



NATIVE AMERICAN LIBRARY SERVICES ENHANCEMENT GRANTS

Sample Application NAE-260899-OLS-26

Keweenaw Bay Indian Community

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$150,000

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community aims to strengthen cultural connections within their community through preserving and revitalizing Ojibwe culture and language programming at the Ojibwa Community Library. The library will create a “micro-museum” space to display physical artifacts and printed and recorded stories. The project funds will also support outreach to elders, families, and artists willing to share stories for cataloging, recording, physical display and digital preservation. Project funds will support Ojibwe artist talks and hands-on cultural learning activities including traditional storytelling and traditional art creation. Remote library book houses will be enhanced with culturally relevant materials and activity kits. The project will provide direct benefit to the over 3,000 Tribal citizens within its project service area.

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.

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) is a federally recognized Indian Tribe, organized pursuant to the provisions of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, with a Constitution and By-laws adopted and approved by the Secretary of Interior in 1936. The KBIC Community is governed by the Tribal Council. The Tribal Council is composed of 12 members elected to serve 3-year terms by the voting membership. Tribal elections are held annually in the month of December with reorganization taking place the following January. Tribal governance is grounded in approved constitution and bylaws. One third of the Council is up for election every year.

The permanent homeland of the KBIC and its people is the L'Anse Indian Reservation, which is located in Michigan's Upper Peninsula on the southern shore of Lake Superior. The L'Anse Indian Reservation is located in the remote, rural, northwestern corner of the Upper Peninsula of MI. The KBIC administers 59,072 acres of the L'Anse Indian Reservation lands, or 125 square miles, scattered non-contiguously throughout Baraga County, as well as a small part of Ontonagon County to the west and a portion of Marquette County to the east. Tribal members total 3,563, of which 1,443 live on the Reservation. In Baraga County, the Village of Baraga and the community of Zeba lie entirely within the Reservation boundaries, while the Village of L'Anse lies partially within the reservation boundaries.

Baraga County contains a population of 8,215 people living sparsely in the 898.43 square mile county. The county is remote and rural with 9.1 people with an average of 6.1 housing units per square mile. (US Census Data 2020) Currently, the economy is stagnant, often referred to as hardscrabble, with a heavy reliance on tourism and extraction industries. Physical and communication infrastructure fall behind populated areas of the country.

Winters in the western Upper Peninsula of MI are long and harsh with over 200 inches of annual snowfall common. Due to the harsh weather, isolation becomes even greater during the months of October-April. Economic and educational opportunities are limited for county youth and families. Education and careers that provide living wages are sparse. Lack of socio-economic resources and isolation create a vicious cycle of economic and career struggle for youth and families in the KBIC and Baraga County.

Within this social and economic backdrop, the KBIC library, the Ojibwa Community Library plays an important role in the community. The library is housed within the KBIC Education Department and reports to the Director of the Education Department, Liz Julio, who reports to the KBIC CEO, Brigitte LaPointe. The CEO reports to the Tribal Council. The Library Director manages the staff and day to day operation of the library. Staff include a Library Assistant and Summer Youth.

The Library provides the circulation of vital resources for the community, including free access to print, non-print, and digital information. Other services include laminating, photocopying, scanning, and printing; inter-library loan services; meeting space; and a summer reading program for adults and children. The couple other libraries in the area either do not provide sufficient hours, are far away (over 30 miles), or charge memberships fees. Currently, the library's collection has approximately 9,000 items, and houses a wide variety of materials such as: popular fiction and non-fiction titles, a large collection of Native American fiction, non-fiction, and literature, a section for teens/young adults featuring both Native American items and popular titles, and a children's section also featuring both Native American materials, popular titles in fiction and non-fiction, and puzzles and games. The library maintains a language room for people to access and study Anishinaabemowin materials, including software, audio courses, and over 100 books/items to aid in the study of the Ojibwe language. In conjunction with these language education materials, we provide free access to Rosetta Stone (Ojibwe), for all ages. Additionally, the library offers free wireless internet access, and is home to four public computers and six android tablets for use during programming. We do not charge a fee for circulation services or activities, and strive to share no-cost materials and books with the community. We promote healthy lifestyle choices by offering educational health programming and have provided free supplies such as dental supplies, covid tests and Narcan kits. We provide small public meeting space with updated technology (Smart display board), and seasonal offerings such as a free seed-share library.

In addition to on-location services and programming, we reach out to the community by attending events, usually combined with book giveaways and educational materials. We maintain 6 free remote libraries in Tribal buildings or community spaces. The library maintains a community story trail featuring rotating books. We have developed our outside yard to be a small park-like space with apple trees, native plants, a picnic table and comfortable benches. This inviting community space is enhanced by our building mural with Ojibwe imagery painted by a local tribal member.

