



NATIVE AMERICAN LIBRARY SERVICES ENHANCEMENT GRANTS

Sample Application NAE-259223-OLS-25

Muscogee Creek Nation

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$150,000

The Muscogee Creek Nation will focus on literacy training to support the larger community and enhance staff development. The two-year project will provide literacy and technology resources at the 25 community center library sites throughout the Muscogee Reservation. Funds will also support kits for 500 students that contain books, literacy activities, and resources, which will encourage family interaction at home. The culminating activity will be a family literacy conference to engage parents, elders, and children in literacy skills outside of the typical school learning environment. The conference will encourage families to take an active role in introducing their children to books and other literacy resources.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Tribal Profile
- Narrative
- Schedule of completion

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the most recent Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program to which you are applying.

Tribal Profile

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN) is the fourth largest federally recognized Tribe in the United States with a total population of 103,141 tribal citizens – more than half of whom live within the tribal jurisdiction. MCN tribal headquarters is centrally situated within the Nation's jurisdiction in the city of Okmulgee. The reservation spans eleven counties that include urban, rural, and very rural-remote areas. Population densities vary from small-unincorporated communities, with fewer than 50 residents, to Tulsa, one of the largest urban areas within the state of Oklahoma.

Spanning nearly 5,000 square miles, the MCN tribal reservation includes eleven (11) counties in east-central Oklahoma and maintains the boundaries established in 1900. The reservation is divided into eight (8) districts corresponding namely with the counties of Creek, McIntosh, Muskogee, Okfuskee, Okmulgee, and portions of Wagoner, Tulsa, Rogers, Hughes, Seminole, and Mayes.

The services provided by the MCN encompass a variety of educational programs aimed at supporting American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) students. The Johnson O'Malley (JOM) Program provides school supplies, tutoring, cultural enrichment activities, and other supports to ensure students succeed academically and socially.

The MCN also utilizes the Education and Training Program (ETA) to provide career and educational opportunities through quality, culturally focused guidance to enhance self-sufficiency, involve community and family, and promote a stronger workforce.

Additionally, the MCN is furthering its support for students through other grant-funded initiatives:

- **Accessing Choices in Education (ACE) Grant:** The MCN Accessing Choices in Education Project enhances student and family educational choices by creating a Service Provider System that includes evidence-based, culturally responsive service options to improve AI/AN student academic outcomes.
- **Native Youth Community Project (NYCP):** NYCP serves as a multi-purpose support system for AI/AN youth by addressing behavioral health needs, providing social experiences such as OKC Thunder games, and engaging youth in Muscogee culture and traditions.

Through these programs and grants, the MCN is enhancing its capacity to support AI/AN students by addressing their educational needs, promoting cultural awareness, and ensuring they have access to the resources necessary for success.

Narrative

I. Project Justification

Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN) Department of Education is requesting funding in the amount of \$150,000 a year for two years for its Native American Library Enhancement project. This funding will allow the department to address significant literacy needs within the 5,000 square mile area of the reservation by providing enhancements to libraries in community centers. These enhancements will provide for both literacy and technology resources as well as staff training regarding the barriers to students and families and how to enhance their own lives through a love of reading. Furthermore, it will provide literacy bundles for future success to be handed out at two different Family Literacy Nights.

Many MCN American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) students live in rural areas, limiting access to quality education, internet services, and extracurricular programs. Geographic isolation and lack of technology can lead to lower academic achievement, fewer opportunities, and reduced engagement with the broader educational community. Furthermore, a lack of active parental or community involvement in AI/AN students' education can weaken support systems. Students may struggle without the encouragement and resources from their families and communities, resulting in lower academic success or retention rates. According to The Nation's Report Card:

- In 2022, the average score of fourth-grade students in Oklahoma was 208. This was lower than the average score of 216 for students in the nation.
- The average score for students in Oklahoma in 2022 (208) was lower than their average score in 2019 (216) and in 1998 (219).
- The percentage of students in Oklahoma who performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level was 24 percent in 2022. This percentage was smaller than that in 2019 (29 percent) and in 1998 (30 percent).
- The percentage of students in Oklahoma who performed at or above the NAEP Basic level was 55 percent in 2022. This percentage was smaller than that in 2019 (63 percent) and in 1998 (66 percent).¹

These startling statistics demonstrate a significant need for literacy resources for all students and family engagement. Studies consistently show that the best indicator of strong academic success is the activities that take place outside school hours. Marzano states, "Involvement with reading activities at home has significant positive influences not only on reading achievement, language comprehension, and expressive language skills...but also on pupils' interest in reading, attitudes towards reading and attentiveness in the classroom."²

¹ National Center for Education Statistics. (2023). *The Nation's Report Card: 2022 State Snapshot Report – Oklahoma, Grade 4* (NCES 2023010OK4). U.S. Department of Education.

