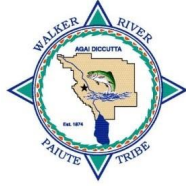


NAG-ENHANCEMENT-FY24

Applicant: Walker River Paiute Tribe - Education Department



WALKER RIVER PAIUTE TRIBE
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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Schurz, NV 89427

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March 27, 2024 - Organizational Profile

The Walker River Paiute Tribe comprises a seven-member Tribal Council governing body organized under the provisions of the Indian Reorganization Act of June 1934 as amended, to exercise certain home rule and be responsible for promoting its members' economic and social welfare. The Tribal Council serves on consecutive terms as the official elected leaders for all decision-making responsibilities on behalf of the Tribe. As stated in the Walker River Paiute Tribe's Long-Term Comprehensive Community Plan conducted in 2017:

"It is the mission of the Walker River Paiute Tribe to maintain our Agai Diccutta heritage while carrying it into the future. The Walker River Paiute Tribe is dedicated and committed to advocating and protecting Tribal Sovereignty. The Walker River Paiute Tribe shall foster the ideal of community self-determination and self-sufficiency. The Walker River Paiute Tribe will strive to promote, preserve, and protect the quality of life for our Tribal Members."

The Walker River Paiute Tribe reservation is the second largest land-based reservation in Nevada, consisting of 323,386 acres. The reservation resides in three counties: Mineral County School District (MCSD), Lyon County School District (LCSD), and Churchill County School District (CCSD). There is a small town called Schurz located within the reservation. Community members must travel between 25 and 45 miles to obtain essentials for basic necessities. The current population is approximately 850 residents. The reservation was established in 1874 by Executive Order and is under the General Allotment Act of 1887. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 40% of people living on the reservation are below the poverty level, and 90% of students qualify for Free and Reduced Lunches. The town of Schurz has a gas station and smoke shop, which are the only tribal enterprises. The nearest town is Yerington, located 25 miles away in LCSD. The second closest town is Hawthorne in MCSD, 35 miles away, while Fallon is 45 miles away and in CCSD. Because the tribal reservation lies within three counties, no local high school, and one local school, Schurz Elementary School, serves grades K-6. Students in grades 7-12 have the option of attending schools in any of the three counties. In the closest neighboring town in Yerington, NV, students from the Yerington Paiute Tribe reservation and colony attend Yerington Elementary School (YES), Yerington Intermediate School (YIS), or the Yerington High School (YHS). Approximately 95% of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. A majority of the students who reside in the Walker River reservation boundaries currently attend schools in Yerington.

The design approaches in this proposal will identify barriers within and outside of schools, analyze students' readiness for college and careers, and highlight opportunities in the local community to build upon literacy advancement, college/career pathways, and social and emotional services, including cultural education and community engagement. The Education Department is designed to support local AI students, preparing them for college and careers after completing high school or alternative GED programs. In partnership with other tribal departments and existing programs in the Education department, we will promote educational equity and advancement for AI students and community members in literacy resources and advancement opportunities.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

The Walker River Paiute Tribe (WRPT) Education Department is pleased to apply for the Native American Library Services Enhancement Grant to enhance literacy, college and career pathways, and connect traditional language preservation and culturally based curriculum for students of all ages. The Walker River Tribal Library Program will expand its capacity through the Education Department staff to raise focus areas of academic and career advancement, life-readiness skills, critical thinking skills, and strengthen community engagement practices and methods of success. Through the leadership of the Education Director and the support of the Education Specialist, as well as two Native Youth Community Project College and Career Coaches, the Education Department will thrive with an additional position to align the Walker River Tribal Library Program with the grant's agency-level *Goal 2: Strengthen Community Engagement, Objective 2.2: Support community collaboration and foster civic engagement*. This position will be entitled as the Communal Library Specialist, who will devise community-based and culturally based knowledge and critical skills workshops that promote educational and career components needed for the long-term viability of a community. While the primary beneficiaries of this program and services will be Native American (NA) students and tribal members, both residing on and off the reservation, the expansion can be shared resources and activities encompassing participants of all native descendent students residing in the Walker River Paiute Tribe reservation, as well as non-native community members – providing more strength in our community collaboration efforts.

