



## Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services

Sample Application MN-246032-OMS-20

*“Planning a Complete Apsaalooke (Crow) Indian Learning and Cultural Center  
at Little Big Horn College”*

### Crow Tribe of Indians

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$100,000
Amount of cost share:	\$10,067

The project description can be viewed in the IMLS Awarded Grants Search:

<https://www.ims.gov/grants/awarded/mn-246032-oms-20>

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

Please note that the instructions for preparing applications for the FY2021 Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services grant program differ from those that guided the preparation of FY2020 applications. Be sure to use the instructions in the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program to which you are applying.

**Project Justification:**

The Crow Tribe of Indians under the auspices of Little Big Horn College (LBHC) are applying for an eight month IMLS Planning Grant to explore the establishment of a cultural center named the *The Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow High Bird Center of Apsaalooke (Crow) Culture and History* on the Crow Reservation in Montana. The project is titled *Planning a Complete Apsaalooke (Crow) Indian Learning and Cultural Center at Little Big Horn College*. LBHC is a tribally controlled community, fully accredited college located on the Crow Indian Reservation in south-central Montana. The Little Big Horn College campus is located in the town of Crow Agency, Montana. Language and cultural preservation are one of the primary goals of LBHC and are reflected in the Crow Studies degree LBHC offers and in the college core theme which states that the College is “Dedicated to the Enhancement of Crow Language and Culture.” Furthermore, this is a key component of the college’s mission statement which states, “The College is committed to the preservation, perpetuation and protection of Crow culture and language, and respects the distinct bilingual and bi-cultural aspects of the Crow Indian community.” The reservation is 2.28 million acres and spans ninety miles east-west and sixty miles north-south. Currently, there are 13,600 enrolled members of the Crow Nation with approximately 9,800 or 72 percent who reside on the reservation. Thirty-eight percent of the community speaks the Crow language.

The college serves as a hub for cultural activities and the LBHC Library offers a weekly Cultural Enrichment course during the academic year. The LBHC Archives houses textual, photographic, and audiovisual materials. However, there is no central location for the maintenance and perpetuation of Crow culture and history for the Crow community on the reservation. This has been an ongoing concern expressed to many faculty and staff at LBHC by members of the Crow community. The LBHC Library Committee has long felt that this is a priority for the college and that a process that involved all of the college’s stakeholders could lead to the eventual establishment of cultural center. During college wide planning meetings college staff often rated the establishment of museum or cultural center as an important part of the college’s long term plans. In 2018, Richard Gruber from Cody, Wyoming bequeathed one and half million dollars to the college for a museum upon his death.

These needs, particularly Gruber’s future donation, led the college librarian to begin a process whereby an eight month IMLS planning grant at the exploratory stage would lead to a concrete strategic plan that would guide the college towards the goal of establishing a cultural center that incorporated both archival materials and material culture into rotating displays. The cultural center would also host events and workshops that perpetuated Crow culture and its worldview for future generations. With long term exploratory planning leading to the eventual development of such a facility, not only would LBHC students benefit, but the entire Crow

community and those residing off the reservation as well. The establishment of cultural center would lead to a triumvirate of cultural institutions at LBHC: library, archives, and cultural center.

During the planning process, two distinct groups will work to produce the strategic planning document. First, a project committee would consist of ten people with a range of backgrounds ranging from college faculty and staff, outside museum professionals who have overseen project planning, non-tribal scholars, and Eminent Cultural Scholars from the Crow community (see Supportingdoc 4). Second, the project will also have five key project advisors who will guide the project to fruition. These advisors are Arthur Wolf, master planner, who has nearly fifty years of experience in the museum field and has worked with numerous indigenous communities on similar projects (see Supportingdoc7 for an example), Daniel Glenn, architect, an enrolled Crow tribal member who has designed three buildings at the college in the past and has also designed cultural centers for Native communities. Glenn has also led planning processes as he sees them as a key part of attaining an architectural vision. The other project advisors include: Herman Viola, Curator Emeritus at the Smithsonian Institution; Janet Smoak, Director, Suquamish Museum and Cultural Center; and Mardell Plainfeather, an enrolled member of the Crow Tribe, who is a retired historian from the National Park Service and is a fluent Crow speaker. Finally, Tim Bernardis, LBHC Librarian, and Jon Ille, LBHC Archivist will serve on the committee and perform many of the project's day to day tasks. The master planner and architect will guide many of the activities. The master planner will lead most activities and write the strategic plan, while the architect will be there to listen to the LBHC community and to provide expertise in the potential ways the building and site can be developed to provide a setting for the cultural activities of the center.

