NATIVE AMERICAN LIBRAY SERVICES ENHANCEMENT GRANTS

Sample Application NAE-259261-OLS-25

Wrangell Cooperative Association

Amount awarded by IMLS: $150,000

The Wrangell Cooperative Association will enhance the role of the Irene Ingle Public Library, an educational and cultural cornerstone for a remote island town with rich Tlingit heritage. Project funds will support a programming coordinator to develop a range of programs such as after-school tutoring for high school students, early literacy offerings for toddlers, and digital literacy workshops for seniors. Additional initiatives include an eSports club and a year-round Teen Book Club. The aim is to improve educational outcomes, increase community engagement, and expand access to cultural and learning opportunities for all residents, from young children to elders. Through these activities, the library will further establish its place as a vital community hub.

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.

WRANGELL COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

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Tribal Profile: Wrangell Cooperative Association

Overview & Mission:
The Wrangell Cooperative Association (WCA) is the federally recognized Tribal government serving the tribal citizens of Wrangell, Alaska. WCA's mission is *"to support the cultural, ceremonial and subsistence lifestyle for all Alaskans, and to promote the safe use and availability of a healthy environment for present and future generations."*

WCA serves approximately **900 enrolled Tribal citizens**, providing essential services and programs that promote self-determination, cultural revitalization, environmental stewardship, and the well-being of our Tribal community.

Brief History of Tribal Governance:
WCA was formally organized under the Indian Reorganization Act and has served as the recognized governing body for Wrangell's Tribal citizens for generations. Over time, the Tribe has grown its capacity and expanded its role in regional partnerships, economic development, and cultural leadership in Southeast Alaska. Governance is carried out through an elected Tribal Council, which guides programs and strategic priorities in alignment with community values.

Community Setting and Geographic Area:
The Tribe is located in the small island community of **Wrangell, Alaska**, home to roughly **2,000 residents**. Wrangell is situated in the heart of the Tongass National Forest, on the northern tip of Wrangell Island. The population includes a strong Alaska Native presence, with deep roots in Tlingit heritage. WCA's programs and services benefit Tribal citizens in Wrangell and across Southeast Alaska, including those living outside the community who maintain strong ties to their homelands.

Longstanding Community Partnership:
WCA has proudly partnered with the **Irene Ingle Public Library** for many years to support educational programming, community events, and cultural outreach. Through this collaboration, the Tribe has worked to ensure that youth, elders, and families have access to cultural resources, literacy support, and opportunities for learning that reflect both traditional knowledge and contemporary needs.

WCA remains committed to building a vibrant future for our Tribal citizens—one that honors our ancestors, uplifts our youth, and strengthens our community through culture, connection, and resilience.

Project Justification

Wrangell, Alaska, is a close-knit community of approximately 2,127 residents (2020 census), located in Southeast Alaska. It is situated on the ancestorial lands of the Lingit Aani (Tlingit) on Wrangell Island at the mouth of the Stikine River—the fastest moving navigable river in north America. The Tlingit people, who have lived on these lands for time immemorial, remain integral to Wrangell's cultural fabric. Wrangell has a rich history shaped by Tlingit heritage and former Russian and British influences, and the community today balances this vibrant past with modern living. Local industries include commercial fishing, small-scale timber, tourism, healthcare, and government services, while many residents continue to practice subsistence harvesting for fish and wildlife.

Geographically, Wrangell Island is accessible only by plane or boat, contributing to a tight-knit atmosphere. With limited roads and a small-town feel, community members rely heavily on local institutions—such as the library—for educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities. This balance of heritage preservation and contemporary development underpins Wrangell's identity, making the Irene Ingle Public Library essential to sustaining the area's educational and cultural growth. The library's mission is to enrich lives and foster community through accessible resources, vibrant programming, and welcoming spaces, serving as the community's hub of knowledge, creativity, and inspiration, supporting lifelong learning and fostering meaningful interactions.

