

**Miami Tribe of Oklahoma**  
**Library/Archives**  
**"Libraries: Lost and Found" Project Abstract**

The Miami Tribe of Oklahoma is seeking funds to improve library/archives services to two overlapping groups: the Miami members living nationwide, and all Native people served by the northeast Oklahoma tribal libraries. First, the Miami tribal members will be served by beginning an oral history project, taping elders for the edification of future generations. An African saying says it best, "Every time an elder passes, a library is lost." In years past, the interviews found of Miami tribal members, most conducted by outsiders, have focused on cultural topics, such as language, or stories. Thus these interviews become a testimony of "libraries lost", due to unnatural outside forces such as diseases like cholera or the removals. The proposed oral history interviews will build on the limited information gained from those interviews, by broadening the topics, to include political forces/issues which impacted the Miami Tribe, both internally and externally, as well as all the Nations living within the area, such as the boarding schools. Therefore, members of all tribes will be interviewed. The nine Nations that now reside in Ottawa County have a long history of working together, to better survive politically and have a greater impact. Much of the last one hundred years have been spent dealing with broad, complex political issues, which they faced together. The story of how they endured needs to be documented. Due to the participants' age, this knowledge will be lost to present and future generations, if it's not recorded now.

Second, library services will be strengthened for the CHARLIE Library Network, by conducting a complete inventory of the catalogs maintained by this Network. [The CHARLIE Library Network, which stands for Connecting Help and Resources Linking Indians Effectively, was established in 1995 to better coordinate library services among the small, disparate tribes in northeast Oklahoma.] These performance measures need to be implemented to maintain quality control, as it has not been done, since the Network began. Here too, "lost libraries" will be found. The grant will also permit this catalog to be upgraded to a new software product, enabling each collection to remain in a separate database, yet searchable from a unified webpage. This change will mean that each library will be able to update and maintain their own catalog, as they are enabled to take on that responsibility. This positive sign reflects the growth among some of the CHARLIE site libraries. Additional mentoring, professional cataloging, and one-on-one training will also be available from the traveling CHARLIE Librarian, if requested.

Finally, library materials will be purchased for all sites. The Miami Tribal Library and the satellite library at the Longhouse will add 116 titles, and the other six CHARLIE sites will add 84 titles.

Thus at the end of the two years of funding, the anticipated results would include (1) 25 oral histories completed of tribal elders living in the BIA Miami Agency area, (2) a completed inventory of current holdings (about 34,221 records) of all eight CHARLIE Library Network libraries, (3) an upgraded CHARLIE catalog, searchable from a common Internet portal, (4) professional librarian services available to all sites, with approximately 1000 hours spent on CHARLIE responsibilities; plus (5) a total of 200 library materials purchased during the two years.

**MIAMI TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA  
ENHANCEMENT GRANT**

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## Statement of Need

### Description of Community

The Miami Nation Library/Archives is located in Miami, Ottawa County, Oklahoma with a satellite library ten miles away at the Miami Tribal Longhouse. The Miami Tribal Library/Archives serves all Native Americans in this area, as well as their own 3,308 Miami Tribal members. Eight other tribes have tribal offices within twenty miles. These include: the Seneca-Cayuga, Peoria, Quapaw, Wyandotte, Eastern Shawnee, Shawnee [formerly known as the Loyal Shawnee], Modoc, and Ottawa of Oklahoma. [See Attachment A, pg. 40, for map. Please note, the map was prepared prior to the Shawnee receiving their federal recognition.] According to the 2000 Federal Census, there are 5,477 Native Americans living in Ottawa County, but the total population nationwide for the above tribes are estimated at 12,000 plus.

While the Miami Tribe has a Title VI nutrition site that feeds members of all tribes, 55 years and over, in a consortium with the Ottawa and Peoria Tribes, the majority of those served belong to the nine tribes listed above as well as the Cherokee. Since this facility and the library/archives are in the same building, these programs share users. [From April, 05-March, 06, they served 89,982 meals, to 712 unduplicated clients. The library's records for the latest completed year, (October, 04-September, 05) show 6,405 patrons served, with 742 unduplicated.] Because of this proximity, over 85% of the library/archives patrons are 55 and over, with limited incomes.

