



NATIVE AMERICAN LIBRARY SERVICES ENHANCEMENT GRANTS

Sample Application NAE-260866-OLS-26

Seminole Tribe of Florida

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$150,000

The Seminole Tribe of Florida will expand hands-on STEM education, digital literacy training, and culturally relevant learning pathways for children, teens, adults, and elders at libraries located within the Hollywood, Big Cypress, Brighton, and Immokalee Reservations. Community input was key to the development of the project, with members expressing interests in robotics, coding, and digital storytelling. Project funds will equip the four library branches with updated digital media tools, STEM and maker technologies, digital media equipment, and tools such as 3D printers, robotics kits, coding devices, Smartboards, and interactive displays. The project also supports curriculum development, staff training, community workshops, and will ultimately strengthen the educational, digital, and workforce capacity of the Seminole Tribe of Florida community.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Tribal profile
- Proposal 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 – Seminole Tribe of Florida

1. Brief History of the Tribe

The Seminole Tribe of Florida is a federally recognized Indian Tribe and sovereign nation, officially acknowledged by the U.S. Congress in 1957. The Tribe is the largest noncontiguous Tribe in the United States, with communities located across South and Central Florida. Tribal lands include eight federally designated reservations—Big Cypress, Brighton, Hollywood, Immokalee, Tampa—and trust lands in Coconut Creek, Fort Pierce, and Lakeland. The Tribe has a long-standing commitment to self-governance, education, cultural preservation, and community well-being. Approximately 5,000 Tribal members live across these diverse and predominantly rural communities.

2. Description of the Communities Served

The Seminole Tribe of Florida serves geographically dispersed communities with varying educational, technological, and cultural needs. Library services support Tribal members of all ages, their families, Tribal employees, and members of the surrounding community. The libraries are located within the Hollywood, Big Cypress, Brighton, and Immokalee Reservations, representing unique local populations and cultural traditions. Community needs include access to educational resources, technology, digital literacy, cultural preservation, and lifelong learning opportunities.

3. Description of Library or Archive Services Provided

The Seminole Tribal Library System, operated by the Tribe's Education Department, maintains a comprehensive collection of printed materials for all ages, Native American publications, and Seminole archival resources. The libraries provide programming such as preschool story time, after-school homework help, summer reading programs, computer classes, digital literacy instruction, STEM activities, and exhibitions. The mission of the Seminole Tribal Library System is to provide Tribal members with comprehensive access to information and educational resources that support learning, cultural preservation, and community engagement. Four library branches—located in Hollywood, Big Cypress, Brighton, and Immokalee—serve as local hubs for education, enrichment, and cultural continuity.

Narrative

Project Justification

This project aligns with the NAE Program Goal by strengthening the Tribe's capacity to provide high-quality library services. It directly supports Objective 1: Serving the learning needs and interests of the community, by expanding STEM education, digital literacy, and lifelong learning opportunities, and secondarily supports Objective 3 through enhanced access to technology, digital resources, and cultural preservation tools.

This grant proposal seeks funding to strengthen the educational, digital, and workforce capacity of the Seminole Tribe of Florida community. With the support of these funds, we will expand access to culturally responsive STEM learning, structured educational programming, and up to date teaching tools. Enhanced infrastructure, innovative classes, hands-on workshops, and expanded instructional resources will allow the Seminole Tribal Library System to serve as a community hub for lifelong learning.

By investing in this initiative, the Library Program will further its role as a center for digital inclusion and community empowerment, supporting children, teens, adults, and elders in gaining the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in an increasingly technology driven future.

Native American communities face unique challenges in accessing modern educational tools, STEM resources, and digital learning opportunities. Currently, Tribal libraries lack the technology necessary to support STEM education, digital literacy, and cultural preservation efforts. This project directly addresses these gaps by introducing STEM learning pathways, structured educational programming, and modern teaching tools into community libraries. The initiative will create a dynamic learning environment that integrates traditional knowledge with present day technologies, enabling community members to explore science, engineering, digital fabrication, and cultural expression in meaningful ways.

