



NATIVE AMERICAN LIBRARY SERVICES ENHANCEMENT GRANTS

Sample Application NAE-260888-OLS-26

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$150,000

The Jones Academy Library of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma will enhance its library services to better meet the community identified needs of Jones Academy students, teachers, families, and Tribal members. The project will strengthen library staff capacity through funding salaries for the Librarian and Library Assistant. Funds will also support the acquisition of high-interest and culturally relevant books, the replacement of worn or outdated materials, digital literacy instruction, and storytelling, language, and history workshops. As a result, the library aims to increase student engagement, improve literacy outcomes, and promote cultural enrichment.

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.



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma: Jones Academy FY26 Native American Library Services Enhancement Grants

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) is a federally recognized Native American Tribe that oversees a 10,922 square mile reservation in southeastern Oklahoma, which is currently home to approximately 39 Native American tribal nations. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma has more than 230,000 enrolled members as of late 2025.

The CNO reservation's districts overlay 13 Oklahoma counties: Atoka, Bryan, Choctaw, Coal, Haskell, Hughes, Johnston, Latimer, LeFlore, McCurtain, Pittsburg, Pontotoc, and Pushmataha. Currently, many Native Americans within the reservation live side-by-side with people of all ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the CNO works not only for the benefit of its tribal members but also to improve the lives of the entire population.

Founded in 1891 by the Choctaw Nation, Jones Academy is a no-cost American Indian boarding school located four miles north of Hartshorne in Eastern Oklahoma. The school is nestled among 540 acres of rolling pastures and trees at the foot of the Pochontas Mountains in Oklahoma's Ouachita Mountain range. Approximately 200 students attend grades 1-12 each year, from tribal nations across the US, particularly our neighboring communities in Oklahoma. Its mission is to empower Native American youth (grades 1-12) by providing individualized care and development, focusing on educational, cultural, and spiritual opportunities.

With a reservation-wide average unemployment rate of 4.6%, the CNO faces an uphill battle in ensuring that its residents are afforded every opportunity possible. For many years, the CNO has worked to become the "employer of choice" in Southeastern Oklahoma and currently has approximately 13,495¹ staff. The Choctaw Nation is proud to provide programs like Job for the Day that offer a full-time, temporary position to Native Americans and/or young professionals looking for permanent employment.

The 13 counties in the reservation are among the poorest in the state, with poverty levels ranging from 12.6% (Pontotoc County) to 23.7 (Pushmataha County)². Poverty in this region disproportionately impacts the residents of the CNO, many of whom live below the poverty level. However, the Nation hopes to meet the basic needs of Native American residents through services such as the Low-Income Housing Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Affordable Connectivity Program which assist with the cost of utilities and internet services.

Choctaw Nation provides services like Head Start programs to serve economically disadvantaged families with young children and offers assistance to those seeking higher education. Despite the significant challenges, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma strives to 'Live out the Chahta (Choctaw) Spirit of faith, family, and culture' as it continues to focus on providing opportunities for growth and prosperity.

¹ 2024 US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates on statewide and individual counties 2023 ACS 5-year estimates

² <https://www.odot.org/ok-gov-docs/PROGRAMS-AND-PROJECTS/Grants/FASTLANE-US69/REPORTS-TECH-INFO/Tribal%20Data.pdf>



Project Justification

For the FY26 Native American Library Services Enhancement Grant, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) Jones Academy will prioritize efforts toward Program Goal: ***Develop, enhance, or disseminate practices, programs, models, tools, or library staff training to strengthen library and archival services for Native American Tribes*** and the corresponding ***Objective 1: Serve the learning needs and interests of the community***. This project directly advances the Native American Library Services Enhancement (NAE) program goal by developing and strengthening a student-centered library service model that expands literacy programming, increases access to culturally responsive resources, and builds sustained staff capacity to meet the evolving learning needs and interests of Native students.