As a cornerstone of the Wrangell community, the Irene Ingle Public Library sees approximately 22,500 patron visits a year. The library offers a wide range of services to both residents and visitors, including public WiFi, internet-connected computers with word processing, scanning, and printing capabilities, as well as wireless printing, photocopying, and a KIC Knowledge Imaging Center. AWE Early Literacy Stations support early childhood education, and a reservable conference room is available for small group meetings and studying. Additionally, library staff proctor exams for individuals pursuing higher education, and the library recently launched the Wrangell Newspaper Archive, a website that provides digital access to Wrangell's newspapers from 1898 to the present, supporting research, genealogy, and local history preservation.

The library offers a diverse collection of approximately 43,000 items for checkout, including books, audiobooks, DVDs, games, 6' tables, a projector, and more. Our collection is thoughtfully curated to serve patrons of all ages, with a strong emphasis on educational materials, popular fiction, large print titles, and resources that reflect local interests. The library's robust Alaskana section preserves and shares the history, culture, and literature of Alaska, providing valuable materials for researchers, students, and lifelong learners. The library has an annual circulation of nearly 20,000 items. Beyond its physical collection, patrons also have access to the Alaska Digital Library for eBooks, audiobooks, and eMagazines.

Libraries are continuously evolving to meet the changing needs of our society, and the Irene Ingle Public Library is no exception. It has become a dynamic gathering space that serves as the heart of community engagement. The library offers a broad variety of programs to the community. Weekly events include the Wrangell Kids Club after-school program and Toddler Story Time. Monthly activities feature Baby Hour, Homeschool Hangout, and an adult book club. Seasonally, the library hosts a successful Summer Reading Program for children from the end of May through early

August, and this year we introduced a Winter Reading Program for Grownups, running from January 6 to March 21, which proved very popular and will become an annual event. Additionally, we are excited to launch our first annual Bookmark Contest for students in grades K-12, which will span several months. The library also organizes various programs throughout the year, such as Early Literacy Night in collaboration with the public school system, National Library Week and Banned Book Week activities, Tech Savvy Senior events that aim to help seniors with digital literacy, craft and activity mornings, holiday cookie decorating, a magic show, pajama story time, and more.

Despite its robust offerings, the Irene Ingle Public Library faces significant challenges due to staffing limitations. Currently, the library is open from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Saturday, totaling 48 hours a week, year-round. It is staffed by two full-time employees—the library director and the library assistant—and supported by two casual part-time library technicians who help maintain operation hours. The full-time staff is responsible for planning and managing all current programs, as well as their other library responsibilities, including circulation, reference questions, customer service, technology and systems management, community outreach, collections development and budget development and management. This multitasking hampers the library's ability to consistently deliver high-quality programming. The addition of a dedicated programming coordinator position to the library staff would greatly enhance its capacity to fully meet the diverse and growing needs of the community.

The need for expanded programming at the Irene Ingle Public Library has become increasingly evident through patron feedback, responses from local educators, and participation data from our existing programs. For instance, Toddler Story Time frequently exceeds attendance expectations, indicating a strong demand for expanded early literacy offerings, including requests for weekend story time sessions. Parents and students have shown appreciation for current after-school programming and have requested a summer teen book club and an after-school tutor specifically for high school students seeking academic support. Additionally, an eSports initiative is currently under development, reflecting a growing interest in a broader range of activities. There is also a community-wide call for more regular adult technology training sessions, which would significantly support digital literacy.

The primary audience for this project encompasses the entire Wrangell community, including babies, grade school children, high school students seeking academic support, families, adult lifelong learners, and elders. These groups have been actively engaged in the planning process through direct feedback to library staff and participation in pilot programs. Their input has shaped the project’s focus on educational programming and tutoring, tailored to accommodate diverse learning activities.

By addressing these needs, this project aligns with the Native American Library Services Enhancement Grant (NAE) program goal to develop and enhance library services for Native American communities. Specifically, it meets Objective 1: Serving the Learning Needs and Interests of the Community by introducing participatory STEM learning, digital literacy, and educational programming, and Objective 2: Improving Community Well-being through academic support, guest speaker events, and adaptable spaces that foster social connection and lifelong learning.

