



NATIVE AMERICAN LIBRARY SERVICES ENHANCEMENT GRANTS

Sample Application NAE-260867-OLS-26

Gun Lake Tribe

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$122,827

The Gun Lake Tribe's Gagé Gwidokémen (Forever We Build Community) project will provide opportunities for Tribal citizens to engage with cultural crafts and teachings, enhancing the tribe's Learning Center and Library services. The Learning Center and Library includes a makerspace that hosts popular weekly Widoké (Making Community) nights, hands-on learning sessions covering topics such as learning to sew regalia, beading, moccasin making, weaving, quilting, graphic design and 3D printing. Grant funds will be used to replace and acquire crafting equipment, such as engravings and embroidery, which the tribe currently does not have, and participants have expressed interest in using. Additionally, funds will support guest teachers to present traditional arts and crafts and STEM. The project will provide direct benefit to the Tribal citizens within the tribe's five-county service area of Allegan, Barry, Kalamazoo, Kent, and Ottawa counties of Michigan.

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.

Gagé Gwidokémen (Forever We Build Community) Project Tribal Profile

The mission of the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi, d.b.a. Gun Lake Tribe, is, ““We, the members of Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi, will maintain our elders’ vision, integrity, spirituality, culture and economic self-sufficiency by protecting our sovereignty, treaty rights, traditions, land and natural resources for our future generations.” The mission of the Tribe was included in the Constitution of the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi. The Tribe’s Constitution was adopted on July 6, 2000.

The Tribe offers programs and services to Tribal Citizens, Government staff, Casino employees, members of other federally recognized and historic, state recognized Tribes, household members of Tribal Citizens, and other community members. Except for specific programs and services reserved for Tribal Citizens only, many of the Tribe’s programs and services are targeted for individuals who live in the Tribe’s five-county service area—Allegan, Barry, Kalamazoo, Kent, and Ottawa counties of Michigan. The Tribe currently has 625 enrolled members. Of the 625 enrolled members, 388 members, or 62%, reside in the five-county service area of the Tribe. The Tribe is comprised largely of Tribal Youth, 242 or 38% of the membership population being the age of eighteen and younger. Of the 625 enrolled members, 108 members or 17% of the membership, are the age of fifty years and older. This demographic is also understood and treated as Tribal Elders.

The Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi received federal recognition (also referred to as federal re-affirmation) in 1999. The Tribe’s Government is headquartered in Shelbyville, Michigan, a small, unincorporated community in Allegan County. The area immediately surrounding the Tribe’s base of operations is predominantly rural and defined by agriculture.

The Tribe’s Education Department will be responsible for carrying out the work on this project. The Education Department’s mission is to “promote and assist our Tribal Citizens with educational opportunities that encourage and support an enriched standard of living through life-long learning.” The Education Department is comprised of five employees, including an Education Director, Education Assistant, Tribal Librarian, Higher Education Specialist, and Youth Specialist. The Education Department manages the Tribe’s Higher Education & Continuing Education programming and the Learning Center, which is the Tribe’s library and hub for learning for the Tribal Community.

Gagé Gwidokémen (Forever We Build Community) Project

Narrative

The Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi, d.b.a. Gun Lake Tribe (Tribe), is seeking \$122,827 for the Gagé Gwidokémen (Forever We Build Community) project. The Tribe became Federally recognized in August 1999 and is governed by an elected Tribal Council of seven Citizens. The Tribe's service area consists of Allegan, Barry, Kalamazoo, Kent and Ottawa counties of Michigan. Roughly 62% of the Tribe's Citizens reside in this five-county service area. The Tribe's Library program provides programs and services to Citizens, non-citizen natives, families of citizens, and the community at large.

The Learning Center and Library were established in 2011 and are overseen by the Tribe's Education Department and the Tribal Librarian. The Learning Center focuses on providing library services, such maintaining a physical collection focused on Indigenous authors and issues for borrowing, digital library offerings for Tribal Citizens unable to access the Learning Center, a home library program and community space, to Tribal Community members. The Tribe's combined Library and Learning Center is located on the second floor of the Tribe's Administration Building and is accessible to all Citizens during the workday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM as well as during 6 evenings a month. 17% of respondents to a Needs Assessment completed by Tribal Citizens aged 18 and up in 2021 highlighted the desire for opportunities to practice traditional arts and crafts and gather as a community. In 2025, using a previous IMLS Enhancement grant, the Education department started hosting Widoké (Making Community) programs. Widoké programs offer hands-on evening learning sessions that cover topics such as learning to sew regalia, beading, moccasin making, weaving, quilting, graphic design and 3D printing in the Learning Center. A portion of the Learning Center has been transformed into a usable Makerspace. A group of 20 participants regularly attend the Widoké programs, allowing them to strengthen community while engaging in traditional crafts and teachings.

