HEARING OUR STORIES AND BUILDING OUR WORLD

ABSTRACT

HEARING OUR STORIES AND BUILDING OUR WORLD is a two-year project that will develop new programs for library storytimes, increase visits to the Tribal Early Childhood Center, expand readings in Tribal tutoring sessions for K-3 children, and provide outreach programming to other Pueblos.

Community surveys and interviews with community stakeholders (including parents, tutors, day care teachers, and staff of the Tribal Education Department) reaffirm the need to instill a love of reading and learning in children, beginning from infancy and continuing through elementary school. Children who are read to are more likely to want to read themselves, and children who like to read are more likely to become enthusiastic learners.

The HEARING OUR STORIES project will use the Every Child Ready to Read Program, with its six defined pre-reading skills, as a resource for developing new storytimes and programs in the Library. Outreach will be provided both within and outside the Pueblo to include workshops for parents and caregivers at other Tribal Libraries. Having been presented by staff from Pojoaque at Tribal Libraries in Santa Domingo, Nambe, Laguna, Ohkay Owingeh, and Sandia, the one-hour workshops will continue to be offered as requested by Tribal Libraries. Finally, the project will focus on the sustainability of the Every Child Ready to Read Program by offering instructional materials and assistance to Tribal Libraries to develop their own workshops.

These presentations are intended to reach parents and caregivers and to encourage them to read to their children. The storytimes presented directly by the Pojoaque Youth Services Librarian to the children in the Pojoaque Library, Early Childhood Center, and tutoring sessions ensure that stories including vocabulary, rhymes, and narrative styles are being heard and that book formats including cover, title page, reading right to left, and printed letters are being introduced in a positive way. The long-term outcome of the project to raise skilled readers who finish school begins with the storytimes presented to the youngest Tribal children today.

Reading and writing are essential to school success, and children are getting ready to read and write from infancy. The HEARING OUR STORIES project builds pre-literacy skills in pre-school age groups, continues to encourage young readers as they enter school, and creates young students with the positive attitudes about learning that lead to success in school.
Introduction and Assessment of Need

This proposal is submitted by the Pueblo of Pojoaque Public Library. The Pueblo is located in the Upper Rio Grande Region of New Mexico at the juncture of Hwy 84-285 and Hwy 502 to Los Alamos. Within a 70-mile radius of Pojoaque, there are seven additional Native American Pueblos with a combined population of more than 30,000. These Pueblos include Nambe, Picuris, San Ildefonso, Ohkay Owingeh (San Juan), Santa Clara, Taos and Tesuque, with members that use the Pojoaque Pueblo Library. Highway 84/285 is the northern corridor to the eight northern Pueblos and home to northern New Mexico’s agriculture community. It is an economically depressed rural area 15 miles north of the city of Santa Fe at an altitude of 5,500 feet.

Census 2000 figures indicate 2,700 people living within the boundaries of the Pueblo of Pojoaque, of whom 500 are Native American. Persons below poverty level for the Pojoaque Pueblo are dramatically higher than for Santa Fe County, the State of New Mexico and the Nation. Tribal members for Pojoaque Pueblo are 86.2% below poverty, Santa Fe County is 11.9%, New Mexico is 18.7% and the nation is 13.3%.

Approximately 49% of the population of the Pueblo is under the age of 18, with eighteen tribal members enrolled in college or advanced education. The Pueblo has a 100% employment policy and will provide a job for any Tribal member who wants to work, but many of the positions that are open require skills, training, or educational background beyond the levels of Tribal members. Funds are provided for anyone wanting to attend a four-year college degree program, but many Tribal students spend the first year in remedial math, reading, and writing classes, and either become discouraged and leave school or deplete funds before finishing their degrees. While this project will be open to members of the Eight Northern Pueblos as well as any tribal or non-tribal residents in the Pojoaque Valley, the target audience will be the Pueblo of Pojoaque Tribal Parents, child caregivers, and members from birth through the age of 17.