Studies have shown, American Indian and Alaska Native students have lower college graduation rates than other ethnic groups in the United States. These students often face a variety of barriers to completing their education (Source: Keith, J. F., Stastny, S. N., & Brunt, A. (2016). Barriers and strategies for success for American Indian college students: A review. *Journal of College Student Development*, 57(6), 698–714.). This grant proposal outlines a project designed to empower Native American communities by strengthening the educational, digital, and workforce capacities of community libraries. The initiative aligns with broader goals of promoting STEM education, fostering cultural preservation, and bridging the digital divide. With your support, this project will contribute to the

advancement of Native American communities by providing access to innovative resources that will leave a lasting impact on education, creativity, and cultural preservation.

The primary target group for this project includes elementary, middle, and high school students, as well as adult Tribal members, elders, and other community members. While there is a growing interest in technology across the community, many individuals have had limited exposure to STEM education and emerging technologies. By offering accessible, hands-on STEM learning opportunities, this initiative will help bridge that gap and build communitywide confidence, familiarity, and long-term engagement with modern tools and digital skills.

Community input was central to shaping this project. Library staff gathered feedback from youth participating in existing programs, who expressed strong interest in robotics, coding, and digital media tools. Adults and elders in digital literacy sessions shared a desire for expanded technology support and culturally relevant digital storytelling opportunities. Throughout the planning of this project, staff observations, informal conversations, and participant requests were documented and directly informed the selection of STEM tools, curriculum topics, and program formats included in this proposal.

Project Work Plan

The project will be implemented over a 24-month period across the Hollywood, Big Cypress, Immokalee, and Brighton library locations. Each site will be equipped with up-to-date tools and technologies, including digital media equipment, STEM and maker tools such as 3D printers, robotics kits, coding devices, Smartboards, and interactive displays. The project will create an accessible environment where community members can explore STEM concepts, develop technical skills, and engage in culturally relevant projects that honor and preserve Tribal knowledge. The specific activities are as follows:

Phase 1 (Months 1–3) Project Launch and Setup

- Finalize procurement of STEM, digital equipment, and instructional resources.
- Assess and prepare designated areas at each library.
- Develop safety policies and equipment usage guidelines.

Phase 2 (Months 3–5) Training and Curriculum Development

- Conduct professional development workshops on robotics facilitation, 3D printing and design software, coding platforms, and digital media production.
- Develop age-appropriate lesson plans for early childhood STEM exploration, environmental science connected to Tribal lands, digital storytelling of Tribal

history, youth robotics, coding clubs, teen technology workshops, and adult/elder digital literacy courses.

Phase 3 (Months 6–9) Community Launch

- Create a STEM programming calendar featuring robotics clubs, coding workshops, 3D printing classes, STEM education sessions, and digital literacy workshops.
- Conduct outreach through the Seminole Tribune, TW announcements, Education Department social media platforms, and Monthly Community Meetings.

Phase 4 (Months 10–21) Implementation and Workforce Integration

- Implement STEM series and teen programming, including digital media production and coding.
- Launch adult workforce technology training.
- Host STEM career exploration visits.
- Prepare the IMLS midyear performance report.

Phase 5 (Months 18–24) Evaluation and Reporting

- Conduct participant surveys.
- Evaluate skill growth benchmarks.
- Prepare the IMLS final performance report.

Potential risks include equipment delivery delays, staff scheduling constraints, and high demand for technology resources. The project team will mitigate these risks by maintaining multiple vendor options to address procurement delays, implementing cross-training to ensure adequate staff coverage, and coordinating with Tribal IT for troubleshooting and maintenance support.

Personnel for this project include Media staff, who will facilitate hands on STEM and digital media training and manage workshops and events. The project will be supported by the Library Program Supervisor, Media Specialist/Coordinator, and Library Assistants. The Education Department Director and Assistant Director will oversee the project.

The Education Department will collaborate with various Tribal departments, including Accounting, Grants and Compliance, and the Tribal Schools, to ensure successful implementation.