Project Justification

What current need, challenge, or opportunity will your project address and how was it identified?

The current need the project will address is to increase opportunities for Tribal Citizens to engage meaningfully with cultural crafts and teachings while also strengthening community ties in a shared community (or Third) space. The space provided allows Tribal Citizens to create traditional items while also integrating modern digital tools like 3D printers and laser cutters to continue to innovate while maintaining their traditional crafts. By engaging with cultural crafts and teachings in a group setting, Tribal Citizens will

increase understanding in their culture and build relationships with other Tribal Citizens. Increasing opportunities to engage with cultural crafts and teachings will be achieved by improving the existing Makerspace through upgrading and adding equipment and hosting guest teachers monthly.

Each Wednesday, the Tribe hosts weekly Widoké nights in the Learning Center, hands-on learning sessions that cover topics such as learning to sew regalia, making moccasins, beading, and other culturally relevant crafts. Twice a month on Thursdays, additional Nsabé (Discovery) programs are held, focusing on furthering education related to STEM, higher education, and archival preservation. Citizens have expressed desires to acquire new and upgraded equipment to further utilize the Makerspace in the Learning Center and broaden the craft offerings during Widoké programs. The current equipment used in the Learning Center Makerspace is old and was slowly acquired over time. Several pieces of equipment, such as the sewing machines, are in need of repairs that may cost more than a new unit. Citizens have also expressed interest in crafts that the Tribe does not currently have the equipment for. Examples of these crafts include engravings and embroidery. Project funds will be used to purchase new equipment to replace worn-down machines and introduce additional crafts to the Learning Center Makerspace.

To continue providing quality education and cultural teachings, project funds will also be used to provide an honorarium to two guest teachers a month. The teachers will change each month to ensure a wide variety of topics are covered. Guest Cultural teachers will present at Wednesday Widoké programs twice a month to focus on traditional teachings and crafts. Guest teachers will also present once a month at the Thursday Nsabé programs to continue the focus on STEM, higher education, and archival preservation.

Who is the primary audience for your project and how have they been involved in the planning?

The primary audience for the project is the Tribal Citizens within the Tribe's five-county service area of Allegan, Barry, Kalamazoo, Kent, and Ottawa counties of Michigan. There are 386 Tribal Citizens in the five-county service area. The project will primarily focus on adults within the Tribal Community, though youth will be allowed to participate in programs and attend the Learning Center open hours as well. 68% of Tribal Citizens who live within the five-county service area are adults ages 18 and older.

Tribal Citizens have been able to provide input through a needs assessment and during the existing programs. 17% of respondents to a Needs Assessment completed by Tribal Citizens aged 18 and up in 2021 highlighted the desire for opportunities to practice traditional arts and crafts and gather as a community. Citizens have discussed their desires

for further education and opportunities to access the Learning Center Makerspace with the Project Director and other staff during existing programs and while utilizing the Makerspace during the Tribe's regular office hours.

Project Work Plan

What specific activities will you carry out and in what sequence?

The grant activities contribute to achieving the overall objective of Improve Learning Center Capacity.

- Objective 1: Improve Learning Center Capacity
 - o Activity 1: Purchase Supplies and Equipment for Widoké Programs
New and upgraded crafting equipment and supplies will be purchased to improve the existing Makerspace within the Learning Center and to allow additional crafting opportunities during Widoké events.
 - o Activity 2: Host Guest Teachers Three Times Each Month
The Learning Center will host guest teachers three times a month, with a teacher attending the Wednesday Widoké program twice to focus on cultural teachings and another attending a Thursday Nsabé program once to focus on STEM.

Who will execute each activity? Be sure to identify all key staff.

The Gun Lake Tribal Education department will oversee the project. The Tribal Librarian, Karen Bos, will be the Project Director and therefore responsible for executing each activity. Karen will oversee purchasing supplies and equipment as well as scheduling the guest teachers. Karen has experience with managing grants, including an annual IMLS Basic grant to support the Tribe's library collection and a previous IMLS Enhancement grant to increase the Tribe's capacity for assisting with higher education. Karen will meet regularly with the Tribe's Finance department to review grant spending. Karen will also attend quarterly grant meetings with the Tribe's Finance and Grants, Planning and Management departments to provide updates on project progress.

How have you involved stakeholders in the planning and development of the project and how will you incorporate their input throughout the project?

