in the area to participate. We will be partnering with the other tribes on this venture as well. We truly believe this will be a win-win proposition for all involved, plus allow for greater participation for Native American youth.

iii. *Goal 3. Objective 3.2: Support the preservation of Native community content*

We are blessed to have elders in the tribe and local artists from neighboring tribes that are extremely talented in utilizing talents and skills passed down for generations. However, many of the residents in the community, and even some tribal members know little about these traditions, culture, or skills, and have expressed a desire to learn these talents to ensure that they are passed to the next generation. Previous IMLS funding allowed us to purchase materials and host two traditional crafting classes last year, which were open to both tribal and non-tribal members. All of the classes were enormously successful. After working with the Education Director of the tribe, however, it became abounding clear that the vast majority of our tribal youth have little or no knowledge about many of the traditions, customs, or history of the tribe. In addition to the classes currently offered to adults, it is essential that the upcoming youth of the tribe be taught traditional cultural and skills, as they ultimately will be the leaders of the tribe in the future; therefore, we would like to expand cultural classes to target our surrounding youth. The Quapaw, along with other Mississippian Tribes produced some of the finest pottery of prehistoric North America, and the art of pottery making has through the years help define the Quapaw Tribe, however, many of the Quapaw youth know little about this time-honored craft. In addition to our two traditional crafting classes, which are open to everyone, we would like to start a monthly pottery class for both adults and youth with IMLS funding. We are privileged to have an elder in the tribe that is very proficient in the making of Quapaw pottery and is an excellent instructor. As well, we will bring in other potters from the area to showcase the various types of pottery being made by other tribes. Previous pottery classes have been enormously successful, filling up as fast as each class is posted. To ensure that traditional pottery making stays alive within the tribe, it is essential that both basic and more advanced classes be offered. IMLS funds will be used to purchase supplies for the class, as well as pay a small stipend to the instructors.

b. **Beneficiaries of the project.**

The Quapaw Tribal Library is located in the small rural community of Quapaw, Oklahoma. The town is striving to build a strong community for its citizens, thanks in large part to the support of the Quapaw Nation. The community has been severely affected by unfortunate circumstances in recent years from which the town is trying to rebound and rebuild. Quapaw is located near the "Tar Creek Superfund Site", one of the largest superfund sites in the United States. In 2014, an EF2 rated tornado, struck Quapaw resulting in the death of one person, and severely injuring five. In all, sixty structures in town received moderate to severe damage. Many of the families in the area fall either below or slightly above the national poverty level. According to the US Census the 2020 poverty rate of Quapaw was 23.74%. According to the Dietitian at the Quapaw School, 67% of the students now qualify for either free or reduced lunches based upon their family income, and that figure is expected to rise as well next year. Many of these children have learning disabilities due to the lead and zinc poisoning from Tar Creek. According to the Census Bureau, the population of Quapaw in 2020 stood at 874 with an additional 2,200 living in the surrounding area. Businesses in Quapaw consist of one café, one convenience store, one paving company and approximately six churches. There is no city library in Quapaw and virtually no "gathering place" for people of any age group in the community. The town of Quapaw suffered an additional blow in 2020 when the pandemic hit. The public school system was forced to go to all virtual learning for several months; however, due to the lack of reliable, fast internet services available in this area, the school made the decision to reopen the schools.

The total number of Quapaw tribal members stands at 5,294, with only 5% of the population ages 65 or older, 46% are under 18, and the remaining 49% are ages 19 to 64. There are no full-blood members. In recent years the enrollment has taken a dramatic upturn however as more and more Quapaw descendants are applying for membership. Approximately 44% of tribal members live within a hundred-mile radius of Quapaw, while an additional 56% live beyond 100 miles of Quapaw. The elders of the tribe are dwindling, which also means tribal history, cultures, and traditions as well as stories are in danger of being lost, unless we act quickly.