The stakeholders who the committee will engage with during the planning process include LBHC students, college faculty and staff, Crow community members, and non-tribal members with an interest in the project. We will utilize Survey Monkey to generate data regarding proposed needs along with community meetings in each of the six reservation districts. The data generated during the planning phase will help in the writing of a strategic planning document that will guide future actions leading to the establishment of the cultural center. Key project personnel will also participate in a SWOT analysis, workshops and retreats, and visit four cultural centers over the course of the eight-month project.

### **Project Work Plan:**

The following activities will lead to the successful creation of a strategic planning document will provide us with valuable information on how to proceed after the grant's conclusion.

*Activity 1-* At the outset of the project, assigned members of the committee would create and conduct two surveys that would gauge both community interest and the Project Team on what they envision the cultural

center should look like. The master planner will provide samples of prior community needs surveys and lead the development and analysis of the surveys, while the architect will assist in providing design perspectives throughout the process. The surveys would be available onsite at the college but there would be a major push for stakeholders to fill out the surveys via Survey Monkey, as this would allow us to create as much data as possible in one place. This would allow us to analyze the data and integrate it into the planning document.

*Activity 2-* Upon completion of the surveys, there will also be six community meetings of individual stakeholders including students, college faculty and staff, and community members to generate input on their visions on what a culture center should look like. The meeting will take place during the third month of the grant at each of the six reservation districts: Black Lodge, Reno, Lodge Grass, Wyola, Big Horn, and Pryor. These meetings would be conducted in the Crow language when possible. These meetings will provide a space for community engagement that will provide feedback about the development of a cultural center and to provide insights into the long range plans for LBHC as a continued and expanded cultural hub for the Crow people. Also, community members without access to computers or Internet can fill out surveys. This is essential as many elders lack technological proficiency but will provide insights through their cultural knowledge key to producing a planning document rooted in Crow understandings about cultural representation.

*Activity 3-* A key concept that will frame activities during the grant cycle is a Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis. LBHC frequently performs SWOT analyses, so this process will be familiar to college employees involved in the project. The analysis, led by the master planner, will provide his experienced perspective and analysis in guiding the process. Other participants include the architect who will focus on site and structural issues, who along with other key project personnel will produce an assessment that represents a range of issues or events that might benefit or harm the college in building a cultural center. The preparation of the SWOT by the master planner is essential for discussion at the two-day retreat.

*Activity 4-* The committee will hold planning meetings throughout the project to both facilitate ideas and to receive updates on the project as a whole. Within the first month, the work group will meet with the consultants, architect and master planner in an initial conversation. Upon completion of the surveys and SWOT analysis, the working group will attend a two-day retreat. The master planner who has guided dozens of successful planning efforts will lead the retreat with assistance from the architect in providing an architectural vision. During this two-day retreat, the work group and consultants will sketch out the entire project including assigning tasks and responsibilities. The consultants will work closely in assigning these tasks based upon their areas of expertise. They would also help us confirm the four cultural centers to visit during the project. Also, we will begin to envision what the planning document might entail helped through analysis of survey comments, community

meetings, and the SWOT document. The master planner will produce notes shortly after the conclusion of the retreat to guide future decisions about the strategic planning document. After the retreat, a smaller group of eight key personnel including the LBHC college president will be attend a strategic initiatives meeting. Armed with the notes from the two-day retreat, the master planner will facilitate while the architect will provide assistance. The smaller group will be selected from among the project advisory committee and board of LBHC. The smaller group will meet for one day in a strategic initiative meeting to analyze information produced over the two day retreat in order to focus on the planning document. Throughout the grant period, we will continue to meet with the consultants to receive feedback and advice on our planning documents.