The Education Department currently provides the following programs and services for NA students in grades K-12, adults in post-secondary education, and other career-driven avenues for tribal member individuals. The Tribe is continually granted two Public Law 93-638 contracts through the Western Nevada Agency Bureau of Indian Affairs. These contracts include the Higher Education grant program, which offers financial aid to eligible “Indian” students to enable them to attend accredited institutions of higher education. The Johnson O’Malley program funds basic services that meet eligible NA students' unique and specialized needs. In supporting these BIA contracts, the Tribe utilizes the annual Tax Fund Use Plan to allocate taxes accumulated each year to the Agai Diccutta Scholarship, the Adult Vocational Training program, and the Enrichment program. The funding for these programs varies each year, and this is due to the amount of taxes accumulated; however, the Education Department has continued to serve eligible members of the Tribe with the limited funds available. The Education Department has sustained itself through continuous funding from the BIA contracts and the Tax Fund Use Plan through a single Education Director position for over 10 years, leaving minimal capacity and time to address other needs identified in previous Tribal community comprehensive plans. While the funding is limited, based on allocation to the Education Department for higher education/vocational programs, it continues to be limited, serving at a minimum rate of the population needing assistance with college and career pathways and resources. With a population of approximately 850 for those residing on the reservation, the tribal membership count is over 2,500 members, with many of our tribal members/students pursuing other avenues of higher education and careers outside of the reservation. Currently, the Education Department is collecting data on previous and present students who sought assistance through these programs, which will be drafted into an annual report to present the number of students/individuals served and draw comparisons to how this is reaching our tribal membership population.

During the pandemic, the Tribe faced national mandatory shutdowns, including prohibitions from entering the reservation boundaries if not a bonafide resident of the community. This ultimately brought learning capacities to a significant halt, resulting in delayed learning and opportunities for several students and adults seeking employment and educational avenues while increasing the need for technology more than ever. The WRPT received funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) disbursements to assist individuals/families and technology needs. Chromebooks were purchased and made

available for K-college grade-level students and elders to reduce social isolation free of cost. Through the ARPA funding, the Education Department was able to purchase two vehicles, including a Ford Transit Van and a Chevy Traverse, both able to transport up to 15 people each, including the driver, to assist with the existing barrier of transportation for students to attend school outside of the reservation. As the pandemic restrictions began to lift, there was still a lingering fear of students riding the public school buses, and the Education Department provided this service gap and safety net to transport local students to schools and other events. As the community remained resilient through the pandemic shock, the basic need of transportation provided by the Education Department assisted several community members in ensuring the youth were safe.

In 2022, the Education Department was provided with the transfer of the Native Youth Community Project (NYCP) grant from a neighboring Tribe to manage for the remainder of the grant period. NYCP includes three initiatives to address the barriers within and outside of school for Native students related to college and career readiness. The Education Department employs two NYCP College and Career Coaches who provide mentorship and support for 7th-12th grade students while focusing on the following goals: *Goal 1: Implement a successful NYCP that promotes and prepares Native students for college and careers with an emphasis on careers in the teaching profession* *Goal 2: Increase student academic performance by including opportunities in the local community to support Native students.* *Goal 3: Increase student motivation and readiness to attend college or vocational training.* The NYCP program expanded services provided to students attending Mineral County School District and the Lyon County School District areas. The Education Department is currently in Year 2 of this grant and plans to reapply at the end of the grant period. One of the barriers within the NYCP program is the capacity to communicate effectively with parents/guardians and 1:1 with students to address issues of chronic absenteeism, low grade levels, and developing solid individual academic plans before they graduate from high school. This was largely due to one of the NYCP positions being vacant for an extended period during Year 1. Another barrier within the NYCP program is the ability to have college tours and camps that do not conflict with the school(s) academic calendar for the mandated number of attendance days. The Education Department staff have the capacity to communicate with the local schools in the two identified counties concerning these issues, and several of the college and career activities are hosted in the summertime when students are not in session. When it comes to providing workshops and activities for the students during school, it was clear to the Education Department that the outreach capacity and community engagement were lacking. Nevertheless, the NYCP program is a spectacular program available to the students, and the WRPT is one of two Tribe's in Nevada as a recipient of this grant.