The Miami Tribal Library began with Title IV Basic Library Grant funds from the U. S. Department of Education in 1987 in a consortium with the Ottawa Tribe, and later the Peoria Tribe. Begun primarily as a recreational library for these Title VI elders, the library/archives program now serves all ages. The archives component was added in FY-93, after a National Archives NHPRC grant established an archives and records management program. Sustainable growth allowed the Ottawa and Peoria Tribes to establish their own libraries and independently receive Basic Library Grants from the U. S. Department of Education, like the rest of the northeast Oklahoma tribes. The Wyandotte Tribe also received a Special Projects Grant. This resulted in separate library collections.

A local library network was established for the Miami, Modoc, Ottawa, Eastern Shawnee, Quapaw, and Seneca-Cayuga Tribes, funded by a Special Projects Grant, called the CHARLIE Library Network (for Connecting Help and Resources Linking Indians Effectively) and initially supported by grants, each tribe received equipment, computer software, Internet access, and training, resulting in an online library catalog, using the Librarian's Helper software. Later, this software was replaced with a Winnebago Spectrum automated circulation/cataloging system, and the resulting catalog put on the Internet. [See [www.myaamia.org/](http://www.myaamia.org/).] A 'circuit-rider' librarian, from the Miami Tribal Library, rotated to the smaller libraries, cataloging the books and adding them to the catalog database. Later, the Peoria Tribal Library and Miami Tribal Longhouse, satellite library location, were both added to the network. (The invitation remains open for the Wyandotte Tribe to join. A ninth Nation, the Shawnee recognized in 2001, now currently completing a new tribal office in Miami have also been extended an invitation.)

## Current Status of the Library/Archives and the CHARLIE Network, including Baseline Data to Measure Outcomes at Project Completion

For years, the Miami Nation developed many services to benefit the NE Oklahoma tribal community as a whole. Services have become more focused since receiving an ANA Language grant in 1995, which sparked renewed interest in the culture and history. The Cultural Preservation Office which began in 2000, became a separate department by 2004. In the reorganization, the archives begun by the Library, was placed under the Cultural Preservation Office. In late 2005, a new fireproof "state of the art" archives with separate climate control, and thumbprint security was built to house the Myaamia Heritage Collection (the Miami materials). There are approximately 40 oral histories in this collection, which were collected earlier by others. These will be closely reviewed for this project, so duplication of subjects/topics won't occur. As the materials are moved back into the new archives wing, any materials such as the bound set of Draper Manuscripts, which are not considered culturally significant to the Miami Nation by the Cultural Preservation Office, will be housed in a separate Inter-Tribal archives room, under the care of the Miami Tribal Library. Following this natural progression, gaming funds and other tribal funds that were expected to support the library have been directed to the new Myaamia Heritage Museum and Archives.

Support for the Miami Tribal Library and its Archives does remain strong among the Miami tribal members, as well as members of other tribes' in the area. Recognizing the need for stable funding, a "friends of the library" was formed in 1999, called the Myaamia Institute. It now has 169 members, many of whom are Miami tribal members nationwide. From this group of supporters, and following the death of a treasured elder, the Paul Thomas Watson Library Endowment Fund was begun in 2005.

Meanwhile, on February 23, 2006, the Library/Archives Advisory Board reaffirmed the following six needs faced by the Miami tribal community as program emphases: **library services, education, history preservation and cultural identity, community partners, health, and information.** [See pgs. 00-00, for a complete copy of the Long Range Plan.]