2. PROJECT WORK PLAN
a. Specific activities and sequence.

Each activity below will address a related objective identified earlier in this proposal and require careful planning, development, and evaluation to ensure the greatest success for both the library and patrons, and ultimately the community as a whole. We believe their impact will be great, as we strive to influence our community, and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

Goal 1. Objective 1.1. Related Activities: To continue to reach patrons beyond the doors of the library to remain viable and competitive in our ever-changing, technological world, by meeting the needs of all users and maintain a favorable position relative with other information providers.

Activity 1: Purchase additional online resources and databases that promote lifelong learning.

Activity 2: Purchasing additional online resources (eBooks, scholarly journals, etc.) via Oklahoma Virtual Library.

Activity 3: Promote online resources to ensure patrons of all ages are aware of all the resources available to them.

Goal 2. Objective 2.2. Related Activities: To expand our after-school program, providing more high quality, rigorous and authentic learning experiences designed to promote the creation and implementation of effective STEAM education that results in outstanding academic achievement for all students.

Activity 1: Work with the Quapaw Public School librarian, as well as three other surrounding public schools in the area to develop literacy programs and select students that could truly benefit from these types of programs.

Activity 2: Incorporate more STEAM based activities and projects, specifically robotic and coding principles into the curriculum. Robotics is an ideal STEM learning experience primarily because it engages, empowers, and challenges students through authentic learning tasks.

Activity 3: Develop an after-school program that engages the students in the learning process by combining the library's physical collection and digital collection of resources.

Activity 4: Host an annual "Virtual STEAM Fair" for all area Native American students at the end of summer each year to allow students to showcase principals learned through school curriculum and STEAM classes throughout the year.

Goal 3. Objective 3.2. Related Activities: To provide programs/events that will demonstrate the traditions, history, culture and language of the Quapaw Indians, and other Indian Tribes indigent to northeastern Oklahoma.

Activity 1: Host traditional and cultural significant craft classes, which highlight time-honored crafts of the Quapaw Nation as well as neighboring Native American tribes, including language-oriented classes and entertainment programs.

Activity 2: Develop a youth pottery program that focuses on the rich history, culture, and tradition of the Quapaw Nation.

Activity 3: Host an adult monthly pottery class to teach and encourage both current and future Quapaw potters to continue this time-honored craft.

We believe this is the best approach to meet the needs of a very diverse and struggling community. This approach allows us to offer the greatest number of resources that will appeal to both our physical patrons as well as our online patrons. The library is both a tribal and public library; therefore, the collection must meet the needs of both tribal and non-tribal patrons. The collection must be very diverse, broad in nature, as well as contain current, relevant, and desirable information in a variety of formats. We fully realize that a progressive library must look beyond its doors. Therefore, providing online digital materials, as well as various online programs and services are no longer a luxury, but a necessity to meet the informational and educational needs of the public. Our vision is to have a library that is making a difference in the lives of people in our community and bustling with patrons of all ages, while aggressing utilizing the newest technology advances to meet the ever-growing needs of our online patrons.

b. The person who will plan, implement, and manage the project.

The Library Director will serve as the manager of all the projects, overseeing all aspects of planning, implementation and evaluation of each program, activity, and event. She will also ensure that the goals and objectives of the project are met with integrity in a timely manner. They will also be completed within budget and comply with all regulations. The Director will also be responsible for securing all speakers, teachers, and helpers for the traditional craft classes planned with grant funding.

c. Resources including time, financial and personnel needed to carry out the activities.

We fully realize these undertakings will take a great deal of research, planning, and collaboration among all the parties involved to ensure their success. We also know the two-year project period will be sufficient to accomplish all of the outlined activities. The Tribe will fully financially support the Library Director's position, while the grant will cover the Library Assistant position who will also play a crucial role in all aspects of the various projects, including helping with the daily activities in the library. We will also work closely with the Education Director, local school officials, teachers, and tribal representative from other tribes in northeast Oklahoma. The "Virtual STEAM Fair" will be a collaborative event among all the area tribes.

d. Potential project risks and mitigation measures.