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community's project, ***Sharing Treasures: Showcasing the Living Legacy of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community***, will focus on building cultural connections with the community by installing and enhancing visual displays in the library. We will explore and preserve select collections (both modern and traditional) representing Anishinabek culture and traditions. These may include artifacts, artwork, regalia, family heirlooms, pictures, print and oral stories from community members. We will host family friendly programs which will meaningfully engage and educate the community while and celebrating the history and culture of our region which will connect generations with their common heritage. Presenting local cultural history in a lively and attractive format within our library will give people, both resident and visitor, an opportunity to learn more about our language, culture, community knowledge, and our nation's great history.

Project Justification

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community's ***Sharing Treasures: Showcasing the Living Legacy of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community*** project will fall under IMLS Native American Library Services Enhancement Grants Agency Goal 3: Advance Collections Stewardship and Access, and work toward both objectives 3.1: support collections care and management, and 3.2: promote access to museum and library collections. The NAE Program Goal that aligns best with our proposed project is objective 3: Provide access to and preservation of information and collections.

Current Need, Challenge or Opportunity Addressed

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) is a federally recognized tribe. The permanent homeland of the KBIC and its people is the L'Anse Indian Reservation, which is located in Michigan's Upper Peninsula on the southern shore of Lake Superior. In addition to its reservation lands in Baraga County, KBIC also holds off-reservation trust lands within neighboring Marquette County. These trust lands, while much smaller in size, are federally recognized as part of the Tribe's land base and contribute to its broader geographic footprint across the region. There are a total of 3,563 tribal members, of which 1,143 live in Baraga County, which is where our library is located within the Reservation boundaries.

The rural location of the reservation and trust lands make it difficult to locate and access resources. Residents in this remote area face long distances between communities. The nearest town from the reservation to procure supplies is nearly 30 miles away. The L'Anse Indian Reservation in Baraga County is nearly 500 miles from Lansing, Michigan's capital, and almost 200 miles from Green Bay, Wisconsin, the closest large metropolitan area. Access to services that are common in those areas, participation in supportive organizations, and training opportunities are not readily available in our area.

A significant portion of Tribal and Baraga County residents face financial instability. Recent data indicate that approximately 50–60% of households live below the ALICE Threshold, meaning they cannot consistently afford basic necessities such as housing,

food, transportation, and healthcare. This reflects a substantial working population that remains economically vulnerable despite employment. (Univ. of MI, 2025) The area averages an 8-10% unemployment rate during non-summer, non-tourism months. This is high in comparison to the state unemployment rate of 5%. The median household income on the L'Anse Indian Reservation is \$46,250.00 (My Tribal Area, US Census Bureau, 2021) The average income of a Baraga County resident is \$11,236.00 *LESS* than the average income for a resident in the state of Michigan. The overall poverty rate of Baraga County is over 10% higher than the average poverty rate in the U.S. The percentage of Native American households living at or below the poverty level in Baraga County is 38%. In tribal housing, 59% of households possess an income of less than \$25,000 annually. (KBIC HUD Demographic Report 2021) According to the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (2020-2025 5-year estimates) 89.9% of people over age 25 graduated from high school, but only 14.8% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The combination of consistent high unemployment rates, number of families in poverty, and lower high school and college graduation rates in the county demonstrate a critical need for library services.

To help fill the educational and cultural need for its members the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community has a small library, the Ojibwa Community Library, which is open and free to both tribal members and the local public. The Ojibwa Community Library staff work to maintain and improve library services, and to increase library use each year. The tribe is financially able to fund the library director's position, collection development, and some children's programming. Library databases document 780 patrons currently registered, of which approximately 300 use the library monthly. 125 patrons also utilize free access to digital materials (audio and e-books, e-magazines) monthly through our regional library cooperative.

KBIC has identified a critical need to preserve, document, and increase access to culturally significant artifacts, stories, and knowledge that are currently at risk of being lost within the community. This need was identified through a combination of observed service gaps, community interest, and ongoing library engagement with patrons and cultural programming.

The Ojibwa Community Library currently serves as a central hub for educational, cultural, and informational resources, maintaining a collection of approximately 9,000 items, including Native American literature, language resources, and multimedia materials. The library also provides access to technology, programming, and outreach services such as remote libraries and community story trails. Despite these existing services, staff have identified a significant gap in the preservation and presentation of culturally and historically significant items and stories, particularly those held by community members and elders.