The Primary Audience is Jones Academy's Native American students in a rural southeastern Oklahoma community where access to educational resources, digital tools, and culturally relevant programming remains limited. The hybrid campus is home to approximately 200 students in grades 1st–12th from across the United States and also supports non-residential students from the community during regular school hours. Many students come from underserved backgrounds and face barriers including limited broadband access, reduced exposure to career pathways, and gaps in academic support resources. The Jones Academy Library plays a significant role as both an academic support hub and a community resource.

The need for expanded library services and sustained professional staffing was identified through a combination of internal observations, student engagement trends, and broader data on rural and Native student access to educational resources. Local observations at Jones Academy indicate increasing demand for academic support, digital literacy assistance, and culturally relevant materials. These findings align with national data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)¹, which highlights persistent disparities in access to educational resources for Native American students, as well as data from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) showing that rural and Tribal communities continue to experience limited broadband access². Together, these sources helped define both the scope and urgency of strengthening library services at Jones Academy.

Jones Academy is a vibrant educational and cultural hub that plays a significant role in supporting students and the Hartshorne, Oklahoma community, including many Choctaw Nation citizens. The Academy is deeply committed to academic excellence and cultural enrichment, and there is an exciting opportunity to further enhance its library services by expanding dedicated professional staffing to better support evolving learning needs, literacy growth, and cultural engagement. Students today require more than access to books. They need guided support in information literacy, digital research skills, and culturally relevant learning resources.

¹ National Center for Education Statistics. (2021). National Indian Education Study 2019: American Indian and Alaska Native students at grades 4 and 8 (NCES 2021-018).

² Federal Communications Commission. (2019). Broadband deployment report (as cited in Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2023).



The primary audience for this project includes Native American students at Jones Academy, with a secondary audience of their teachers, families, and the surrounding community partners. Teachers will benefit from increased instructional support and access to curated resources that enhance classroom learning, families will gain expanded opportunities to engage in their children's literacy and educational development, and community partners will benefit from strengthened collaboration and shared programming that supports cultural preservation and community-wide learning. These groups have informed project planning through ongoing engagement with school and library staff. Student survey findings, informal discussions, and observed usage patterns have highlighted a need for increased access to research assistance materials. Teachers and school leadership have contributed to planning through collaboration on curriculum support needs and identification of service gaps. These combined insights directly shaped the development and priorities of this project.

Jones Academy seeks IMLS Enhancement funding to support salaries and fringe benefits for a Librarian and Library Assistant to sustain and strengthen library services that meet the evolving learning needs of Native students, families, and the broader community. As a Tribal school library serving Native communities, the Jones Academy Library functions as a critical knowledge and resource center that supports academic success, cultural learning, digital literacy, and community engagement. Funding will allow dedicated library staff to plan, implement, and deliver high-quality library services aligned with Objective 1.

The Librarian and Library Assistant will provide direct support to students, teachers and families through instructional programming, literacy initiatives, research assistance, and access to print and digital resources that reflect Native culture, language, and community priorities. Staff will also curate and maintain culturally relevant collections, support classroom instruction, and assist students in developing information literacy and lifelong learning skills.

Salaries and fringe benefits are essential to maintaining consistent, professional staffing that ensures reliable access to library services throughout the academic year. These positions enable the library to remain open and responsive to community needs, expand outreach efforts, and serve as a safe and inclusive space that promotes educational achievement and community wellness. Dedicated staffing ensures continuity, accountability, and the ability to assess and improve services over time, key factors in sustaining meaningful outcomes.

The proposed project aligns with IMLS priorities by expanding equitable access to information, strengthening educational support systems, and fostering community-centered library services. By investing in professional library staff, Jones Academy will be better positioned to meet the diverse and evolving needs of its students while preserving and promoting the cultural knowledge that is central to the community it serves.

Ultimately, this project is not simply about staffing, it is about creating a dynamic, inclusive library program that empowers learners, supports educators, and strengthens the broader community.

Work Plan

Project Leadership and Staffing



Joy Tribbey will serve as Project Director for the FY26 Native American Library Services Enhancement Grant at Jones Academy. Ms. Tribbey holds a master's degree in education with an emphasis in Curriculum and Instruction and will oversee all grant activities, including fiscal management, reporting, evaluation, and overall project coordination.