The primary potential project risks include staff turnover, technological issues, and lack of support from potential partners. The Quapaw Nation has a robust hiring process through their Human Resources Department in the unlikely event the Library Director or her Assistant leave the Tribe. The Tribe also has a four person IT Department who will be able to help mitigate any networking or other computer-based tech problems. And finally, while the potential project partners identified in this proposal (such as the local schools and tribes) are preferred due to their proximity, there are many other schools and tribes the Quapaw Nation has relationships with who would also likely be interested and make excellent partners if needed.

e. Data collected for performance measurement.

The following forms of evaluation will be used to determine the success of each program, and/or resource. These tools will also help us make changes, as needed.

- <u>Comment Cards</u>: A card on which patrons can write their opinion on book selection, resources, programs, or classes.
- <u>Statistical Reports</u>: The total number of material items, and or online resources used for a specific time period.
- <u>Program Attendance</u>: Each program, class, etc. total attendance will be documented.
- <u>Personal Interviews</u>: Patrons/participants will be encouraged to share their opinion on both library resources and any and all programs sponsored by the library.
- <u>Surveys</u>: Questionnaire evaluating specific aspects of each class, program, or resource.

f. How the Tribe plans to share the project's general lessons learned.

The tribe is very fortunate to have a full-time Public Relations Director, who diligently promotes the services of all departments via press releases (to 35 local television/radio stations and newspapers; and 10 national Native American publications), flyers, emails, newsletters, bulletin boards, social networks, etc., so the community is aware of all the tribe has to offer. The tribe also has its own online newspaper which features news, history, obituaries, employment information and upcoming events.

The positive outcome of providing these services, events, and resources will be shared by the various participants in and beyond the community. We will encourage them to share their experiences with others via social networks, word-of-mouth, etc. The Library Director would very much like to participate in the poster board session at the IMLS conference to share the results of our success and possibly serve as a model for other tribal libraries wishing to make a positive impact in their community. In addition, I will seek other conferences such as the ALA annual conference and the Oklahoma Library Conference to share our project and its results.

As patronage and circulations increase, the value to the community will become very evident, and serve as an encouragement to others to utilize the services of the library. We are in the process of organizing a monthly meeting with all area tribal librarians, whereby we will share ideas, projects, and concerns. The ideas, plans and strategies put forth in this plan will be shared with the various other tribes to encourage literacy-based programs within their respective tribes.

3. **PROJECT RESULTS**
   a. **The project's intended results and how they will address the identified need.**

   At the end of this project, we are confident that we will see an increase in library patronage and usage, more robust online resources, including Native American collections with materials available for all ages, plus traditional and cultural significant classes for adults and youth that will provide greater understanding and appreciation of the traditions, culture and history of the Quapaw Tribe and surrounding Native American tribes. There are four intended outcomes of this project. We fully expect the following:

   i. An increase in knowledge of local tribes, including, but not limited to their history, culture, traditions, crafts, and tribal government.
   ii. Increased circulation of new materials both physical and online, as well as a significant increase in the number of library patrons.
   iii. Increased STEAM literacy for all students, including those who do not pursue STEAM-related careers or additional study in the STEAM disciplines.
   iv. A greater appreciation for the library and the Quapaw Tribe in the community, as both tribal member and the general public realize the true value of the library and its services.

   b. **How the intended audience's knowledge, skills, and behaviors will change.**

   We believe this project will have a profound positive impact in our community as well as our tribal members, no matter their age or place of residence. Providing culturally relevant resources, both in-house and online, will help children, youth and adults better understand the rich history of Native Americans and the role they played in shaping our great nation. Typically, this information is either lacking altogether or is very abbreviated in the public-school curriculum. All programming and events will also focus on reading/literacy as well. The pottery and traditional craft classes will support and encourage the dedicated elders in the tribe that have been creating beautiful works of art for many years, plus allow them the opportunity to pass on their skills and knowledge to the younger generation. The classes will also serve as an encouragement to the upcoming youth in the tribe, in hopes that they will fully understand the value of preserving the culture, traditions and crafts of the tribe. It is our

desire to mentor future crafters in the tribe, to ensure the time-honored crafts of the tribe are not only preserved but thrive for many generations to come.