² Marzano, R. J. (2007). *The art and science of teaching: A comprehensive framework for effective instruction* (ED496346). Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). ERIC.

The primary audience of the project will include AI/AN students grades PreK-12th grade in rural areas with access to the community center libraries, as well as their parents/caregivers. Resources purchased through this grant will assist families with facilitating literacy with their young children. By doing so, this project will address the educational challenges MCN students and families face. Students will have higher interest in and better attitudes toward reading, and be more attentive in the classroom. Overall, this initiative will lead to significant education improvements, addressing many of the challenges MCN students face. This grant will allow the MCN Department of Education to provide increased access to education and technology resources in the rural areas located within the MCN reservation. Furthermore, it will provide guidance for parental involvement in student education. MCN Department of Education staff will also benefit from this grant by receiving training to help them more effectively address literacy barriers faced by students and their families.

II. Project Work Plan

This project will take place in two phases—one phase per year of the life of the grant. Within the first year, all relevant staff will receive the literacy training necessary to fulfill the goals and objectives of this grant application, providing literacy learning opportunities for grant staff to share with families. Additionally, the Project Director and Academic Specialist will evaluate all MCN Community Centers and the OKC Resource Center libraries for library and technology enhancement needs. They will collect specific data on the needs and barriers of students and families by attending community center meetings. Mileage will support observing and setting up community libraries and resource centers. It will be the responsibility of the Project Director to oversee the employment section of the resource area, as well as the day-to-day operations of this program. A primary focus during Phase I will also be to procure at least half the materials to enhance these community center lending libraries. This grant will be leveraged to enhance twenty-five (25) lending libraries and existing community libraries to promote literacy and family engagement beyond the traditional learning environment. The Academic Specialist will be responsible for maintaining and updating the library area materials, message boards, and resource areas. The Academic Specialist will work closely with the Grant Coordinator, who will ensure expenditures meet grant compliance. The Grant Coordinator will also provide strategic planning assistance and evaluate all MCN Community Centers and OKC Resource Center libraries for library and technology enhancement needs. Within the same phase, the MCN Department of Education will provide resource centers in all twenty-five (25) community centers within the 5,000-square-mile reservation, ensuring access to digital resources for literacy, employment, and career development. The resource centers will provide digital access to research databases, and job, employment, and career resources. It will also serve as a reference desk, reading, and study space for the community center families. The goal is to complete the updates to resource centers in half of the community centers during this phase. During Phase I, the MCN Department of Education will host the first of two Family Literacy Nights to promote the importance of literacy

to student success. The purpose of the Family Literacy Night is to provide parents, elders, and children with a family engagement opportunity to enhance literacy skills and gain valuable knowledge for use in the home and community. This will be a large-scale event requiring all staff to be present. Parents and children will be provided with a literacy bundle that will contain literacy tools needed for future success. Providing Prek-12th grade students with literacy bundles will encourage reading and family interaction at home. These literacy bundles will be meticulously curated by the Academic Specialist who will research, write curriculum, order, and prepare these bundles. In addition to the Project Director, Grant Coordinator, and Academic Specialist, an Administrative Assistant will also be involved with this grant. It will be her responsibility to assist with supply ordering, inventory, and distribution; maintain accurate CUFF; provide budget reports; document travel expenses; and assist with Family Literacy Nights.

Phase II of the project will be an extension of Phase I. The Project Director will maintain open communication with CR&D, community centers, resource centers, students, parents, and elders. This phase will also focus on the continuing enhancement of the library and technology resources offered at each of the community centers. Additional resources will be purchased to build upon the library and technology resources purchased during the first phase. During this time, the remaining community centers will receive their resource center supplies and materials, and the remaining literacy materials will also be purchased. A second Family Literacy Night will be held during this Phase, as well. This will require the purchase of an additional 500 literacy bundles so that the MCN Department of Education will be able to provide important tools to support literacy and family involvement. At the conclusion of the second year, all resources will be purchased and all resource centers will be fully functional for community use.