Project Work Plan

To address the identified needs, the Irene Ingle Public Library will implement a structured work plan with the following key activities:

- Hire a Programming Coordinator (to be executed by Library Director)
    - A part-time, benefited Programming Coordinator will be hired to oversee program development, implementation, and community outreach.
    - This role will ensure the sustainability and consistency of library programming.
    - Responsibilities will include developing, planning, organizing, managing, facilitating, promoting, and evaluating programs for all ages.
    - The coordinator will recruit, train, and manage volunteers to assist in library programming efforts.
    - The coordinator will create promotional content for programs, leveraging social media, local radio, newspaper advertisements, and printed flyers to maximize outreach.
- After-School Tutoring Program (To be executed by Wrangell High School Principal and Library Director)
    - A dedicated tutor will be hired to provide academic support for high school students, focusing on core subjects and study skills.
    - The library is in contact with Wrangell Public Schools and has several students who are interested in filling this role.
    - The proposed schedule from the school is Monday – Thursday for 1 hour a day after school, aligning with students' schedules.
- Purchase of Materials and supplies: (Library Director)
    - STEM curriculums and supplies will be ordered as needed to supply programs.
        - **Baby Hour**: Lovevery kits
        - **Wrangell Kids Club & Homeschool Hangout**: PCS Edventures curriculums and a range of STEM supplies, including Kiwi Crates, Raspberry Pi components, and LEGO kits
    - 6 floor chairs will be purchased to enhance seating flexibility and comfort during library programs.
    - Book club books will be purchased for the summer teen book club prior to each meeting to provide sufficient time for reading.
- Guest Speakers and Author Events: (Organized by Library Program Coordinator and Library Director)
    - The library will host guest speakers and authors to enrich educational opportunities and cultural engagement. The library director and program coordinator will contact the following groups and individuals for availability and scheduling. If they are not available, the library director and program coordinator will reach out to other similar guests.
        - **80% Studios:** Their comics and manga are a product of the 90s pop culture they ingested growing up, plus their roots in Seattle, Alaska, Native American and Indigenous heritage. Since 2021, 80% Studios has pushed the boundaries of what is capable with the graphic novel medium by

incorporating live multi-media performances and interactive storytelling workshops for all ages. Through dedication, perseverance and most importantly teamwork, they aim to show the next generation of storytellers that the act of creation and sharing it with the world, rather than holding out for perfection. The Library Director has met in person with 80% studios and they are interested in coming to Wrangell.

- **Michaela Goade** is a Native American illustrator. A member of the Tlingit and Haida tribes, she is known for her work on picture books about Indigenous people. She won the 2021 Caldecott Medal for her illustrations in We Are Water Protectors and is the first Indigenous artist to receive the award. Her book, Berry Song, was a Caldecott Honor book in 2023.
- **Dana Stabenow** is the award winning Alaskan author of the Kate Shugak series.

- Existing programming enhancements: (library programs coordinator and other staff will continue to implement the following programs with enhancements)
  - Wrangell Kids Club
    - This is a multi-departmental initiative that provides after-school programming for local youth, offering a safe, engaging environment for learning and recreation. The program features STEM activities, arts and crafts, literacy enrichment, and social development opportunities, ensuring that children have access to meaningful, structured activities outside of school hours. A dedicated Programming Coordinator would enhance this program by expanding and improving program offerings, recruiting and train volunteers, and integrating new educational experiences, such as guest speakers, STEM workshops, and hands-on learning opportunities. Additionally, the grant would provide the floor chairs and additional STEM supply upgrades, allowing the library to create a more adaptable space for Kids Club activities and ensuring that programming remains engaging and accessible for all participants.
  - Homework Hangout
    - This is currently a self-directed program where homeschool students can access educational materials and supplies in a flexible library setting. With the support of this grant, the program could become more interactive and engaging, offering guided STEM activities led by the Programming Coordinator or guest instructors. These more structured sessions would provide hands-on learning experiences, fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration among homeschool students. Additionally, enhanced STEM resources and curriculum materials would allow the library to offer a broader range of activities, ensuring that homeschool families have access to high-quality educational opportunities in a supportive community environment.
  - Baby Hour
    - Currently a passive program where parents bring their babies (ages 0-18 months) for unstructured socialization. This grant would allow the library to

enhance the program by providing more baby-specific toys and interactive activities that support early literacy, sensory exploration, and motor skill development. With additional resources, Baby Hour could offer a more engaging and enriching experience for both infants and caregivers, fostering early learning and community connections.