The project will be administered by the Pueblo of Pojoaque Public Library. The library is located on an access road off NM 285 in a building that also houses the Boys and Girls Club and a large, modern Wellness Center, open to the public. When the library was established 10 years ago, it occupied a one-room space in the present Early Childhood Center. The Library moved to its present 2300 square foot location in 2001. The library seats 24 and houses 13,000 items including books, books on tape, videos, and DVDs. There are four newspaper and 10 periodical subscriptions. Book sections include adult and children’s fiction and non-fiction, children’s board and picture books, “Book Talk Recommendations,” books for the College Bound, Graphic Novels, and a Books/Movies area where books, DVDs and videos with the same titles shelved together. The State Library funds online access to the Thomson Gale Infotrac databases as well as an Interlibrary Loan service. Ten public computers with high speed Internet access are available.

Cataloging of the library collection was completed in summer of 2006, and automated checkout began in September of 2006. The hours are 9 am to 7 pm Monday through Thursday, 9 am to 5 pm on Friday, and 10 am to 4 pm on Saturdays. Patron registration has doubled in the past two years, with annual items circulated increasing from 2,854 to 9,448 in 2008 (see Library Statistics attachment: Supportingdoc1.pdf).

The library employs one full time professional librarian who also serves as the Director and two full-time library assistants, one serving in circulation, the other in a combination of technical services, circulation, and clerical support, plus one part-time employee who works on Saturdays. A Children’s Librarian Consultant is available on an as-needed basis. The Library Director reports to the Director of Education who in turn reports
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to the Lieutenant Governor of the Pueblo. A full-time professional Youth Services Librarian position is funded through an IMLS Enhancement Grant until September 30, 2009.

A survey (see Assessment Form attachment: SupportingDoc2) was conducted in the library during January and February 2009 to assess patron use, value of existing programs, and need for new programs. The two programs rated with highest value were the library storytimes and special programs during summer, both centered on the Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) Program. These results were an improvement from a survey of January 2007, indicating that establishing programming for children was the greatest need in the community. One comment from a Tribal member on the 2009 survey is "I think it is great that they go to the daycare and read to the children and everything they do is good."

The ECRR program, including both storytimes and workshops for parent/caregivers, initially was implemented because it addressed the need for programming for pre-school children to improve their school readiness and to involve parent/caregivers in the learning process, both concerns expressed by the staff of the Education Department. It was developed and introduced during the first year of the current Enhancement Grant, and during its second year it has been embraced by the community. The Youth Services Librarian has developed working relationships with the staff of the Early Childhood Center, tutors from the Education Department, and parents and children alike. As a result of his successful storytimes and interactions within the community, additional programs are being requested, and new ideas, including a storytime during tutoring sessions have been implemented, all to increase interest in reading and learning, leading to success in school.

Interviews with community stakeholders including parents, Early Childhood Center teachers, and staff of the Education Department were conducted throughout the spring of 2009. Lenore Lopez, an Early Childhood Center teacher who attended an ECRR workshop last fall, said that she applies all the pre-reading skills discussed, especially Phonological Awareness because of its importance in learning to read. "You cannot believe the difference in the young children. They have learned what a book is, to focus, and to enjoy being read to. Some of my four-year-olds are learning to spell. The parents have noticed and ask about the ECRR program because they have seen how successful it is. The children look forward to Adam's (Adam Becker, the Youth Services Librarian) programs at the Center because they are a surprise and bring in the outside world. Their visits to the library storytimes have shown them that they are welcome there, and they enjoy going."

Helen Trujillo, manager of the tutoring program for Tribal children said, "I appreciate that Adam selects books that are slightly above the reading level of the children, then stops to discuss and define the new vocabulary, and I've heard them use the words later in their own conversations. They have begun to enjoy books, and they gravitate to the book section and read to themselves or to each other when they finish their homework." Cristal Suazo, Assistant Director of the Education Department related that "members from other Pueblos have discussed the Pojoaque Every Child Ready to Read programs at our Higher Education meetings. It has set a new standard for reaching pre-school children and their parents." During the one-hour workshops, we ask attendees if they remember a particular children's book that was special to them. Too frequently, the parent/guardians say that that they do not remember any books that were read to them as children. One parent replied, "I did not have a special book, but I am going to be sure that my children will have one." She and her family have become avid library users.