The Education Department is also a recipient of the Native American Library Services Basic Grant from 2023-2024, where the funding assisted greatly with shifting focus areas to preserve the Tribe's cultural activities, heritage, and traditional practices. Two respected elders of the community who are fluent in the Northern Paiute band (Walker River Paiute Tribe dialect) were able to be contracted through this funding and held community classes both virtually and in person. The Education Department also hosted cultural activity nights with local traditional knowledge holders to facilitate events like beading workshops, cultural movie nights, and winter break activities for the youth. Bringing community cultural events back to the public was a great need for the community in the transition out of the significant pandemic phases. The Education Director and the Education Specialist were the primary leaders for these grant activities.

As for location and space, the Education Department is currently housed in what is known as the Technology and Learning Center, previously utilized and managed under the Education Department for desktop computers as a public resource for Wi-Fi access and printing capabilities. However, over time, it has transformed into a shared space along with two other tribal departments, including the Food Pantry and the Tax Department. The Food Pantry is housed in the largest area of the building due to the space needed to serve up to 100-200 people weekly. The Tax Department houses three full-

time employees in a symmetrical office, the same as the Education Department. A new building is part of the Tribe's plan to relocate the Food Pantry program into a more feasible and manageable space for a public food pantry. Once the new Food Pantry program is established (approximately 1 year), the Technology and Learning Center will be reinstated to the management of the Education Department, providing more space to utilize for workshops and setting up technology for public use. The building itself is ADA-compliant. The Education Director recently set up a 5-year contract to begin in July 2024 for continuing Wi-Fi access of up to 500 Mbps, which will be a more secure internet access set up explicitly for the Walker River Tribal Library. The Education Director is working with the IT Specialist for the Tribe and the contracting business, CC Communications, to implement this contract, establish high-speed internet for the library space and IT security, and any software upgrades needed for computers. The Education Department is currently ordering books to populate the library for use, and it will include a quiet reading area, space for workshops, a presentation area, and filing cabinets for additional resources for the college and career pathways goals.

With these ongoing programs and services provided through the Education Department, there is a need to collaborate on a higher level with existing partners and tribal departments and continue to reach out to other entities involved with the Walker River Tribal Library's goals and objectives. This is where the Communal Library Specialist will play a significant role in building a collaborative effort of networking and developing a strategic plan for expanding literacy, college, and career pathways, as well as connecting traditional language preservation and culturally based curriculum. The target population for collaboration within the tribal departments will be the Cultural Department Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), the Senior Center elders for facilitating traditional activities, the Boys and Girls Club Youth Center, which provides after-school activities and supervision of youth from ages 5-18 years of age, the Empowering Community Alliance composed of 10 members and serves as the essential prevention coalition for the Tribe, the Social Services Department to account for data collection, and the TERO department coordinator for workforce development. A few more outside agencies the Communal Library Specialist will collaborate with are the local surrounding libraries, such as the Mineral County public libraries, one located in Hawthorne, NV, and the other at the Schurz Elementary School, the Lyon County public library, and the Churchill County public library. There are two museums within the tri-county area of the reservation boundaries, located in the nearby towns where the Communal Library Specialist can also collaborate efforts for resources and planning workshops. Along with this, we will be developing more life-readiness, critical thinking workshops, and vocational training workshops for the community for the new position to explore and bring forth to the community.

PROJECT WORKPLAN: (In Sequence)

Goal 1: Improve digital services to support needs for education, workforce development, economic and business development, health information, critical thinking skills, and digital literacy skills.

Objective 1.1: Support establishing and refining digital infrastructure, platforms, and technology.

