



NATIVE AMERICAN LIBRARY SERVICES ENHANCEMENT GRANTS

Sample Application NAE-260916-OLS-26

Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$82,875

The Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria will address needs identified by the community by providing access to higher education resources, STEM learning opportunities, and library space enhancements. The library will provide financial aid workshops and financial literacy sessions in partnership with Two Feathers Native American Family Services. Additionally, career-pathway classes focused on resume development, job readiness skills, and career exploration will be offered. STEM programming with hands-on experiments geared toward elementary through high school students will meet the growing demand for engaging youth programming. Grant funds will also provide new study tables, flexible seating, and dedicated zones, including a STEM corner and quiet study spaces. Digital library subscriptions will expand access to the library's collection. As a result, the library will further establish its place as a vital community space for over 450 Tribal and community members.

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

The Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria is a federally recognized Tribal government in rural Northern California. Established in 1910 to serve landless Native people, the Tribe was later terminated under the 1958 Rancheria Act and had its federal recognition restored in 1983 through the Tillie Hardwick case. Today, Bear River governs a 173-acre land base near Loleta, California, and serves a population of just under 700 members and growing.

Despite its size, the Tribe provides a wide range of essential services, including education, social services, housing, public safety, and environmental protection. Bear River places a strong emphasis on expanding educational opportunities, strengthening its library services, and supporting youth development, alongside improving housing and maintaining responsible stewardship of its lands. The Tribe's long-term goal is to build a stable, healthy, and self-sufficient community through strong governance, effective services, and community-centered programs.

Bear River is led by a full-time, elected Tribal Council that exercises its sovereign authority. Daily operations are managed by the Tribal Administrator and Assistant Tribal Administrator, who oversee key departments. The Education Department provides financial support to help members access college and trade programs. As of January 1, 2026, the Education Coordinator also serves as the Tribal Librarian. This transition creates an opportunity to better align education services with library resources, strengthening support for students and expanding access to learning opportunities across the community.

Project Title: Expanding Educational Access, STEM and Community Engagement through Library Space Enhancement and Programming

Project Justification

The Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria Library serves as an essential resource for educational material, cultural access, and community engagement within the tribal community. Our library is one of the few accessible and welcoming public spaces in our rural community, playing a critical role in supporting lifelong learning and providing equitable access to information and native-inclusive material for the community. However, the library is currently facing limitations on meeting demand for books, educational materials, and the evolving needs of the community.

A great need exists for increased access to higher education resources. Many of our youth and young adults lack guidance in navigating college applications, understanding financial aid systems such as the FAFSA, and exploring available career pathways. Most first generation college students and families face barriers to accessing guidance, information, and culturally relevant support systems. These barriers can discourage individuals from pursuing higher education or career advancement opportunities.

Additionally, there is a growing demand for engaging and accessible educational programming for youth. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) opportunities are limited within the community. While early exposure can increase the likelihood that our tribal youth will pursue careers in these fields, many do not have access to hands-on learning experiences that help develop their curiosity, confidence, and problem-solving skills. Providing consistent and interactive STEM programming is essential for preparing the tribal youth for future academic and career success.

The current layout of the library also presents challenges. Current shelving and furniture layout limits the capacity of the space, which reduces opportunities to create designated areas for study, collaboration, and programming. The library's layout doesn't have spaces that are easy to change or feel welcoming, which makes it difficult to host engaging programs and discourages extended use of the library by community members. There is also a need for the intentional community building activities that create a sense of belonging and encourage consistent engagement with library services.

This project addresses these needs by transforming the library into a multifunctional learning environment that supports higher education support services, STEM programming, and community engagement. By improving both services and layout, the library will better serve as a safe space where community members can find connection, support, and opportunities.

The broad audience is over 450 locally based tribal members as well as the wider rural community. The primary audience for this project is Tribal members from middle school through college age who are seeking educational and career support. This group will be most immediately impacted by expanded access to STEM programming, higher education resources, and career readiness opportunities.

The primary audience has been actively involved in the planning process through participation in both the 2023 Strategic Plan survey and a follow-up community survey conducted in Spring

2026. Feedback from these efforts directly informed the development of this project, ensuring that proposed programs align with the needs, interests, and priorities of Tribal youth and young adults

Project Work Plan

Project planning and development were guided by community-identified priorities and stakeholder input. Findings from the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria organization-wide 2023 Strategic Plan indicated that “workforce opportunities” and “education opportunities” ranked as the second and third highest priorities among Tribal members. These findings were further refined through a Spring 2026 community survey, which identified STEM programming, high-skill job readiness, and higher education support services as key areas of need. Stakeholders in this project include Tribal youth, families and caregivers, Tribal leadership, library staff, and community partners such as Two Feathers Native American Family Services. Their input has shaped the design of programming and will continue to guide implementation. Ongoing feedback will be gathered through participation tracking, informal conversations, and community engagement to ensure the project remains responsive to evolving needs.