Stakeholders have been involved in the planning and development of the project and will continue to be involved as the program incorporates their input throughout the project. These Stakeholders include Muscogee Nation, the MCN Community Research and Development (CR&D) Director and staff, and community center members. The Project Director has met with the CR&D Director and board member of the Muscogee Indian Community Center to seek project input. Upon receiving the grant, the MCN Department of Education will seek the input of the community through in-person visits at monthly meetings at the centers and quarterly meetings with various MCN staff and community center members.

Giving each community a voice will be important to the Library Enhancement Project. Evaluation will include feedback from community members on the needs, value, and effectiveness of the enhancements to their libraries and resource centers. The feedback surveys and community meetings will take into consideration the communities' needs as a whole and what will work for each individual community. This feedback will build a bridge between the Nation's resources and services and the community in which it serves. By providing a space to learn and grow each community member will be responsible for their personal growth and development. Instructional materials will provide community members with the confidence to review services available in real-time. Recognizing that each community will have its own unique needs and barriers, the service provider will create surveys to receive personal and community feedback to integrate into

the overall project and plan for each community center. This information will be used in determining what type of books, digital resources, and information is needed at each project site. Post-evaluations will be conducted at the end of each project to demonstrate further the successes and ongoing needs of the program and what additional support the communities will need to continue to utilize the resources provided by this grant opportunity.

The tribe will utilize its already existing twenty-five (25) community lending library buildings, staff, and resources to aid this project in its success. This grant will work in tandem with already existing services provided for students by the tribe. These current services provided by the MCN encompass a variety of educational programs aimed at supporting AI/AN students. The Johnson O'Malley (JOM) Program provides school supplies, tutoring, cultural enrichment activities, and other supports to ensure students succeed academically and socially. The MCN Accessing Choices in Education (ACE) Project enhances student and family educational choices by creating a Service Provider System that includes evidence-based, culturally responsive service options to improve AI/AN student academic outcomes.

The results of this project and the lessons learned will be shared with all stakeholders in a variety of methods. While the purpose of the Family Literacy Night is to encourage family involvement in students' education, it will also provide an opportunity for MCN staff to advertise the improvements and additions made to each of the twenty-five (25) community center lending libraries. Social media, such as the MCN Facebook page, and the MCN Website will be essential to communicating the positive impacts of the Native American Library Enhancement grant. Furthermore, the program will collaborate with Mvskoke Media to publish information on its news site.

III. Project Results

Before the grant begins, data will be generated that shows what is currently available to the communities being served. Post-grant data will also be collected, demonstrating what is provided after the enhancements. Community surveys will serve as the analysis portion of the evaluation allowing the community to give feedback on what they view as effective in the enhancement project and implementation. Upon completion of the grant, the MCN Department of Education expects to see a maximum of 500 attendees at Literacy Nights which will result in the delivery of 500 Literacy Bundles to those attendees to support literacy efforts in the home. Both of these deliverables will address the need for parental involvement in student literacy which will in turn result in improved literacy skills among students in PreK-12th grade within the MCN reservation. Additionally, three (3) staff members will attend training to prepare them with skills essential to addressing barriers to literacy. These staff members will be expected to report on the knowledge gained from the training. All twenty-five (25) community center libraries will allocate space for additional books and literacy materials. Furthermore, each site will have a space dedicated to a resource and learning center. These resources will be accessible to any member from the community, removing the barrier between students and literacy resources. In addition to