This challenge has been further defined through direct community feedback and participation. Library staff report that community members have frequently requested access to archives and culturally important objects, and several individuals have expressed interest in sharing personal or family artifacts if an appropriate and respectful

space were available. Additionally, while other KBIC departments and regional partners offer programming related to traditional arts, foods, and cultural practices, there are no existing programs specifically dedicated to the systematic preservation, documentation, and public display of these materials.

The urgency of this need is reinforced by the loss of community elders and knowledge holders, resulting in the disappearance of stories, teachings, and historical information that have not been formally recorded or preserved. This represents both a significant challenge and an opportunity to capture and share knowledge in ways that support cultural continuity and intergenerational learning.

These identified needs directly informed the scope of the ***Sharing Treasures: Showcasing the Living Legacy of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community*** project. The project will establish a dedicated “micro-museum” space within the library to securely display artifacts, share stories, and provide both physical and digital access to cultural materials. The design of this space responds specifically to community interest in accessible, respectful, and centralized opportunities to engage with local history and culture.

Primary Audience

The primary audience for this project includes KBIC elders, youth and families, as well as the broader community. Elders will serve as key contributors of knowledge, stories, and artifacts, while youth and families will be the primary beneficiaries through participation in educational programming and cultural learning opportunities. These audiences have been actively involved in shaping the project through ongoing engagement with library services, participation in community programming, and expressed interest in preserving and sharing cultural materials. By using observed service gaps, community input, and existing program data, KBIC has developed a project that is both community-driven and responsive to clearly identified needs, ensuring that the project will meaningfully expand access to and preservation of cultural knowledge.

Community surveys show that nearly 75% of respondents want the library’s future programming to focus on the preservation and revitalization of Ojibwe culture and language. (Ojibwa Community Library Survey, June, 2023) Our proposed project combines the need to preserve and revitalize our cultural artifacts and stories with additional family programming.

Project Work Plan

Specific Activities, Sequence, Key Staff

The ***Sharing Treasures: Showcasing the Living Legacy of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community*** project will be carried out through a sequenced set of specific

activities designed to collect, preserve, and present culturally significant artifacts, stories, and knowledge, while increasing community engagement.

Phase 1: Planning, Training, and Protocol Development

The project will begin with the development of artifact acquisition protocols and documentation procedures, ensuring culturally appropriate handling and permissions. Staff and volunteers will receive training in artifact handling, cultural sensitivity, and documentation practices. During this phase, the project team will also finalize the design of the “micro-museum” display space within the library.

Phase 2: Collection and Documentation of Materials

The project team will conduct community outreach to identify elders, families, artists, and knowledge holders willing to share artifacts and stories. Items will be cataloged, recorded, and prepared for both physical display and digital preservation, including collaboration with Northern Michigan’s UPLINK system to support online access.

Phase 3: Exhibit Development and Installation

The library will develop permanent and rotating displays using a variety of media, including physical artifacts, printed and recorded stories, and digital content. Displays will be integrated throughout the library, with a central “micro-museum” space and smaller satellite displays to enhance visibility and engagement.

Phase 4: Community Programming and Engagement

The project will implement Ojibwe artist talks, open houses, and family-centered programming, including hands-on cultural learning activities such as storytelling and traditional art creation. Remote library book houses will be enhanced with culturally relevant materials and activity kits to extend the project’s reach throughout the community.

Phase 5: Ongoing Engagement and Digital Access

Digitized materials and exhibit content will be made accessible online, creating a sustainable and expanding digital archive. Programming and displays will continue on a rotating basis to maintain community interest and participation.

Key Staff and Activity Execution

Project activities will be led and executed by experienced KBIC staff:

Project Director (Education Department Director Elizabeth Julio) – Provides overall project oversight, coordination, and reporting and compliance.

Tribal Librarian (Dawn Browning) – Serves as the primary project coordinator, responsible for planning and implementing programming, managing collections and displays, coordinating outreach, oversee digitization and systems, and supervising daily project activities.

Library Assistant (Graham Edwards) – Supports cataloging, artifact preparation, event coordination, scanning, data entry and daily operations.

Youth Worker (Summer Program) – Assists with programming and supports youth engagement activities.

Community Members (Elders, Artists, Families) – Serve as essential contributors by sharing artifacts, stories, and cultural knowledge, content and context.

Stakeholder Involvement in Planning and Development and Ongoing Input

Stakeholders have been actively involved in the planning and development of the project through ongoing community engagement at library programs and events, direct feedback and requests from community members for access to cultural materials and archives, and participation in prior open houses and cultural programming. These efforts demonstrated strong interest in storytelling and artifact sharing.

Throughout the project, stakeholder ongoing input will continue to be incorporated into project implementation. Input will be received through direct collaboration with elders and families contributing materials, feedback gathered during programming events and open houses, and ongoing input on display content, storytelling, and cultural interpretation.