The Walker River Tribal Library Program will seek to establish more collaborative networking efforts and develop a two-year strategic plan for expanding literacy through hosting a virtual series of workshops on digital literacy related to college and career advancement. The Communal Library Specialist will focus on implementing up to 12 workshop sessions (including virtual and in-person) surrounding personal finance management/budgeting, technology-related support for applications such as Microsoft Office, Adobe PDF, internet browsing, resume building, scholarship writing, job search effectiveness, professional email communications, smart phone use, online health portal engagement, and other virtual workshops related to college and career advancement. There is a need to address the lack of technology and communication/networking skills among community members for accurate training and coaching on online resources. Maintaining up to date with technology expansion has never been more imperative for Native communities and individuals who seek higher advancement opportunities. This will transform the Walker River Tribal Library into a well-balanced public resource free of cost.

Goal 2: Improve educational programs related to specific topics and content areas of interest to library patrons and community-based users.

Objective 2.1: Support the identification of the needs and interests of learners.

The Walker River Tribal Library Program will develop a literacy enhancement space of content-related books for college and educational advancement based on the interests of library program attendees to help connect to existing resources at the tribal, state, and national levels. The Education Department is awaiting donations of hard-copied books to be received by the Nevada State Library, Archives, and Public Records. The Communal Library Specialist will continue to develop the list of books to populate the library and gain community interest with direct and indirect feedback from community members. The Specialist will devise a plan to gain interest and create an open-door avenue for patrons to enter the library space for assistance, resources, and guidance on tracking the information needed for their personal and professional endeavors. The Specialist will also network and communicate with outside agencies and the local surrounding libraries, such as the Mineral County public libraries, the Lyon County public library, and the Churchill County public library. Literacy enhancement ideas can include facilitating book clubs, reference searches, job hunting tips, homework help, language/cultural learning of the Great Basin Tribes, storytelling/puppet making, poetry jams, Zine making, and e-books and audiobooks.

Goal 3: Enhance the preservation and revitalization of Native American cultures and languages.

Objective 3.1: Support the development of efficient strategic partnerships within, across, and outside Native communities for immediate preservation efforts.

The Walker River Tribal Library Program will connect traditional language preservation and culturally based curriculum to support the revitalization efforts of the Tribe and its loss of cultural identities. The WRPT has very few (<25) fluent Northern Paiute (Walker River dialect) language speakers and keepers to teach and revitalize the language. An immediate need for preservation efforts for the Paiute language in this specific dialect is greatly needed. While communicating with the Schurz Elementary School and the attendees of the 2024 Indian Education Summit in Nevada, there is a strong desire from educators and students who are seeking a more culturally based curriculum to be taught in schools for both native and non-native

students/teachers. The Communal Library Specialist will collaborate with the existing entities, such as the Cultural Department, Language teachers, elders, and fluent speakers of the Walker River dialect, and develop a plan to best preserve the language digitally for the new age of learners. Learning the traditional language through various onsite and at-your-fingertips activities will provide more community collaboration and identity-seeking connections for youth/families impacted by the effects of the boarding school era.

Other Activities Related to Goals:

The Education Director prioritizes the staff members to be effective in their position and role as not only employees of the Tribe but also as mentors to their peers and participants of their programs. The focus during 2024 (YR 1) will be primarily to provide training opportunities to enhance the Communal Library Specialist and the Education Specialist to improve their qualities as a professional librarian while promoting support as digital specialists to a proficient standard. This includes attending a few major opportune trainings and events hosted on an annual basis, such as the Indian Education Summit (March 2025) through the Nevada Department of Education, the Nevada Library Directors' Summit (May 2025), and the National Indian Education Association conference (Oct. 2024).