The CHARLIE Library Network policies' remain the same as 1995. Each tribe still retains ownership of their materials and determines user policies; but with the catalog on the Internet, patrons on site or virtual ones can benefit from access to what each Tribe has. Researchers can determine if an onsite visit is warranted even in the event that materials are reference. Each library is different and has matured at its own rate, depending on the level of tribal support from within that tribe, both financially and politically. When the Network first began, the Miami had the largest library in physical space, until the Eastern Shawnee library expanded in 2004. The Modoc and Ottawa have expanded as well. The Miami Tribe have issued 2,406 patron cards, but that number includes only those registered to check out materials, not those that may receive reference services or free copies. As each tribal library grows, the need for CHARLIE coordination continues, even as the type of services needed changes. It's tribal sovereignty at its best to see a Native Nation reclaim ownership of a component of its infrastructure previously administered by the dominant society, such as library services. As tribal libraries succeed, each learn from the other. One of the greatest compliments is when one tribal librarian visits another, sees something good and says, "*this* is exactly what we need to do." By working together, "everyone wins".

The Network goes dormant when grants aren't received as no single tribe can sustain it alone financially. Then by necessity, each library shifts into "crisis" mode, focusing on its own survival, trying simply to minimize funding cuts. Over half of the librarians wear "many hats" in order to keep their jobs. One tribe

has their tribal planner responsible for their library. In another, the Librarian is also responsible for the HUD, HIP, Title VI nutrition programs, and runs background checks on the gaming employees. In 2004, the local tribal community raised over \$3,000 in bake sales, craft sales, raffles, and other donations to support the CHARLIE Library Network when a drastic cut in tribal funds threatened to totally derail services. But even with heroic efforts such as this, the smaller libraries, in particular, do not have the staffing to handle time consuming library tasks, such as inventory for example, without outside help.

In the past, the CHARLIE Library Network catalog was maintained as one unified catalog, housed on a server at the Miami Tribal Library. [There are 17,000+ records in this database, which does not include the 10,500 records of the Eastern Shawnee. Together the CHARLIE sites say, they have 34,221 titles.] Attempts to add records from the Eastern Shawnee to the catalog have proven problematic for a wide variety of reasons. Sometimes the reasons are geographic, because the Eastern Shawnee have a Missouri address. Then it was discovered that satellite service was not available to the Miami Tribal Complex, because of its location. Later, it was discovered that the telephone poles here were too short for the extra lines. Finding software that would allow each Tribe to house their collection on their respective servers, yet import/export by a batch process the data to update the respective catalogs was flawed as long as a unified catalog was the goal. (The proposed software will allow separate catalogs to be maintained, but accessed through a common web portal.) Meanwhile, the Eastern Shawnee Librarian has completely redone her entire catalog twice, adding more detail. The other major flaw in the unified catalog is that it requires the Miami to have staff/time to continue to maintain the catalog for all sites forever. While the desire and willingness to help as needed is still there, it isn't realistic as the whole point is to strengthen each of the CHARLIE tribal libraries, helping them to grow independently. This software is needed that can solve the current problems, and handle future growth. [See Attachment B, for InfoCentre documentation, pg. 41-42.)

#### What Needs will be met by the Goals of This Project and How Those Needs were Determined.

This proposal will directly impact four of the six needs as approved by the Library/Archives Advisory Board in the Long-Range Plan: library services, education, historic preservation and cultural identity, and community partners. Knowledge gleaned from working in this tribal community since 1989 aided Karen Alexander, Director of the Miami Tribal Library in an analysis of the community, to determine the voids of knowledge/services, and the strengths and weaknesses of the Library, as well as to pinpoint areas for potential growth and future partners. Tribal administration and tribal staff were consulted, as were the Library/Archives Advisory Board.

Two project needs were identified to recover that which is being lost. Lost tribal knowledge will be recovered in conducting the interviews, and lost items in each library will be retrieved in carrying out the inventory. The interviews will be primarily for historic preservation and cultural identity, but with strong educational purposes as well. The Miami Tribal Library regularly uses community partners, often outsiders, to extend its resources; but the CHARLIE Library Network was born internally from within by the librarians as an act of empowerment. The idea was patterned after the area Community Health Representatives, which are funded by the Indian Health Services. The inventory and the software upgrade that will follow are foundational elements for the Network to function cohesively. The third need involves the purchase of library materials for all sites to maintain the quality of service and resources expected by the patrons.