Sierra McAfee, Librarian at Jones Academy, holds a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and a master's degree in library media. Ms. McAfee will lead program planning and implementation, including literacy programming, technology integration, and student engagement activities.

Sonia Donaires, Assistant Librarian, holds a master's degree in public education and will support program delivery, coordinate daily library operations, assist students, and help facilitate programming. Both Ms. McAfee and Ms. Donaires will be supported as part-time employees through grant funding.

Project Activities and Sequence

The project will be implemented in four phases over the school year:

Phase 1: Planning and Capacity Building (Months 1–2)

- Conduct project kickoff meeting with staff and stakeholders
- Assess current library resources, technology, and student needs
- Upgrade technology (computers, Wi-Fi access points, software)
- Expand print and digital collections with culturally relevant materials
- Staff attend regional/state library conferences and Tribal education workshops

Lead Staff:

- Tribbey: Oversight, budget, coordination
- McAfee: Needs assessment, training coordination
- Donaires: Inventory, setup, logistical support

Phase 2: Program Implementation (Months 3–9)

- Deliver digital literacy instruction integrated into library services
- Facilitate STEM and technology workshops
- Introduce and train students on digital tools (laptops, databases, creative software)
- Maintain and expand after-school (M-F, 7:30 am -3:00 pm) and weekend programming (various times and days during the weekend)

Lead Staff:



- McAfee: Program delivery lead
- Donaires: Program support and student assistance
- Tribbey: Monitoring progress and compliance

Phase 3: Community and Cultural Engagement (Months 4–10)

- Conduct two cultural preservation workshops per semester (storytelling, language, history)
- Expand library hours for after school access
- Strengthen partnerships with Tribal organizations, local schools, and community groups

Lead Staff:

- McAfee: Event planning and partnerships
- Donaires: Event coordination and outreach support
- Tribbey: Partnership development and oversight

Phase 4: Evaluation and Dissemination (Months 10–12)

- Collect and analyze program data (participation, outcomes, feedback)
- Conduct surveys and feedback sessions with students and staff
- Prepare final reports and evaluation summaries
- Share results with stakeholders

Lead Staff:

- Tribbey: Evaluation oversight and reporting
- McAfee: Data collection and program reflection
- Donaires: Survey distribution and data support

Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholders, including students, families, Tribal education representatives, and community partners, were consulted during the planning phase through informal discussions and needs assessments to identify gaps in literacy, technology access, and culturally relevant programming.

Ongoing stakeholder input will be incorporated through:

- Surveys and feedback forms for students and staff
- Engagement with Tribal organizations and educators to ensure cultural alignment



- Regular communication with school leadership and community partners

This continuous feedback loop will ensure the program remains responsive to community needs.

Resources, Assets, and Partnerships

The project will leverage existing resources and partnerships, including:

- Jones Academy library facilities, collections, and staff expertise
- Existing school technology infrastructure and instructional support
- Tribal cultural resources, including language, storytelling, and historical knowledge
- Partnerships with Tribal organizations, local schools, and community groups to support programming and outreach
- Regional and state library networks for professional development and resource sharing

These assets will strengthen program implementation and sustainability.

Dissemination of Results and Lessons Learned

Project results and lessons learned will be shared with multiple audiences through:

- Reports submitted to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)
- Presentations to Tribal leadership, school administration, and community stakeholders
- Presentations at after school activities
- Digital communication channels, including the library's online resource portal
- Collaboration with partner organizations and participation in professional conferences

These efforts will ensure transparency, promote best practices, and support replication of successful strategies in other Tribal and educational settings.

Project Results

Jones Academy seeks to cultivate an engaging and culturally responsive library environment that encourages students to develop a genuine interest in reading. The intended results of this project include: (1) the acquisition of new, high-interest, and culturally relevant books; (2) the replacement of worn or outdated materials; and (3) the implementation of structured and informal programming, such as literary events, cultural presentations, and after-school activities. These efforts directly address the need to increase student engagement with reading materials, strengthen cultural connections, and improve literacy outcomes by creating a welcoming and meaningful library experience.