With Goal 3: Objective 3.1: The Communal Library Specialist will work on networking with local school districts of Nevada that primarily teach NA students in the classroom and speak with experts (teachers/educators/administrators) about the efforts and outcomes of teaching culturally based curriculum in the class. One potential school to secure a meeting with is the Natchez Elementary School in Wadsworth, NV, to meet with their staff and create more conversations about their culturally based curriculum for K-5th grade students and how to overcome the barriers in the public schools to teach this form of education in schools for all students of all ethnicities. This is a much larger strategic plan that will take several meetings with various experts in the field but also networking with stakeholders at the Nevada Department of Education and the Nevada Indian Commission on their current planning for a native-based curriculum for all students K-12th grade in the state of Nevada. This curriculum development is still in the draft phases; however, it will be vital for a member of the Walker River Paiute Tribe to be involved in the early phases of this plan to support the implementation of NA histories/epistemologies/and cultural contributions in the present day. For this goal, Year 1 will be primarily time for the Communal Library Specialist to travel, network, and create these conversations within the reservation and outside the reservation for schools and programs that have a high population of NA students, participate in the Indian Education Advisory Committee meetings to stay updated on the current issues and mitigation efforts across the state, and then in Year 2, comprise an action step work plan of bringing in more culturally based curriculum into the classrooms where our students attend school.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES: (See more in the attachment *Performance Measurement Plan*)

The Communal Library Specialist and Education Director/Specialist will provide the following evaluation and data collection methods to demonstrate effectiveness, quality, and timeliness:

Statistics (Quantitative): The number of workshops and cultural sharing activities, literacy and educational training, participants in each activity, and populating a 12-month calendar of cultural and educational activities. Data collection will be completed monthly in comparison to timelines set to verify if the target dates or numbers are met.

Pre- and Post-Surveys (Quantitative): Google Forms will be utilized to articulate event and activity details with prompts for attendees to complete before and after events hosted through the Walker River Tribal Library programs. Surveys will address what the attendees received from the activity/event, how it relates to their personal/professional goals, and provide feedback for the Education Department on what to improve. Surveys will be based on a Likert scale.

Interviews (Qualitative): Attendees of events and activities will have the option to participate in a 1:1 interview with the Communal Library Specialist and Education Director/Specialist to help identify more ideas and avenues explicitly related to individuals based on their path to college or career advancement. Questions will be open-ended and create more dialogue between the participants and the Education Department staff for constructive feedback and information regarding individual/family components of the services provided.

Focus Groups (Qualitative): Hosting 2-3 large focus groups each year during significant events will help bring individual perspectives to group feedback and information for the services provided. This will help accumulate information from an individual to a group/community basis that will enhance various perspectives, identify common barriers and challenges, and devise solutions to how the Education Department can better serve the community.

PROJECT RESULTS:

The Walker River Tribal Library Program is addressing various goals throughout this proposal, including the following:

- ✓ Employment Opportunities (Including the Communal Library Specialist and facilitators/contractors for workshops)
- ✓ Establishing a centralized hub of information/resources for specialized sources promoting college and career advancement
- ✓ Developing a space where highly valued information for preserving tribal cultures are collected and stored for dissemination to the general public
- ✓ Providing a safe community space for public use
- ✓ Creating access to technology, including free high-speed Wi-Fi access, access to free workshops, access to free connections on virtual and in-person sessions
- ✓ Enhancing children's reading skills through attainable reading material and group activities related to cultural ties
- ✓ Providing more social interaction skills in the community
- ✓ Promoting literacy development
- ✓ Supporting more networking collaborations among tribal, local, state, and national departments
- ✓ Establishing hands-on activities (SEL learning)
- ✓ Providing more mentors and role models known and recognizable in the community
- ✓ Providing more technical assistance with technological advancement
- ✓ Creating book archives and cultural archives
- ✓ Planning Ahead: Strategic planning for implementing a more culturally based curriculum into the schools of Nevada

The Walker River Tribal Library will be an integral part of the Walker River Paiute Tribe community based on the operations and services provided in this proposal. The library's foundation is meeting people where they are, and currently, this is how the Education Department is meeting the needs of its existing students in our programs and services. The staff is aware of the barriers of living in a rural community for individuals/families and students. We also recognize the advancement of technology in the outside realms, which are constantly adapting at rapid rates. Without access to several components where this proposal has identified its goals and objectives, our community will remain in a delayed learning and advancement state, such as when the pandemic impacted the Tribe. The basic elements of a library establishment serve multiple needs and have room for self-improvement. The performance measures will help the Education Department identify the community values and how we can bridge this gap of accessibility.