Tribal Citizens have been able to provide input in the planning and development of the project in several ways. Responses to the 2021 Tribal Needs assessment highlighted the desire for more traditional activities and teachings, including traditional arts and crafts. The responses also identified the importance of practicing the activities and teachings in a group setting to strengthen community bonds. The Education department meets regularly

with the Kinomáge (Education) Committee to determine the next steps for the Learning Center, including prioritizing programs and events. Participants of the existing Widoké programs discussed ways to improve and expand the events, such as suggesting ideas for crafts and learning opportunities. Widoké participants and Learning Center users have identified areas where they are interested in increasing their cultural and technical knowledge through both structured programs and by utilizing the Learning Center outside of the Tribe's regular business hours.

What existing resources within the Tribe, assets within the library or community, and/or potential partners will you use during this project to aid in its success?

The Education department will partner with the Tribe's Language and Culture and Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) departments throughout the project. Language and Culture and THPO will assist with the programs by providing cultural teachings, information on the Tribe's history, and education sessions related to cultural and archival preservation. The Education department will work with the Tribe's Finance and Grants, Planning and Management departments to ensure all grant activities are in compliance both financially and programmatically. The Finance department will assist with tracking spending. The Grants, Planning and Management department will provide assistance as needed for any programmatic items, such as key change requests.

The existing Makerspace within the Tribe's Learning Center will be used for project activities. The Learning Center is located on the second floor of the Gun Lake Tribe's Administration building. The Learning Center is currently open five days a week from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM with extended hours until 8 PM on Wednesdays for the Widoké program and twice a month on Thursdays for Nsabé programs. The Makerspace currently has several machines to assist with crafts and other projects, such as sewing machines and a 3D printer. There is ample space within the Learning Center for Tribal Citizens to work on projects and spend quality time in community.

How and with whom will you share your work's results and lessons learned?

Tribal Citizens will benefit from the project throughout and past the project period. Supplies and updated equipment will be used during the Widoké programs, which will allow Citizens to try new culturally relevant crafts and complete the projects they work on. The guest teachers will provide culturally relevant teachings and opportunities for participants to gain a better understanding of traditional practices and modern STEM-related ideas.

In addition to the ongoing benefits, the Project Director will put together a presentation to be presented at several education conferences, such as the ATALM conference and the

Michigan Indigenous Education conference. The presentation will discuss the development and growth of the Learning Center Makerspace, including methodologies and best practices discovered throughout the project period.

Project Results

What are your project's intended results and/or product(s), and how will they address the need, challenge, or opportunity you identified in the Project Justification section?

By the end of the project period, the new and updated equipment and supplies will provide engagement with cultural teachings and crafts by ensuring all Learning Center users have the materials and tools necessary to participate in Widoké programs. The guest teachers will provide important information spanning a variety of topics, providing continuing education to the participants.

How do you define success for this project, and how will it be evaluated?

The project will be considered a success if there is an increase in participation, Learning Center use, and understanding of cultural teachings. The existing Widoké program currently has a group of 20 regular participants. By hosting an additional program each week, the Tribe hopes to increase the number to 30 participants by the end of the project period. Understanding of cultural teachings will be evaluated by tracking the number of traditional arts and crafts completed by Learning Center users.

How will you disseminate the results (deliverables, lessons learned, etc.) of the project to the primary audience?

Tribal Citizens will be made aware of the Widoké programs through existing communication channels, such as the weekly email, the monthly Tribal newsletter and the biweekly Kinomagé Family Newsletter. Flyers will be posted around the Tribal Government campus as well. Participants in the Widoké programs will be able to take their projects home at the end of each session or leave them in the Learning Center Makerspace to continue work during future sessions.

The Project Director will put together a presentation to be presented at several education conferences, such as the ATALM conference and the Michigan Indigenous Education conference. The presentation will discuss the development and growth of the Library Center Makerspace, including methodologies and best practices discovered throughout the project period.

How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance?

The Gun Lake Tribal Council supports the activities proposed in this project. If feasible, the Gun Lake Tribal Council will continue to fund the activities proposed in this project after the project is closed.

If it is not possible to continue funding the project activities post project period, the Project Coordinator anticipates that the project will have built a framework that the Education Department can use to implement the same or similar activities in the future. The Education Department views this project as a next logical step in enhancing its existing educational programming – by building this foundation, the Education Department will have gained additional data, experience, and rapport with Tribal Citizens that will inform the department on needed projects to meet the needs of the Tribal Community.

10/1/2026

			Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
Task	Start	End												
1. Purchase Supplies and Equipment for Widoké	10/1/2026	3/30/2027												
2. Host Guest Teachers 3 Times per Month	10/1/2026	9/30/2027												

10/1/2027

			Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
Task	Start	End												
1. Purchase Supplies and Equipment for Widoké	10/1/2027	3/30/2028												
2. Host Guest Teachers 3 Times per Month	10/1/2027	9/30/2028												