

### Abstract

Project Title: Kanza Library & Learning Center Enhancement Program

Project Period: October 1, 2017 through November 30, 2019

Kaw Nation is proposing the following objectives with the overall goal to increase Capacity at the Kanza Library & Learning Center (KNLCC) and meet the goals of IMLS funding:

- Targeting Library and information services to rural communities/Expanding Services for learning and access - including children from birth to age 17 from families with low income as defined by the OMB:
  - Adding a Children's Audio Section with Read Along capabilities
  - Creating craft-time and projects for children/students attending library
  - Making Library more accessible for mothers with small children
    - Adding Rocking Chair to children's area for reading with small children
    - Implementing a "Mommy & Me" Program encouraging family participation
- Expanding services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats to support needs for education, lifelong learning, workforce development and digital literacy:
  - Provide after school tutor for underserved youth in the Kaw City/Shidler area – students will have full access to our educational facilities and computer access center
  - Addition of a parent/teacher resource section available to area schools/parents
  - Addition of a book club to improve membership and engage community
  - Addition of a coffee nook/reading corner for older members of the community to provide an inviting area to read/research
- Provide Training and Professional Development to enhance skills of current library workforce and leadership and advance delivery of library and information services:
  - Library staff will attend IMLS designated mandatory trainings
  - Librarian Certification Training for Librarian
  - Addition of High school/College Intern (Kaw Tribal Member) to promote workforce development and enhance efforts to recruit future professionals to the field of library and information services

This will be a two year project that will improve library services provided by the Kaw Nation in a rural, underserved community. The community is limited on resources and opportunity; further the majority of those served are low to moderate income. Our library provides valuable resources to area schools, community members, those seeking to research, find work, and have a place to meet, communicate and gather.

We hope to improve library services, increase community participation, improve attitudes towards learning and help inspire youth towards the development of the field of library and information services with this funding. We will partner with area schools, intertribal departments and community members to complete objectives of this project.

## **Narrative**

### **Statement of Need**

Kaw Nation's tribal headquarters are located in Kaw City, rural Kay County, Oklahoma. The Kaw Nation's Service Area is comprised of Kay County; consisting of a total area of 987 square miles including 919 square miles of land and 68 square miles of water. According to the 2010 census, the population of Kay County is roughly 46,562. Of these 46,562 residents more than 5,167 are of Native American descent. Kaw Nation boasts 3,463 tribal members across the United States with 746 living within the Kaw Nation Service Area of Kay County, OK. While there happens to be a mid-sized city located within Kay County, Ponca City (with a population of around 25,000), the majority of the Kaw Nation Service Area is farm and ranch land, dotted here and there with small rural towns.

In 2008, Kaw tribal members expressed a desire to have a library and learning center with long distance learning capabilities in Kaw City. This was brought to the attention of the Nation by tribal members at a community meeting. Tribal members stated that it is very hard to get children to a reliable learning facility, such as the Ponca City Library, time constraints and transportation being the biggest issue. One tribal member also stated, "When my older kids were in school, they had to borrow neighbors' computers to do research or type papers because I could not afford a computer or internet access. This would help my younger kids a lot."

In 2009, in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Indian Community Development Block Grant Program, Kaw Nation completed the construction of the Kanza Library and Learning Center (KLLC) in Kaw City. Before the Library and Learning Center was built, a few bookshelves in the tribal Social Services Building was all the tribe had to serve as a library. Books could be checked out, but with no formal circulation system in place, checking out of books was by 'honor system' basis only. Kaw Nation has lost several books due to this fact, including some that cannot be replaced. The 4,200 square foot Kanza Library and Learning Center opened its doors to the public on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010 and features a library, offices, meeting room with large projector screen and wireless projector with technology to allow for educational classes and conferences. Library hours are Monday – Friday from 9 am to 7 pm and Saturday 9 am – 1 pm. The library is staffed by a fulltime librarian and 2 part-time employees. The Kaw Nation Language Program is also staffed in this building and helps with library events providing language classes through the learning center and other culturally appropriate lesson plans. The library staff maintains all aspects of the collection and offers a vast array of materials for library users.