With the new HEARING OUR STORIES project, more direct reading opportunities in the community for pre-school children will be explored and year-long reading encouragement will be expanded from pre-school age to
beginning readers in first and second grade. The project will encourage young readers to have positive attitudes about books and learning to prepare them for success in school. Also, with the new project, library staff will continue the one-hour ECRR workshops in the library as well as presenting them in other Tribal Libraries. During the first year of the current Enhancement Grant, the workshops were developed and introduced to the Tribal Libraries, with requests for them increasing during the second year. During the next two-years of the HEARING OUR STORIES project, outreach will continue to Tribal Libraries not yet reached, and requests for repeat visits will be provided once a “demo” presentation. For sustainability, Tribal Libraries will be encouraged to begin their own workshops with instructions and packets to be developed by the Pojoaque staff.

**Project Goals and Objectives**

This project addresses identified community needs and upholds the Mission Statement of the Pueblo of Pojoaque Public Library that “Special emphasis is placed on supporting students at all academic levels and stimulating young children’s interest in and appreciation of reading.” The goals are to raise skilled readers and enthusiastic learners and ultimately to reduce dropout rates. It will focus on three objectives over a two-year period: A) to expand library and outreach programs emphasizing pre-literacy for pre-school children and their families, B) to develop and implement reading programs throughout the year for school age children, and C) to build the library collection with materials that emphasize pre-reading skills and promote pre-literacy, as well as adding high interest materials for ages 6-7 and 7-8, the first two age groups to graduate from the Every Child Ready to Read Program in the library.

**OBJECTIVE A) to expand library and outreach programs emphasizing pre-literacy for pre-school children and their families.** The Every Child Ready to Read program defines six pre-reading skills that can be taught to pre-school children to help prepare them to read and to become enthusiastic learners in school. Teaching and demonstrating these six skills: **print motivation, phonetic awareness, vocabulary, letter knowledge, print awareness, and narrative skills** to parents and children is the first step in the project. Seeing parents and caregivers use this knowledge to interact with their children in a positive atmosphere is a component of Goal A. The long term project goal is to see improvement in school performances and a reduction in the dropout rates as a result of being taught to be enthusiastic about reading and learning from a very young age. Storytimes in the library for pre-school children were an immediate success when introduced a year ago, with a consistent attendance building to the current average of 25 children and adults per session. While a storyline notebook to record programs has been maintained, there is a continuing need to develop new quality programs and handouts based on the Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) program, as many of the attendees return each week...

As a result of training in one of the all-day workshops presented by a national trainer last fall, staff of the Tribal Early Childhood Center realized the importance of reading to the youngest children and requested that the Youth Services Librarian expand his storytimes in the Tribal Early Childhood Center to two groups: babies (newborn to 2 years of age) and toddlers (ages 2-3), while they bring pre-school (ages 4-5) to library storytimes to gain experience with the facility. Also from the training, The Pojoaque Library Director and the Youth Services Librarian developed one-hour workshops for parents and caregivers to be presented monthly in the Pojoaque Library, and offered to present them as outreach for parent/caregiver groups at any of the Tribal Libraries and Tribal Head Start facilities. The ECRR Workshops have been presented in Santo Domingo, Nambe, Sandia, Ohkay Owingeh, Laguna, and Santa Clara with more presentations and repeat visits on the schedule through the current grant. The new project will allow the staff to continue to provide these workshops, especially to sites not yet visited. For sustainability, we will add an instruction packet and brief training session for Tribal Librarians at each presentation to help them prepare their own future workshops, as we change the
workshops to “demos” for their communities rather than being available from the Pojoaque staff on an ongoing basis. We also will assist them in their own program development in an advisory position.

Project Design and Required Resources

**Activity 1: Every Child Ready to Read-based storytimes in the Library**

Based on pre-reading skills recommended by the Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) program, the storytimes designed and presented by Youth Services Librarian (YSL) Adam Becker are made possible through our current Enhancement grant, which also provided three national ECRR training workshops presented in Pojoaque and open to staff of all New Mexico Tribal Libraries. Since the YSL began the storytimes in January, 2008, he has gained experience with the children and parents who attend the weekly programs in the library. The YSL will continue to plan customized presentations and reading tips take-home handouts for adults. The programs presented on Wednesday mornings have been popular and well-attended since the first program to date. The YSL not only has retained the original group, but continues to add more children and caregivers. Each storytime is based on materials recommended by the ECRR program and its trainers. New materials and activities based on their effectiveness of conveying pre-reading skills are continuously being added to the collection and programs by the Youth Services Librarian. The storytimes include brief sidebars to the parent/caregivers that describe the skill being illustrated and that encourage further reinforcement of the skill at home through selected titles listed on the handout. These programs require knowledge of the ECRR program, library materials and the audience. The project being requested will allow the continuation of these custom programs for pre-school children and their parents beyond the current grant expiration date of September 30, 2009. Prior to the addition of the YSL through the current Enhancement Grant, no staff member was available to prepare or present these programs or to provide programming for pre-school children.