*Activity 5-* After the two-day retreat with the consultants, the committee will have agreed upon the four cultural centers to visit throughout during months four and five of the project. The centers visited will be Native centered and located in the American West, as they will most closely resemble the end result we wish to achieve. A group of two rotating project advisory committee members along with the architect and project director will visit each institution, which will allow most committee members to visit at least one of the selected cultural centers. These visits will allow us to take information from these institutions along with their experiences and integrate them into the strategic planning document.

*Activity 6-* After compiling the data from the surveys, analyzing conversations at community meetings, consultations with consultants, particularly the architect and master planner, and ideas generated at retreats, there will be a Plan Results Public Meeting to inform the public about our findings and take additional input. After that, the next phase of the project will be devoted to producing a strategic planning document. As stated before, this document will guide our actions for the remainder of the project and for our vision beyond it. The writing of the strategic plan will occur once the committee analyzes the data from the surveys and meeting with different stakeholders. The master planner will write the document with a three-week comment period after it is written. The strategic plan will also include a mission statement and draft collections policy. These will be based from data generated and guided by our planning. It will also include a sustainability statement that can show future funders that the cultural center will be there for future generations of the Crow people. Within the sustainability statement, future sources of funding will be recommended. Once a draft is completed and the comment period ended, the Project Team will present the document to the LBHC Board of Trustees and Crow Tribe. From the feedback we receive from the board, we will make any recommended changes to document. The final strategic plan will be finished at the conclusion of the project.

*Activity 7-* The last activity will occur with the architect conducting a programming workshop with project participants and the community. This will essentially serve as a capstone to the project and help guide LBHC in

the second and third phases of building a cultural center on the Crow reservation. The architect will review the strategic document's project results and from this we can determine the types of programming the cultural center will engage in with our stakeholders. Through this separate programming workshop, the college and Crow tribe will better understand the space requirements, site needs, and the potential layout of the cultural center. Furthermore, this will allow project personnel and the community to better visualize what we accomplished during the planning phase and where to go in the future.

**Project Results:**

The results of the project will inform LBHC on how to proceed in establishing a cultural center that will benefit the college's stakeholders. We will evaluate our results from the analyses of surveys, the SWOT, our retreat and strategic initiatives meeting, but most importantly through the strategic planning document. As noted in the project justification, a broad range of stakeholders have noted that a centralized cultural facility is needed at the college. Through the development of a strategic plan the groundwork for this need will be met. LBHC will know its options moving forward including whether to build a new facility or to refurbish a pre-existing one. And perhaps whether the building will grow into a museum in the future. With a mission statement in place, we will be able to structure the cultural center to meet the needs of our diverse stakeholders. As we move forward, the data generated during the grant will help guide us during future decisions regarding the development of a cultural center. With the identification of sources of funding during the planning process, we will be able to move beyond the exploratory stage towards the actual process of structuring a cultural center.

Beyond these long range plans, the strategic planning process will inform stakeholders about the possibility of a cultural center on the Crow Reservation. This could lead to increased interest in Crow culture and history leading to increased usage of the library and archives. The community meetings during the project will also allow us to better engage with stakeholders to both meet community needs and guide us to provide better services currently. Within LBHC itself, the strategic planning process and the eventual establishment of cultural center will allow the college to meet both its core themes and mission statement in relation to strengthening and preserving Crow culture. Through the entire planning process, community engagement will enable the institution to develop enhanced relationships with our stakeholders.

