



NATIVE AMERICAN LIBRARY SERVICES ENHANCEMENT GRANTS

Sample Application NAE-259243-OLS-25

Aroostook Band Micmacs

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$149,041

The Aroostook Micmac Council will serve the lifelong learning needs and interests of the community, particularly for high school, post-secondary students, adults, and Tribal Elders. The Mi'kmaq Nation in rural northern Maine serves all of Aroostook County, and its community library has been an underutilized resource within the Tribal Community. Community members identified related needs through an earlier survey, and this project will address them by supporting library staff, the implementation of a library management system, and increased operational hours for community access. Project leads will track success through community usage of the library and feedback via comment boxes and community surveys.

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.

Mi'kmaq Nation

The Mi'kmaq Nation is the most Northeastern Federally recognized American Indian Tribe in the United States and is located in rural northern Maine with a service area of all of Aroostook County. Aroostook County is the second largest county in the United States with a land area of 6,672 square miles, which is larger than the states of Connecticut and Rhode Island combined. "The County," as Aroostook is affectionately known, is surrounded on three sides by the Canadian Provinces of New Brunswick and Quebec.

There are 1,402 members enrolled in the Mi'kmaq Nation. Tribal members live throughout Aroostook County, with the three largest concentrations of members in Tribal communities located near Presque Isle and Caribou/Connor in the central portion of Aroostook County; and in Littleton in the southern part of Aroostook County. It takes an hour and twenty minutes to drive from the northernmost concentration of Micmac residents near Connor, to the southernmost concentration of Micmac residents near Littleton.

A significant barrier for the Mi'kmaq Nation is the lack of financial and human resources to adequately respond to the need to ensure Mi'kmaq culture and tradition is safeguarded for future generations.

Mi'kmaq culture and tradition have become something of the elder generation with widening gap and loss of native identity including traditional knowledge of youth resulting. Culture, as a protective factor to the Mi'kmaq people, is the driving force behind becoming resilient. Cultural values are the threads that tie the Mi'kmaq tradition and practices, they are the links between the past and present.

According to the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, land within the boundaries of Federally Recognized Tribes are also considered **disadvantaged**.

Maine is plagued by significant racial disparities when it comes to economic security. In 2017, while approximately 15% of white children lived in poverty, the rate was over 40% for children from **Maine's tribes** and over 53% for children from Maine's black or African American families. <https://maineequaljustice.org/policy/poverty/>

According to the 2021 Mi'kmaq COVID Community Needs Assessment, 138 community members participated. From those that participated, it was found that the average annual household income is \$28,100.00, compared to non-tribal average income for the State of Maine is \$59,489.00.

Native American Library Services Enhancement Grant FY25

Applicant Name: Mi'kmaq Nation

Project Title: Piskwa' (Come in)

Project Justification

The current Mi'kmaq Nation Community Library is an underutilized resource within the Tribal Community. This under-utilization is a direct result of lack of staff, lack of dedicated hours of operation, and a very limited level of services offered to the Community. Tribal members themselves are the best source in identifying strengths, needs and opportunities for their community. Hence, the Tribe regularly engages in community surveys to solicit feedback and suggestions directly from them.

The Mi'kmaq Nation Education Department conducted a Community Needs Survey in 2022. This survey resulted in 63 Tribal community members participating. When asked, "do you think the community is in need of a community library?" 95% of community members answered "yes". When asked, "are you aware that we currently have a community library?" 74% of those community members answered, "No". Clearly this cites a need for the Community.

The Mi'kmaq Nation Community Library will utilize the Native American Library Services Enhancement Grant Program to address the program goal of developing, enhancing, and disseminating practices, programs, models, tools, and library staff to strengthen library and archival services for the Tribal community. The intent of focus is to serve the lifelong learning needs and interests of the community via access and opportunity, particularly for high school and post-secondary students, adults, and Tribal Elders.

Community engagement within the Tribal library will lend itself to overall improved community well-being. The ultimate goal of this project is to invite community members to "come in," and participate in lifelong learning, with an emphasis on Native American cultures and traditions.

As the library is housed in the same building as The Boys & Girls Club of Border Towns, it is inaccessible to community members when the club is in session. However, community youth attending the Club have ample access to the library. This project

would provide dedicated staff and hours of operation so community members have the opportunity to utilize the Tribal library for personal and professional growth, whilst maintaining confidentiality for children attending the Boys and Girls Club.