**Outcome:** 1) Storytime programs will maintain or increase average of 25 per session. 2) Books recommended by the YSL in his handouts and other titles from the ECRR section will have high circulation numbers within collection

**Form of evaluation:** 1) Number of attended programs presented 2) Behavioral change reflected in attendance numbers at library programs 3) Number of ECRR books in circulation at checked intervals.

**Activity 2: Visiting the Pueblo of Pojoaque Early Childhood Center to present Every Child Ready to Read storytimes and activities for the baby group (under 2 years of age) and the toddler group (2-3 years of age)**

The Youth Services Librarian (YSL) began presenting stories to the 2-3 and 4-5 age groups at the Early Childhood Center (ECC) in April of 2008. The YSL added the baby group at the Center once a week in November, 2008, as a result of a recommendation from one of the teachers who attended an all-day national trainer’s workshop in the library. The national presenter explained research findings that babies could benefit from storytimes and her demonstrated techniques convinced the teacher that storytime presentations by the Youth Services Librarian would be very desirable for the baby group in the Center. Each group is presented age-appropriate materials and activities, all based on ECRR principles with an accompanying Tewa-speaking staff member to help inject Native words and songs in the programs.

The ECC storytimes have been so successful that Adam has been asked to come at least a second day each week. We would like to continue the valuable storytimes presented directly to Tribal children, as we know that they will be read to even if their parents do not read or interact with ECRR activities at home. Quarterly, a free book (provided through the current grant) that was introduced in one of the storytimes is sent home with each child to keep. We will continue to send home selected books and to offer one-hour workshops for the teachers at the ECC after the current grant expires. Taking the storytimes to the ECC is essential, as transporting all the
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age groups to the library is not feasible for the ECC staff. Currently, the 4-5 year olds come to the library for the storytime experience in that environment with children from the whole community. Prior to the current Enhancement Grant, no staff was available to develop and present these programs. Gradually through the last one and a half years, requests for storytimes have built to the present level; we will allow the programs to evolve and to expand to their full potential through the next two years at the Early Childhood Center, as well as exploring more sites on the Pueblo where storytimes could be presented.

**Outcome:** 1) Approximately 35 Tribal children, newborns through 5 year olds, will absorb the six pre-reading skills through songs, rhymes, and stories on a regular basis 2) 35 Tribal children also will be able to learn at home with the books provided to them 3) the library and library staff will become familiar to them at a young age

**Form of evaluation:** 1) Number of attended programs presented 2) number of visits made by children and families as a result of ECC storytimes.

**Activity 3: Presenting one-hour Every Child Ready to Read Workshops for Parents and Caregivers**

From training received from the current Enhancement Grant-sponsored workshops, the Youth Services Librarian (YSL) and the Library Director designed and currently are presenting custom workshops for parent/caregivers in the Pojoaque community. These workshops encourage the role of parent/caregivers as readers to their children as well as provide tips, techniques, and titles that will make the process fun for the whole family and provide attendees with folders with pertinent handouts, a colorful book bag with symbols for the six pre-reading skills, and a free child’s book to take home. We currently offer these workshops as outreach as requested by Tribal Libraries, having done eight presentations at six Pueblos, with more scheduled.