This project will be implemented over a two-year period and consist of five integrated components: Higher Education support and Career Readiness Programming, STEM Learning Opportunities, Community Engagement Activities, Library Space Enhancement, and Digital Resource Expansion. In Year 1, the library will focus on space enhancements, launching digital resources, and initiating core programming, including FAFSA workshops, financial literacy sessions in partnership with Two Feathers Native American Family Services, and community engagement activities. In Year 2, the library will expand its programming by introducing a comprehensive career readiness series.

Components:

1. Higher Education and Career Readiness Programming

The Librarian will implement a series of semi-annual FAFSA workshops and monthly college readiness sessions designed to support students and families in navigating the higher education process. These workshops will provide step-by-step guidance on completing financial aid applications, understanding the requirements and deadlines.

In addition to FAFSA support, the library will offer career-pathway classes focused on resume development, job readiness skills, and career exploration. These sessions will help participants: identify career interest; highlight high-paying skilled Trade jobs of the future; understand educational requirements; and build foundational skills necessary for finding a career.

This project will include a partnership with Two Feathers Native American Family Services, which will provide financial literacy workshops at no cost to the grant. These workshops will cover essential topics such as budgeting, credit management, and financial planning. They will also participate in a Career Day panel. By featuring Native American

professionals from a variety of fields, the panel will empower tribal students to see themselves represented across all careers and inspire them to pursue their own goals with confidence.

2. STEM Learning Opportunities

STEM programming will be developed and facilitated by the librarian ensuring consistency throughout the project and building connection with the community's youth. The programming will consist of weekly STEM activities during the summer months, as well as monthly programming throughout the year. The summer months will be defined as the end of June to mid-August, which will include eight weeks of programming.

Each activity will include hands-on experiments, engineering challenges, and problem-solving exercises, pushing students to use critical thinking and creativity. These activities will be accessible from elementary through high school and will emphasize interactive learning.

A dedicated STEM corner will be created within the library to ensure STEM learning is always accessible. This space will be equipped with materials and tools that allow youth to explore projects independently or participate in guided sessions. It will provide consistent access to educational resources and encourage continuous learning beyond scheduled programming. Through regular exposure to STEM, students will build confidence, develop a sense of belonging in STEM spaces, and be empowered to pursue STEM pathways and careers. The goal is to intentionally create and sustain inclusive opportunities in these areas for tribal youth.

3. Community Engagement Activities

To strengthen community connections and increase engagement with library services, the project will introduce weekly community puzzle nights. A custom table with built-in storage will support ongoing collaborative puzzles that community members can contribute to over time. These activities will create a welcoming and calming environment for the whole family to enjoy. These types of activities will serve as an entry point for the community members to engage with the library and other resources and programs. By promoting a sense of comfort and belonging, the library will become a more inviting and inclusive space for all. Community engagement efforts will focus on building connections, increasing visibility, and fostering interaction.

4. Library Space Enhancement

This project will improve the layout and accessibility of the library by adding tall bookshelves in the children's area and two double-faced shelving units on the young adult side. These additions will increase the library's book capacity, allowing us to add more titles to our collection, including works by Native authors and books requested by patrons. This will also make it easier for patrons to find and access materials.

To redesign a welcoming layout, new furnishings will be added, including study tables, flexible seating, and comfortable areas designed to support both individual and group learning. The vision is to create dedicated zones, such as a STEM corner and quiet study spaces, which will provide adaptable areas for programming, exploration, and independent study. These additions will transform the library into a more efficient, flexible environment for all community members.

5. Digital Resources Expansion

To increase access to educational materials and better serve patrons in our rural area, the library will subscribe to a digital service that provides e-books. Providing digital access to e-books will allow community members to obtain materials remotely, expanding availability beyond physical library hours and reducing geographic barriers.

The Librarian will document project outcomes, track participation rates using sign-in sheets, and gather community feedback through a Google form pre and post surveys to evaluate the program's overall success within the community. Lessons learned will be shared with Tribal leadership, community partners, and patrons through reports, and informal community updates such as flyers and social media posts. This will help future program development.

Below are task details for Components one and two, further component tasks are detailed in the Shedule of Completion.