Existing Resources, Assets and Partnerships

The project will leverage a range of existing tribal, library, and community resources, including:

- Ojibwa Community Library facilities and collections, including space for the micro-museum and existing materials.
- Library technology and equipment, including computers, tablets, and digital resources.
- Remote library book houses and outreach programs, extending access across the community.
- Tribal Historic Preservation Office, providing guidance and alignment with broader cultural preservation efforts.
- Northern Michigan UPLINK system, supporting digital preservation and access.
- Local artists, artisans, and knowledge holders, contributing content and programming.
- KBIC Education Department and Youth Programs, supporting outreach and engagement.
- Leadership, instructional staff and resources at the Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College (KBOCC)

These resources ensure the project is cost-effective, sustainable, and integrated within existing community infrastructure.

Sharing Work Results and Lessons Learned

KBIC will share project results and lessons learned through local, regional, and national channels, including:

- Reports to the KBIC Education Department and Tribal Council.
- Community outreach, including radio programming (e.g., locally produced radio show: Indigenous Insights), social media, and library communications.
- Presentations at conferences, including the Association for Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM).
- Participation in regional and local library conferences and trainings.
- Digital sharing through the library's website and online platforms, making project outcomes accessible to broader audiences.
- Presentations in KBOCC classes and staff training, area chambers, economic and development groups, etc.

These dissemination efforts will ensure that project knowledge is shared both within the community and with other Tribal and library organizations seeking to implement similar initiatives.

Project Results

Intended Project Results and Alignment to Need Identified in Project Justification

The ***Sharing Treasures: Showcasing the Living Legacy of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community*** project will result in the preservation, documentation, and increased access to culturally significant artifacts, stories, and knowledge, which directly addresses the need identified in the project justification. Specifically, the project will produce both tangible and intangible outcomes, including the development of a “micro-museum” space, digitized cultural materials, recorded stories, and ongoing culturally-focused programming. These deliverables respond directly to the identified gap in systematic preservation and public access to cultural materials, as well as the urgent risk of losing knowledge as elders pass away.

The intended results include creating a sustainable system for collecting, preserving, and sharing tribal knowledge, while making these materials accessible to community members and future generations. The project will also result in enhanced community engagement, strengthened intergenerational relationships, and increased opportunities for youth and families to learn about Ojibwe culture and language. By providing a dedicated space and structured process for sharing artifacts and stories, the project expands the role of the library as a cultural resource center.

Defining Success and Evaluation

Success for this project will be defined by both outputs and outcomes. Key indicators of success will include:

- The number of artifacts, stories, and cultural materials collected, documented, and displayed

- The establishment and use of the micro-museum and digital archive
- Increased library patronage
- Participation levels in programming, open houses, and cultural events
- Increased library usage and community engagement

Outcomes will focus on measurable changes in participants, including increased knowledge of Ojibwe culture, language, and history among youth and families; improved confidence and self-esteem among participants contributing stories and artifacts; and strengthened connections between elders, youth, and families.

Evaluation will be conducted through participant feedback, surveys, and observation of engagement during programming, as well as tracking participation and usage data. These methods will allow KBIC to assess both the effectiveness of project activities and the extent to which the project addresses the identified need for cultural preservation and access.

Dissemination of Results

Project results, deliverables, and lessons learned will be shared with the primary audience (KBIC elders, youth, and families), with the Education Department Leadership, the Tribal Government, as well as the broader community through multiple accessible channels. These include:

- In-library exhibits and programming, allowing direct engagement with artifacts and stories
- Digital access to materials through an online platform, ensuring access for individuals who are unable to visit the library in person
- Community events, open houses, and presentations, where participants can engage with and contribute to project outcomes
- Written and publicly available annual reports

These dissemination strategies ensure that results are accessible, culturally relevant, and directly beneficial to the primary audience, while also increasing awareness and participation over time.

Sustainability of Project Benefits

The project is designed to provide long-term, sustainable benefits beyond the grant period. Grant funding will establish the infrastructure, equipment, and protocols necessary for ongoing cultural preservation work, including digital systems, artifact handling procedures, and staff training.

Sustainability will be supported through:

- Continued use of the UPLINK digital content management system for ongoing digitization and access
- Integration of project activities into regular library programming and services

- Ongoing relationships with community members, elders, and artists, ensuring continued contributions of materials and stories
- Collaboration with partners such as the Tribal Historic Preservation Office and Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College to expand and support preservation efforts

Additionally, existing assets such as remote library book houses and established community engagement channels will continue to support outreach and access. These combined efforts ensure that the project will create a lasting framework for cultural preservation, education, and community engagement.

Schedule of Completion: Year One Keweenaw Bay Indian Community

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