New funding (including mileage) will allow the program to continue at Tribal Libraries, especially those not yet reached, but also will allow the Pojoaque presenters to prepare an extra instructional element for the Tribal Librarians to help them develop their own workshops. We will continue to present the specialized workshops as “demos” with priority given to sites not yet visited, and to assist the other Tribal Libraries requesting repeat visits to develop their own presentations. Two Pueblo Libraries included implementation of the Every Child Ready to Read children’s programs in their Enhancement Grant applications of last year, but none have prepared their own parent/caregiver workshops for their communities. With new grant funding, we will continue the important task of reaching pre-school children in other Tribal communities, but develop an instructional package including a script, master handouts for copying and order instructions for audio visual materials for Tribal Librarians to help them present their own workshops. Without funding, we will be unable to reach beyond the Pueblo of Pojoaque Library to do presentations in community offices, Day Care Centers, or other Pueblos beyond our current grant date of September 30, 2009.

**Outcome:** 1) Monthly programs will be offered for nine months of each project year with projected attendance to be at least 45 at library programs the first year and at least 60 participants the second year both at library and at outreach venues, and 2) At least 75% of the participants of all programs will indicate that their knowledge of pre-reading skills improved.

**Form of evaluation:** 1) Number of attended programs presented 2) Number in attendance 3) Knowledge assessment from pre/post tests 4) Number of ECRR programs and materials added to other Tribal Libraries 5) Number of workshops begun in other Tribal communities.
OBJECTIVE B) to develop and implement reading incentive programs for school age children

Project Design and Required Resources

Activity 4: Providing an engaging Summer Reading Program
Statistics comparing Summer Reading Programs from 2006-2008 (see Statistics Report in attachments) display the huge impact of having a Youth Services Librarian (YSL) interact with young readers and to plan fun, educational programming during summer. In 2007, 81 children registered and read 503 books; in 2008, 108 children registered and read 736 books. The importance of the YSL in listening to reading reports, then encouraging and praising, handing out theme-related prizes, recording books read, and awarding grand prizes at the end cannot be understated. With the take-home craft bags and the "Create a Bug" contest in the 2008 "Catch the Reading Bug" theme, statistics increased from 92 in attendance of 4 programs in 2007 to 495 in attendance of 22 programs in 2008. Summer has proven the best time to reach school-age children as well as continuing storytimes and activities for pre-schoolers. The Summer Program is an opportunity to emphasize the "fun" of reading concept from the Every Child Ready to Read program with the coveted theme-related prizes and the reading competition with an equal chance for all who finish the program to enter a drawing for grand prizes. Special invitations are issued to the neighboring Boys and Girls Club to attend a variety of programs during the summer and to offer a quiet reading hour for those who wish to read in the library and compete for the grand prizes. No regular staff member is available to directly interact with the children and to read their reports, nor is there a staff member available for planning and presenting summer programming.

Outcome: The number of children registered and number of books read will increase 20% from baseline figures of 2009

Form of evaluation: The total number of children who complete the summer reading program in 2009 will be used as the baseline for comparing change in behavior in the community and positive response to the program.

Activity 5: Presenting storytimes during after-school tutoring sessions held in the Senior Center
The popularity of chapter-reading storytimes for ages 6-12 during the summer reading program led to a request by tutors of Tribal children that the stories be continued during after-school tutoring sessions. Currently, the storytimes are presented once a week; we will expand the sessions to twice weekly and continue to interact with the children in tutoring in a positive manner to encourage reading outside of school. At their conclusion, copies of books read will be given to all participants to encourage reading on their own or reading to younger children, or for the younger children to take home to be read to. The requested project will provide books and staff to develop additional reading programs for school age children, including a Pojoaque Reading Club for Children which will continue from the school year into the summer through the next two years.

Outcome: 1) A new book club for children will be established. 2) The total number of children read to through storytime programs will increase by 20% from the 2009 baseline.

Form of evaluation: 1) Attendance numbers at summer storytimes for school age children will reflect a positive reaction to being read to during the year. 2) Circulation of beginning reading books and non-fiction for children will increase 20% from baseline of summer 2009.
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OBJECTIVE C) to build the library collection with materials that emphasize pre-reading skills and promote pre-literacy, as well as adding high interest materials for ages 6-7 and 7-8, the first two age groups to graduate from the Every Child Ready to Read Program in the library.

Project Design and Required Resources

Activity 6: Collection Building
While the current Enhancement Grant has provided a basic collection of Every Child Ready to Read books, we will continue to add new books that emphasis ECRR pre-reading skills and to replace worn ones. To have exciting books that school age children and teens want to read for the Summer Reading Program, we will add new high-interest books for children and young adults. To fulfill our long term goal of raising readers from pre-school as they enter school, we will evaluate current materials for the 6-7 and 8-9 year olds. High-interest books for these age groups will be added to insure that appealing materials will continue to be available as the 4-5 year old children age beyond the Every Child Ready to Read program.