The Education Department's long-term plan of the Walker River Tribal Library Program is to incorporate sustainability planning at the earliest phases of strategic plans. Maintaining free services to the public is critical because it builds community bonds while ensuring the community that this will be a long-lasting service. Keeping up to date with technological advancement is also an important component when developing strategic plans. The Education Department realizes that we cannot become sustainable if we only focus on what our people need now, but these activities and events will transform in the future. Beginning with the fundamental start-up phases and involving community input is also another critical component of being a sustainable program. The community will have a greater sense of responsibility to take care of the library space if they are part of the planning processes. Communicating with other stakeholders and library establishments for support is another strategy for having ongoing sustainability. Digitizing materials will provide long-term sustainability for the community to preserve the language and cultural components of Tribes. Eventually, we may develop a designated space, such as a bookstore, to sell items and collect revenue that will be invested back into support for more students and individuals. The opportunities are wide open, and we are ready to make this commitment to the community.



Walker River Tribal Library Program

2024-2025 Schedule of Completion

PROCESS	QUARTER 1			QUARTER 2			QUARTER 3			QUARTER 4		
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Capacity & Planning: Develop 12-month calendar of workshop events geared towards college and career pathways, and cultural implementation. Hire & train Communal Library Specialist.	*ED/ES											
Development: Begin populating library for learning and training workshops. Develop outreach activities and opening event of improved library space. Order in supplies, bookshelves, furniture and electronics needed.	*CLS/ED/ES											
Networking/Collaboration: Connect with tribal departments, local public libraries, schools, and other organizations to provide more locally sourced resources.			*CLS									
Strategy: Develop data collection techniques, pre- and post-surveys to evaluate ongoing events/activities. Develop interviews/focus group strategy planning. Solidify facilitators/consultants.			*CLS/ED/ES									
Execution: Begin the year with monthly educational/cultural trainings/workshops. Execute 1st interview sessions and large focus group event for feedback and evaluation.							*CLS					
Monitoring: Begin tracking participation activity and delivery of workshops/trainings. Attend trainings Library Directors Summit. Evaluate ongoing trainings and strategize new focus areas as the events begin to develop.							*CLS/ED					
Reporting: Conduct monthly and quarterly reporting by Communal Library Specialist for Education Staff, Board of Education, and Tribal Departments/Leadership.							*CLS/ED					

*Quarterly Reports Due
 *CLS - Communal Library Specialist
 *ED - Education Director
 *ES - Education Specialist





Walker River Tribal Library Program

2025-2026 Schedule of Completion

PROCESS

QUARTER 1 QUARTER 2 QUARTER 3 QUARTER 4

Sept Oct Nov | Dec Jan Feb | Mar Apr May | Jun Jul Aug

Capacity & Planning: Develop new 12-month calendar for Yr. 2 of workshop events geared towards college and career pathways, and cultural implementation. Execute 2nd interview sessions and focus groups for evaluation.	*CLS/ED/ES											
Development: Develop annual report of progress for library programs. Address any major challenges or barriers identified from previous evaluation surveys. Develop solutions for all issues arisen from evaluations.	*CLS/ED											
Networking/Collaboration: Continue to network and collaborate with all related tribal departments, leadership, public libraries, and other stakeholders as needed to improve strategies and approaches.	*CLS											
Execution: Continue to execute monthly educational/cultural trainings/workshops. Work on existing challenges/barriers and continue to improve and populate existing library space.	*CLS											
Monitoring: Continue tracking participation activities and delivery of workshops/trainings. Attend trainings Library Directors Summit. Evaluate ongoing trainings and strategize new focus areas as the events begin to develop.	*CLS/ED/ES											
Reporting: Conduct monthly and quarterly reporting by Communal Library Specialist for Education Staff, Board of Education, and Tribal Departments/Leadership.	*CLS/ED											
Final Reports: Develop final reports ready implemented for the IMLS grant program and for the Tribal Council, and community for proper presentation and evaluation methods.	*CLS/ED											

- *Quarterly Reports Due
- *CLS - Communal Library Specialist
- *ED - Education Director
- *ES - Education Specialist