This project will afford us the opportunity to maximize usage of the current space and make it more efficient for multiple users. The intent will be to provide morning, evening and weekend hours of operation, providing the greatest opportunity for the community to access and benefit from its content.

Project Work Plan

Through the following project, the current Mi'kmaq Nation Education Department Director will be the Project Director, providing administrative and financial oversight for the grant. Additional staff to be hired will include a part time Library & Media Specialist, for 29 hours per week, and a part time Library Aide, for 20 hours per week. This first step is necessary to ensure efficient and effective set-up of the library management system and obtain an inventory of all current offerings, while developing standard operating hours and conducting informational outreach.

The Library & Media Specialist will oversee library operations and library staff. They will coordinate outreach to inform the community that access to the Tribal library is available during designated scheduled hours. Both the Library & Media Specialist and the Library Aide will staff the library during designated hours to provide customer service and support, maintain inventory and donations, and maximize usage of space. The Library & Media Specialist will also attend the designated IMLS meetings.

Aside from the community needs assessments and surveys, a customer comment box will be made available to all patrons so that the library staff can elicit input and welcome suggestions throughout the grant period. Previous grant opportunities have provided the Tribe with opportunities to obtain a library management system and new inventory. This library management system will be critical to the success of the library, providing electronic scanning and tracking of all inventory.

Book donations and collaborations with other departments (i.e. Education, Tribal Historic Preservation, Environmental and Indian Health Services) and community organizations will be extremely valuable resources to aid in the library's success and expansion. Collaboration with the city library and those associated with institutions of higher learning will also provide additional support and partnerships.

Results and lessons learned will be documented and shared with the Tribal community, Tribal Council, administration, partners and grantors. Some of the forums available for this dissemination of information include monthly community newsletters, Tribal Council meetings, social media and community app postings, as well as, all required reporting.

Project Results

The intention of this project is to allow Tribal community members the ability to access regular and culturally relevant library content and services, which are currently not being utilized. It provides library access without having to go downtown to the public library, a benefit for those that have mobility or transportation barriers.

Having designated hours for the community to come in will provide opportunities for research, learning, studying and computer usage to foster personal and professional growth, while maintaining focus on Native American cultures and traditions. It will provide an avenue for tribal members to seek employment opportunities with additional support of library and education staff members.

Success of this project will be evidenced by the set-up and implementation of the library management system. Once this is completed, there will be valuable data to analyze regarding library usage and services. In addition to that data, success will also be demonstrated via sign-in and attendance records from the community usage of the library, as well as, solicited community feedback via the comment boxes and community surveys conducted.

Results of the project, including progress regarding deliverables and valuable lessons learned will be disseminated to the Tribal community via the annual report that is completed. This report goes out to all community members and is inclusive of all of the departments and the projects and work done in the previous year. As well, Tribal Council and administration will be kept abreast throughout the project period and at its conclusion. Grantors and other partners will also be informed regarding the project's success with the appropriate reporting avenue.

At the conclusion of the performance period additional resources via Tribal Council and the Education Department will provide for the continuation of library services to the community. Existing grant funds and opportunities, as well as, current and new relationships with community organizations and Tribal departments will be crucial in its continued success. Other programs, such as WIOA (Workforce Innovation

Opportunity Act) and Tutoring Services, can be leveraged to provide library staffing while additional grant opportunities can be pursued to provide future enhancements.

The Mi'kmaq Nation believes that success builds success, and as Tribal members begin to see the successes of other Tribal members involved in this project, they will also seek to participate, and as a result, not only the potential for individual growth and economic improvements will improve, but so will the overall growth and success of the Tribe.

Schedule of Completion
Piskwa' (Come in)
Year 1

	Mo. 1	Mo. 2	Mo. 3	Mo. 4	Mo. 5	Mo. 6	Mo. 7	Mo. 8	Mo. 9	Mo. 10	Mo. 11	Mo. 12
<u>Recruit & Hire Staff</u>	X	X										
<u>Set-Up & Implement LMS</u>			X	X	X	X						
<u>Community Outreach</u>				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<u>Implement Library Hours</u>						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<u>Community Feedback</u>						X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Year 2

[illegible]