Outcome: 1) Approximately 450 new items will be added to the collection, and 2) The “ECRR” section will become the most circulated books in the library collection.


Project Evaluation Methods and Dissemination
The surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and attendance figures for individual activities as collected by the Project Director and Children’s Librarian will be reviewed through a formative evaluation process at meetings of an advisory board. The board will consist of a Pueblo of Pojoaque Tribal Official, the Director and a tutor from the Pueblo of Pojoaque Education Department, the Director of the Pueblo of Pojoaque Early Childhood Center, the Director and Youth Services Librarian from the Pueblo of Pojoaque Public Library, and a parent stakeholder from the community. While examinations of recent project activities as reported by the Library Director will serve as milestones throughout the project for Board review at six-month intervals, the YSL and Library Director will immediately review workshops, storytimes, and programs as they occur for ongoing improvements. The following forms of evaluation will be used:

1. Surveys and questionnaires from participants and attendance and circulation statistics will be critiqued.
2. Attendance at all programs by Tribal members will be closely monitored with sign-in sheets, as they are the target audience and their participation is a milestone for reaching project goals.
3. Ongoing methods to encourage Tribal family members to attend workshops and events will be a primary point of discussion to insure that the target audience is being reached.
4. Correlation between activities and goal attainment will be critiqued to identify shortcomings.

To reach Pojoaque Tribal members who are not regular library patrons, postings for all library events and programs will be posted in the weekly memo package that is delivered to all Tribal members. The project is endorsed by the Governor of the Pueblo, and it will have his verbal and written support throughout the project to reach the target audience. The Tribal Liaison for this project will play a key role in announcing events at Tribal Council meetings and suggesting members of the extended families to contact on an informal basis to encourage attendance and promote the program throughout the Tribe.
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Project implementation plans will allow for adjustments to improve any component as soon as the need is recognized. Unexpected results will be examined with an eye for betterment of existing activities through alternate methods of accomplishment. Ongoing review methods include:

1. Basic patron satisfaction surveys with an open-ended section for comments will be readily available for patrons every six months, and the suggestion box for short signed or unsigned comments will be available throughout the project.

2. To avoid over-surveying the participants, the library board will be participants in the various activities and will interact with the families, children, and teachers. Their verbal assessments will become part of the regular review process.

At the conclusion of this project, the Director will prepare a comprehensive project impact evaluation with the measurable outcomes including attendance at programs, circulation of children’s programming materials, and attendance numbers at outreach events. A summary of verbal and written patron satisfaction surveys will also be included in reporting the overall effectiveness in completing goals. A section of the evaluation will address successes and shortcomings with recommendations for future development of literacy on the Pueblo and in the Pojoaque Valley community. Objectives of this project—to develop and present outreach programs with support materials—will be evaluated with methods described, but the success of the long term goals will be measured by noting improvements in scholastic performance and decreased dropout rates. The Pueblo of Pojoaque Public Library will continue to review its programming and support materials with the Education Department beyond this project to address these critical issues.

The New Mexico Tribal Libraries will be primary recipients of project presentations. Individual or panel presentations about the process of applying for an Enhancement Grant, workshop preparations, and the Every Child Ready to Read Outreach Program will be submitted as program proposals as appropriate to the New Mexico Library Association, National Tribal Institutes, or other local and national associations.
BUDGET FORM: Section B, Summary Budget

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Project Funding for the Entire Grant Period

1. Grant Funds Requested from IMLS: $137,066.00

2. Cost Sharing:
   a. Applicant's Contribution: $57,774.00
   b. Kind Contribution: 
   c. Other Federal Agencies*: 
   d. TOTAL COST SHARING: $57,774.00

3. TOTAL PROJECT FUNDING (1+2d): $194,840.00

Percentage of total project costs requested from IMLS: 70%

*If funding has been requested from another federal agency, indicate the agency's name:

OMB Number 3137-0071; Expiration Date: 7/31/2010. Estimated burden for both detailed and summary budget forms: 3 hours.