- Monthly Outreach Programs
  - The library currently provides opportunities for community engagement through craft mornings, family board games, local guest speakers, how-to presentations, and technology help sessions. With the support of this grant, these programs could be expanded and enhanced by incorporating new activities, guest experts, and interactive experiences. The Programming Coordinator would take an active role in planning and facilitating these events, ensuring a diverse range of topics and activities that appeal to all ages. Additional funding would allow for the purchase of materials, supplies, helping to create engaging, high-quality programs that strengthen community connections and encourage lifelong learning.
- Adult Book Club
  - Currently facilitated by a single staff member, the book club places a strain on their workload and limits the program's potential for growth. This grant would allow for additional staff support, ensuring the club can continue running smoothly while offering more frequent and engaging discussions.
- Monthly Tech Support for Seniors
  - Currently, Tech Savvy Seniors sessions are offered irregularly, making it difficult for seniors to access help when they need it. Establishing a consistent, once-a-month program will provide regular digital literacy support, helping seniors navigate smartphones, computers, online banking, social media, and other essential technologies. This grant would ensure dedicated staff time, updated instructional materials, and hands-on guidance, empowering seniors to develop digital literacy skills, stay connected, and confidently engage with technology in their daily lives.

- New Programming: The Programming Coordinator and other staff will plan, advertise and implement the following programs
  - eSports club
    - Utilize existing equipment to offer a youth e-sports program aimed at fostering social connection, skill development, and inclusivity among children ages 8-14. This program will encourage youth to engage in video gaming in person, building friendships and teamwork in a structured, supportive environment. Participants will meet weekly to practice and improve their gaming skills, guided by teen mentors who will provide coaching and feedback. After two to three months, the program will culminate in a community eSports tournament, held in partnership with the local civic center, where players can showcase their progress to family, friends, and community members. Beyond gaming, the program will emphasize strategic thinking, hand-eye coordination, communication,

leadership, and sportsmanship, providing an opportunity for children who may not participate in traditional sports to experience healthy competition. The program's success will be measured through participation data, skill assessments, and community feedback, ensuring it continues to evolve and serve the needs of Wrangell's youth.

- Additional Weekend Story Time
  - The library's current Toddler Story Time is highly popular, often drawing over 30 attendees, but it is only offered on weekdays, limiting access for families with working parents or caregivers. Adding a weekend story time would provide greater accessibility, allowing more families to participate in early literacy development and social engagement. This expansion aligns with the community's demand for more flexible programming options and ensures that all children, regardless of their family's schedule, have the opportunity to benefit from interactive storytelling, songs, and early learning activities.
- Year-Round Teen Book Club
  - The library plans to launch a Teen Book Club in the summer with a biweekly meeting schedule, but there is already interest in expanding it into a year-round program. Providing teens with a dedicated space for reading, discussion, and social engagement will encourage literacy, critical thinking, and community-building. This grant would support the program's continuation beyond summer, allowing for the purchase of new books, staff facilitation, and the creation of engaging discussions and activities that keep teens connected to reading throughout the school year.
- Local Expert events
  - The library will reach out to the following local experts to gauge interest in offering workshops, classes and talks:
    - Authors
    - Artists
    - Tlingit language speakers
    - Other local experts

- Our results will be tracked by taking program attendance, community surveys, and direct patron feedback. We will share our results with Wrangell's Assembly, and the community at large.

Project Results

This project will yield measurable improvements in library services and community engagement. Intended Outcomes:

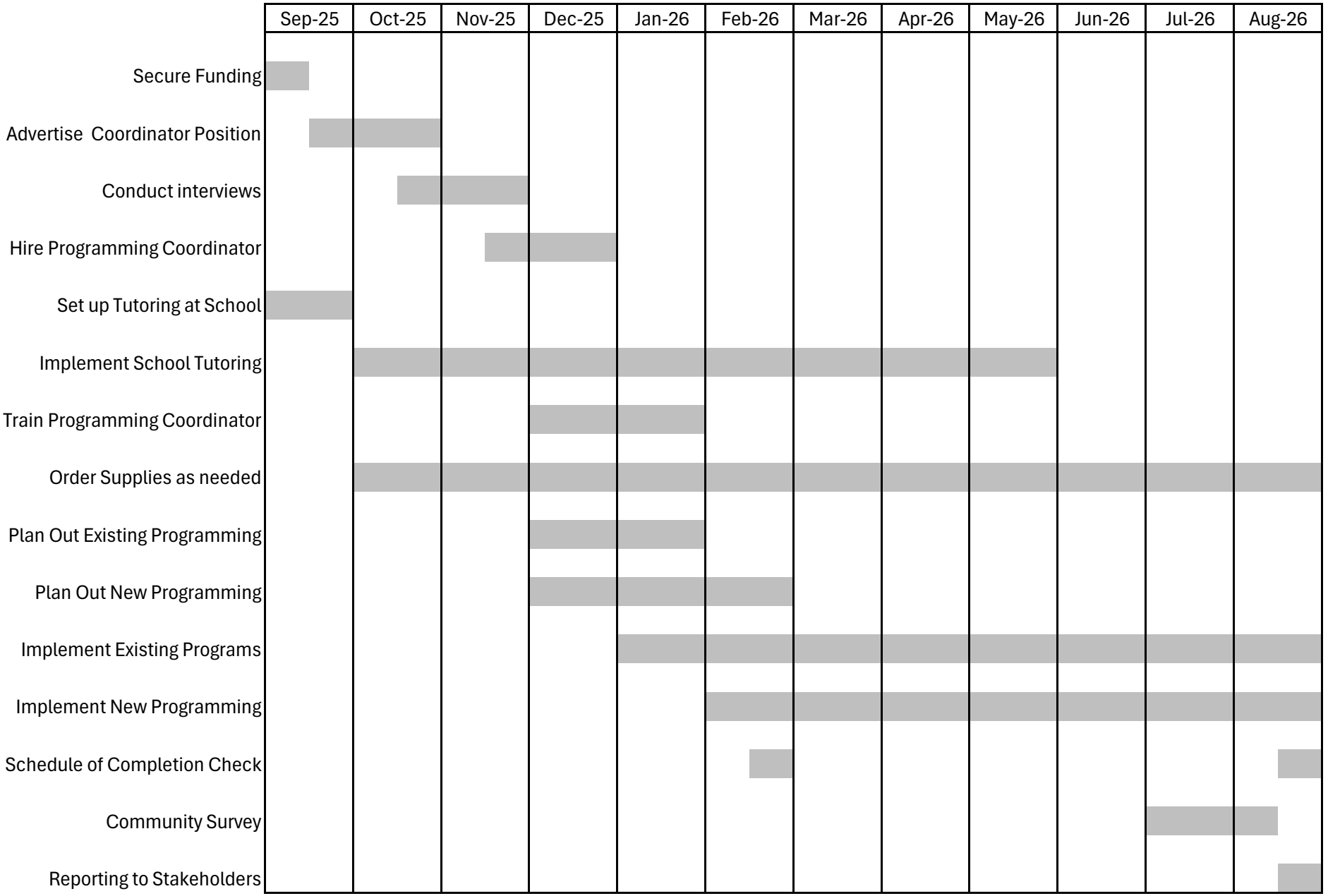
- The creation of a Programming Coordinator position will provide sustainable, high-quality library programming.
- The after-school tutoring program will support academic success for high school students.
- Hosting guest speakers and authors will enrich community learning and cultural engagement.
- Investments in STEM resources will introduce new educational opportunities, particularly in digital literacy and hands-on learning.
- The addition of mobile furniture will create a more adaptable library space, enhancing program accessibility.
- Expansion of existing and new programs will increase community engagement and accessibility for diverse audiences.

Evaluation and Sustainability:

- Program attendance, participant feedback, and engagement metrics will be tracked to evaluate success.
- Surveys and community meetings will be conducted to assess the effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
- The library will seek additional funding opportunities and local partnerships to sustain expanded programming beyond the grant period.
- Through this project, the Irene Ingle Public Library will enhance its role as an essential educational and cultural hub, ensuring sustained benefits for the Wrangell community.

NAG-ENHANCEMENT-FY25: Wrangell Cooperative Association

Schedule of Completion



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