All phases of this project directly relate to the goals and objectives set forth in the library's long-range plan. As we preserve and protect the rich heritage of tribe, we strive to empower people in the community, by providing them with the skills and knowledge required to live and work in an ever-changing, technology-based world. As each step of this plan is carefully planned, implemented, monitored, and evaluated at regular intervals, the ultimate goal is to see the library come alive with activity, as patrons learn new skills, seek information, and become more aware of the importance of the library in the community. Tribal members will develop a greater sense of pride in their Indian heritage, and the general public will better understand the culture, traditions, and language of the tribe.

c. Data collected and reported that will help measure project success.

We will evaluate events, programs and activities based on attendance, observed participation, and the performance measure surveys provided by IMLS after each event. We will also closely look at circulation statistics, visitor counts and library patron registration to ensure they are satisfying the research needs of our patrons. Finally, we will use additional questionnaires, informal discussions, and patron feedback, as well as community comments after each event. This information will be carefully organized and documented, which will be beneficial in both present-day programming, and help assist us as we plan for future programs and events.

d. Tangible products resulting from the project.

Multiple products, including the Virtual STEAM Fair, will be the results of the effort to support digital technology (Goal 1. Objective 1.1.). The subscription service to Overdrive will also provide downloadable eBooks and audio books. The subscription service to the Gale Resource Database will provide a diverse offering of online courses. And the subscription service to Heritage Quest will give library patrons online access to a lot of information for research, homework assignments, and other special projects.

The Gale Resources Database, Pottery Craft Supplies, and After-School Programs will all be the result of the effort to support the development of classes and other educational services (Goal 2. Objective 2.2.) and supporting the preservation of Native community content (Goal 3. Objective 3.2.).

e. Sustainability of project benefits.

While the project objectives and plans outlined in this document are for the next two years, the project is designed to be sustainable and for many years beyond the funding period. By partnering with other departments within the Quapaw Tribe as well as other Native American tribes in the area we believe the project listed will not only continue but expand over the coming years. Other tribal departments, such as Family Services, Education, Social Services, and the Food Sovereignty department have all expressed support for these projects and beyond. We have also had great support and participation from other area Native American tribes. Together we believe the success of these and future projects is undisputable.

The Tribal Administration and Business Committee have committed to maintaining the collection, online subscriptions, and all aspects of this project beyond the grant once they are assured that these are viable assets to the tribal members and the community. The Quapaw Tribe is committed to improving the Quapaw area by providing services and resources that will enrich the lives of all citizens. We will also be working with other area tribes in the hopes of combining resources and programs so we can impact a greater number of people within the area.

While the pandemic has certainly showed us that nothing is certain in life and we shouldn't take things or people for granted, it has also forced us to look at our weaknesses and areas that need improvement within the library and our community. We know this project will improve the resources and services of the library and impact our community in a positive way for many years to come.

Quapaw Tribal Library
IMLS Enhancement Grant

Schedule of Completion - Year 1

Activity	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.
Library Assistant	←											→
Traditional Craft classes		←									→	
Pottery Classes	←											→
Database Purchases	←				→							
Planning After School Programming	←			→								
Implement AS programs				←							→	

Quapaw Tribal Library
IMLS Enhancement Grant

Schedule of Completion - Year 2

Activity	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.

Library Assistant

Traditional Craft classes

Pottery Classes

Renew Databases

Planning After School
 Programming

Implement AS programs