Task #	Activity	Key Staff	Deadline (Months from Start)
1.1	<i>FAFSA Workshops-2</i>	<i>Librarian</i>	<i>Oct 1st, Mar 2nd</i>
1.2	<i>Identifying Your Interests & Strengths</i>	<i>Librarian</i>	<i>Sept 1st</i>
1.2.1	<i>Personality & Career Matching</i>	<i>Librarian</i>	<i>Oct 6th</i>
1.2.2	<i>Values & Goals Exploration</i>	<i>Librarian</i>	<i>Nov 3rd</i>
1.3	<i>Introduction to Career Pathways</i>	<i>Librarian</i>	<i>Dec 1st</i>
1.3.1	<i>Career Research Skills</i>	<i>Librarian</i>	<i>Jan 4th</i>
1.3.2	<i>Guest Speaker or Career Panel</i>	<i>Librarian</i>	<i>Feb 1st</i>
1.4	<i>How to Apply for College</i>	<i>Librarian</i>	<i>March 9th</i>
1.4.1	<i>Alternatives to College</i>	<i>Librarian</i>	<i>Apr 6th</i>
1.4.2	<i>Financial Aid & FAFSA Workshop</i>	<i>Librarian</i>	<i>May 12th</i>
1.5	<i>Resume Building</i>	<i>Librarian</i>	<i>June 8th</i>
1.5.1	<i>Interview Readiness</i>	<i>Librarian</i>	<i>July 7th</i>
1.5.2	<i>Professional Skills & Workplace Expectations</i>	<i>Librarian</i>	<i>Aug 10th</i>
1.5.3	<i>Two Feathers Financial Workshops-1</i>	<i>Two Feathers</i>	<i>TBA</i>
2.1.1	<i>Summer STEM Series 1</i>	<i>Librarian</i>	<i>June 2nd week</i>

2.1.2	Summer STEM series 2	Librarian	June 3rd week
2.1.3	Summer STEM Series 3	Librarian	June 4th week
2.1.4	Summer STEM Series 4	Librarian	July 1st week
2.1.5	Summer STEM Series 5	Librarian	July 2nd week
2.1.6	Summer STEM Series 6	Librarian	July 3rd week
2.1.7	Summer STEM Series 7	Librarian	July 4th week
2.1.8	Summer STEM Series 8	Librarian	August 1st week
2.2.1	STEM Monthly Program	Librarian	Sept
2.2.2	STEM Monthly Program	Librarian	oct
2.2.3	STEM Monthly Program	Librarian	november
2.2.4	STEM Monthly Program	Librarian	December
2.2.5	STEM Monthly Program	Librarian	January
2.2.6	STEM Monthly Program	Librarian	February
2.2.7	STEM Monthly Program	Librarian	March
2.2.8	STEM Monthly Program	Librarian	April
2.2.9	STEM Monthly Program	Librarian	May

Project Results

Success will be measured through a combination of attendance records, program participation rates, and participant feedback. Surveys will be used to assess satisfaction, perceived value, and areas of improvement. The project's effectiveness will be evaluated based on the community's response to the programming, and the timeliness of activity implementation. The results of the project will be shared with the community through program updates, and informal reporting. The metrics for these are included in the Performance Measurement Plan.

Sustainability is an important component of this project. All furnishing, equipment, and materials purchased through the grant will remain in the library and continue to support programming beyond the grant period. Library staff will sustain project-related programming and build partnerships to support ongoing services. By investing in both physical layout and program development, this project ensures long-term benefits in this rural tribal community that will extend beyond the grant period, strengthening the library's role as a central resource for education, connection, and community well-being.

Schedule of Completion - Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria- IMLS Enhancement

Activity Year One	Mo nth 1	Mon th 2	Mo nth 3	Mo nth 4	Mo nth 5	Mo nth 6	Mo nth 7	Mo nth 8	Mo nth 9	Mo nth 10	Mo nth 11	Mo nth 12
Make flyer for programming	x											
Order Furniture	x	x										
Change layout of Library		x	x	x	x	x						
FAFSA Workshop 1		x										
FAFSA Workshop 2								x				
Two Feathers Financial Workshop-TBA												
Phase 1 Career Pathways	x	x	x									
Quarterly Review-1			x									
Phase 2 Career Pathways				x	x	x						
Quarterly Review-2						x						
Phase 3 Career Pathways							x	x	x			
Quarterly Review-3									x			
Phase 4 Career Pathways										x	x	x
Summer STEM Series										x	x	x
STEM Monthly Program	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
Final Review												x

Year 2 continued on next page

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