**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma/Jones Academy
FY26 Native American Library Services Enhancement Grant Program**



Success for this project will be defined by measurable increases in student engagement and library usage. Key indicators will include: a 25% increase in voluntary student visits to the library outside of scheduled class time; participation rates in library programming; and circulation data reflecting increased book checkouts. Baseline data will be drawn from the 2025-2026 academic year in which the Jones Academy library recorded total voluntary visits per month, total program participants per semester, and total items circulated annually. Additional qualitative measures will include student and staff feedback collected through surveys and informal interviews. Data will be collected and reviewed throughout the grant period to assess progress and inform any necessary adjustments to programming and resources.

The results and lessons learned from the project will be disseminated to students, staff, families, and the broader Choctaw Nation community, through multiple channels. These will include school newsletters, social media updates, community presentations, and internal reports shared with stakeholders. Opportunities to highlight student participation, such as showcasing projects, crafts, and event outcomes, will further promote engagement and awareness of the program's impact.

Sustainability beyond the grant period will be ensured through several strategies. Books purchased through grant funding will remain part of the library's permanent collection, providing long-term access to updated and relevant materials. Programming developed during the grant will continue and evolve based on collected data and participant feedback. Additionally, partnerships with community members, including Tribal speakers and cultural demonstrators, will support ongoing programming at minimal cost. This project will not produce actual digital products.

Project costs will be sustained through ongoing institutional support from Jones Academy and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. In addition, Jones Academy will pursue other federal, state, tribal, and private grant opportunities to supplement funding and ensure the long-term sustainability of library services serving Native students.

To further remove barriers to access, materials will be designed with multiple modes of delivery, including print, digital, and interactive formats, ensuring usability for students with varying learning needs and preferences. Language accessibility will be prioritized through the inclusion of Choctaw and English where appropriate, supporting both comprehension and cultural connection.

Cultural relevance is central to this project. Content and resources will reflect Choctaw history, values, and perspectives, and will be developed in collaboration with cultural experts, educators, and community members. This approach ensures that materials are not only accessible, but also meaningful and affirming of students' identities, fostering a deeper sense of belonging and engagement both within and beyond the school setting.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Jones Academy is committed to ensuring equitable access to all project materials and resources for participating students. Students will be able to access materials during the school day through structured instructional time, as well as beyond the school environment through extended access opportunities. Resources will be made available outside of regular school hours via digital platforms, take-home materials, and supervised after-school programming to support continuous learning and engagement.

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Jones Academy, in partnership with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, is dedicated to maintaining and expanding these efforts to ensure continued student engagement, cultural enrichment, and lifelong learning opportunities well beyond the period of performance.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma/Jones Academy
Native American Library Services Enhancement Grant
Schedule of Completion
Year #1

Activity	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12
Phase 1: Planning & Capacity Building	■	■										
Needs assessment	■	■										
Technology upgrades	■	■										
Expand collections	■	■										
Phase 2: Program Implementation			■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Digital literacy instruction			■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
STEM workshops			■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Digital tools training			■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
After-school/weekend programs			■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Phase 3: Community & Cultural Engagement				■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Cultural workshops				■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Expanded library hours				■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Partnerships development				■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Phase 4: Evaluation & Dissemination											■	■
Data collection & analysis										■	■	■
Surveys & feedback										■	■	■
Final reports and evaluation summaries											■	■
Share results with stakeholders												■

Schedule of Completion
Year #2

Activity	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12
Phase 1: Planning & Capacity Building	■	■										
Needs assessment	■	■										
Technology upgrades	■	■										
Expand collections	■	■										
Phase 2: Program Implementation			■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Digital literacy instruction			■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
STEM workshops			■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Digital tools training			■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
After-school/weekend programs			■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Phase 3: Community & Cultural Engagement				■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Cultural workshops				■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Expanded library hours				■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Partnerships development				■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Phase 4: Evaluation & Dissemination											■	■
Data collection & analysis										■	■	■
Surveys & feedback										■	■	■
Final reports and evaluation summaries											■	■
Share results with stakeholders												■

NOTE: Activities and timeline are the same for both project years.