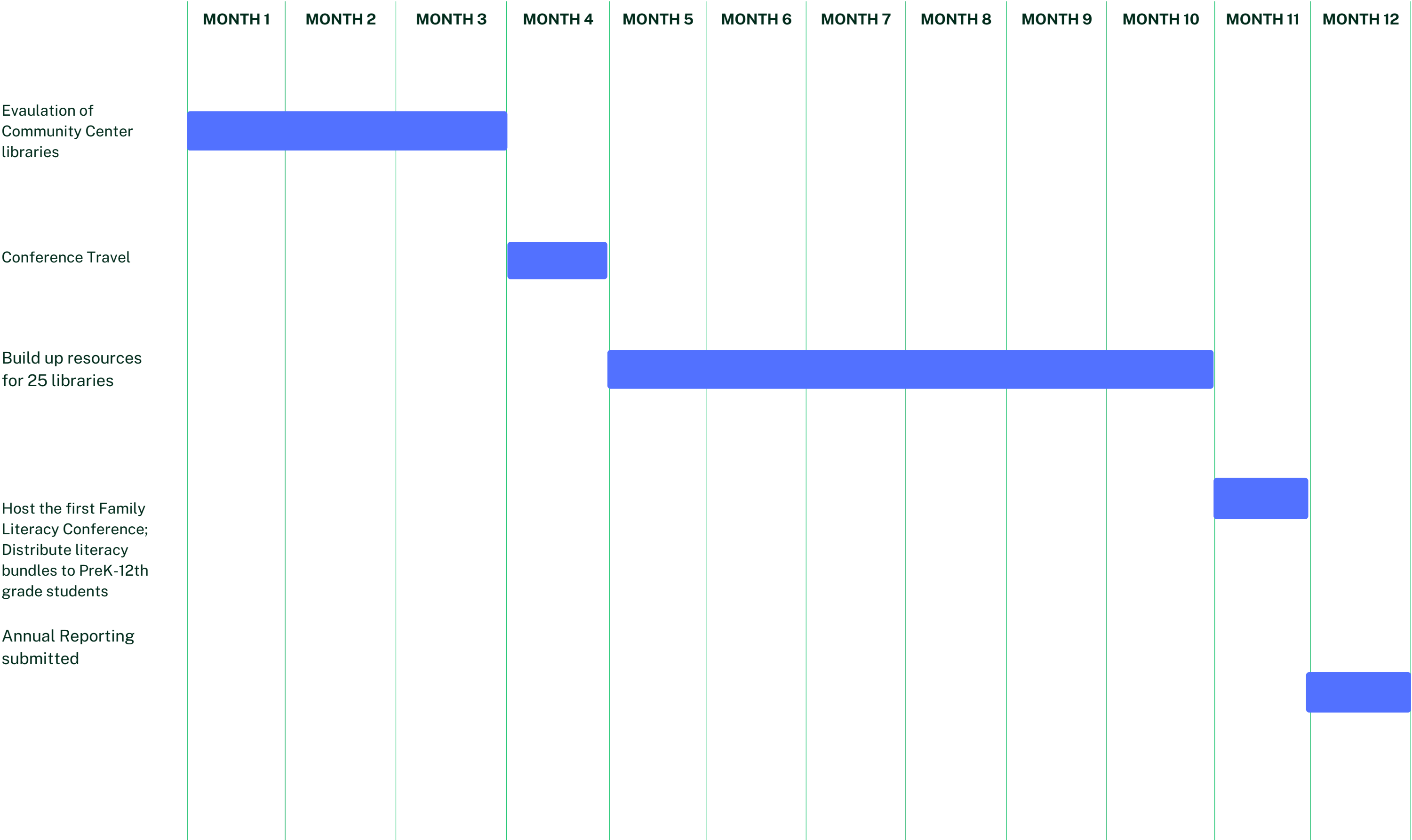
improvements in literacy and education, access to jobs, employment, and career resources will also facilitate college and career readiness in high school students.

For Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the success of this program will be defined by strengthened lending libraries that are frequented by community members. Additionally, circulation at these lending libraries will increase significantly. Attendance at the Family Literacy Night will also be a measure of success. This will be evaluated by the number of Literacy bundles that are given out as well as attendance records from the Family Literacy Nights. Furthermore, the program will be a success if other tribes utilize this program as a blueprint to create one of their own.

Before and after photos will be taken at each center and advertised to their community members. Deliverables and lessons learned will be disseminated to the communities serviced through the two Family Literacy Nights. Additionally, they will be shared with MCN Leaders, other Tribal Education Agencies, and citizens through presentations and handouts with key information. The main goal of sharing information is to show success and adaptation, as well as to help other communities outside of the Muscogee Nation reservation replicate similar programming for their tribes. This information will be shared on the Nation's social media outlets to provide details and the success of the project.

This project will be easily sustainable, as the majority of the project is simply adding to already existing community center libraries. These community centers are already staffed, so the budget is already in place for the expense. Communities will maintain and support their own libraries and digital resource centers once the project is complete.

SCHEDULE OF COMPLETION--YEAR 1



SCHEDULE OF COMPLETION--YEAR 2