The Grants Management Department has successfully managed Tribal grants for many years. The Seminole Tribe of Florida has not had an audit finding in more than 15 years. The Grants Management Department follows established Policies and Procedures that apply

organization wide, with the most recent revision completed in 2024. The Tribe maintains a centralized grants process covering pre award preparation, internal approval procedures (including Council approval), and grant award processes.

Project Results

This project will produce meaningful, measurable outcomes that strengthen educational access, digital inclusion, and cultural preservation beyond the grant period.

The intended results include:

- **Enhance Digital Literacy and Technology Access**
Community members of all ages will gain confidence and skills in using digital tools for learning, communication, and creative expression. Increased access to devices and high-quality software will reduce digital inequities and support academic and workforce readiness.
- **Expand Educational Opportunities**
Youth will benefit from STEM and digital media programs that build critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. Adults will gain practical technology skills that support employment and financial stability. Elders will receive support navigating digital platforms while contributing to cultural preservation initiatives.
- **Increase Community Engagement**
The Seminole Tribal Library System will continue to grow as a vibrant hub for learning, creativity, and cultural preservation. Intergenerational programs will strengthen relationships and foster a strong sense of community pride.

Project results will be shared with the community through STEM showcases, digital storytelling exhibitions, and presentations at Monthly Community Meetings. The Library Program will disseminate updates and outcomes through the Seminole Tribune, Tribal-wide announcements, and Education Department communication channels. A summary of project findings, program participation, and lessons learned will be provided to Tribal leadership and collaborating departments to support sustainability and future planning.

Key Program Staff

Padmini Dukharan- Library Program Supervisor (Primary Project Lead) Padmini will serve as the primary Project Director responsible for day-to-day management and implementation of all grant activities. She will oversee the rollout of STEM programming at each library site, coordinate schedules, supervise Media and Library staff involved in

training and workshop delivery, and ensure that program activities align with community needs. Padmini will monitor progress toward goals, maintain internal communication across participating library branches, manage data collection for evaluation, and prepare programmatic content for required IMLS performance reporting.

Marisa Schnirman-Assistant Director, Education Department: Marisa will provide program-level oversight, supporting Padmini in managing implementation across the four Tribal library locations. She will help guide curriculum development, ensure alignment with departmental education initiatives, assist with staff training coordination, and facilitate collaboration with Tribal Schools, Communications, and other departments. Marisa will also review and approve project materials, progress updates, and evaluation findings before submission to leadership.

Russell Browan- Director, Education Department Russell will provide high-level administrative oversight and ensure the project aligns with the Tribe's broader educational goals and strategic direction. His responsibilities include confirming that resources and staffing support are available, resolving any interdepartmental issues, and reviewing major project deliverables. Russell will help ensure that the STEM and digital literacy initiatives complement existing departmentwide programming and meet the community's long-term learning needs.

Bryan Granie-Senior Director of Administration: Bryan will ensure that the project is administratively supported and will provide high-level administrative oversight. His involvement will be focused on supporting the project team by facilitating necessary administrative processes such as procurement routing, vendor approvals, and coordination with Accounting and Grants/Compliance on required documentation. Bryan will monitor the project from an administrative helping to ensure that financial and compliance components are properly supported, while leaving day-to-day program operations and activity execution to the project lead and Education Department program staff.

Schedule of Completion

Activity	Months 1–3	Months 4–6	Months 7–12	Months 13–18	Months 19–24
Form working group	●●●				
Purchase & install technology	●●●	●●	●		
Curriculum development (STEM, photography, digital literacy)	●●●	●●	●		
Full program rollout			●●●	●●●	●●
Youth photography & digital storytelling		●	●●●	●●●	●●●
STEM & maker labs		●	●●●	●●●	●●●
Adult digital literacy training		●	●●●	●●●	●●●
Elder technology & cultural sessions		●	●●●	●●●	●●●
Oral history & cultural documentation		●	●●●	●●●	●●●
Digitization of photos, documents, recordings		●	●●●	●●●	●●●
Community showcases & exhibitions			●	●●	●●●
Mid-project evaluation			●●●		
Final evaluation					●●●
Sustainability planning & staff training				●●	●●●

Legend:

- = Activity occurring
- = Major activity period
- = Peak activity / primary focus