The Library has an active Basic grant as required through this funding opportunity and uses those funds to update library books and materials, hold storytelling events and provide minimal on-line continuing education opportunities for library support staff. This funding request will broaden the training capabilities and allow the tribe to better serve tribal citizens through more extensive, professional training.

Since inception, the Kanza Library and Learning Center has become a strong community pillar to rural Kay County, OK and serves not only Kaw Tribal members, but all who live in and around our service area. The library provides numerous activities and resources for the community and tribal departments of the Kaw Nation. We promote education by providing book loan programs to area schools, we engage in lifelong learning opportunities by attempting to appeal to readers of all ages, and we focus on our tribal members by providing culturally enhanced reading and resource material. In 2016, the library received a collections assessment from Pat Williams, a retired librarian, who worked in the field for more than 20 years, including tribal libraries. It is from her assessment, citizen participation, Tribal Council recommendations and our tribal goals and objectives that this funding request is comprised of. Lauren, our Librarian has also underwent multiple mentoring training and recommendations from the Ponca City, OK Librarian that has helped us to determine what areas are most in need of improvement, our main strengths and weaknesses, and what would best serve our rural location.

### **Project Design**

This funding will allow Kaw Nation to broaden its services, helping to increase membership and further engage the community. Within this request, we hope to achieve multiple objectives with the overall **Goal of increasing membership, community participation and providing a professional and necessary resource within our rural community** that can be utilized by all persons within our tribal service area.

To achieve this we will focus on the three following objectives and the activities listed below:

- **Target Library and Information Services to rural communities/Expanding Services for learning and access - including children from birth to age 17 from families with low income as defined by the OMB:**
  - Adding a Children's Audio Section with Read Along capabilities
  - Creating craft-time and projects for children/students attending library
    - Quarterly activities will be conducted in the learning center
  - Making Library more accessible for mothers with small children
    - Adding Rocking Chair to children's area for reading with small children
    - Implementing a "Mommy & Me" Program encouraging family participation
      - Program will meet monthly in the first week of the month
- **Expand services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats to support needs for education, lifelong learning, workforce development and digital literacy:**
  - Provide after school tutor for underserved youth in the Kaw City/Shidler area – students will have full access to our educational facilities and computer access center
    - 2 hours per day – Mon.-Fri. for duration of school year
  - Addition of a parent/teacher resource section available to area schools/parents

- Addition of a book club to improve membership and engage community
  - Book Club will meet bi-weekly and feature a new book each quarter
- Addition of a coffee nook/reading corner for older members of the community to provide an inviting area to read/research
- Addition of outdoor reading/activity center that will enhance learning opportunities in a specialized setting and provide opportunity to infuse culture and tribal history, as well as the Kanza language into our activities
- **Provide Training and Professional Development** to enhance skills of current library workforce and leadership and advance delivery of library and information services:
  - Library staff will attend IMLS designated mandatory trainings
  - Librarian Certification Training for Librarian
  - Addition of High school/College Intern (Kaw Tribal Member) to promote workforce development and enhance efforts to recruit future professionals to the field of library and information services as well as support the growth and development of Kaw Tribal Members.

Recently, the Kanza Librarian worked with an outside consultant to assess our library and information services. Many of the items listed above pertain to that assessment and were recommended to help increase membership and community engagement. This will be a two year project that will improve library services provided by the Kaw Nation in a rural, underserved community. The community is limited on resources and opportunity; further the majority of those served are low to moderate income. Our library provides valuable resources to area schools, community members, those seeking to research, find work, and have a place to meet, communicate and gather. Within our small community there is no other place that children can gather or engage in specialized activities, there is no community center for youth/adults to access technology, the schools within our district are financially strapped and often have limited opportunity when it comes to reading current publications and are often behind the times in comparison to higher populated areas.

We hope to improve library services, increase community participation, improve attitudes towards learning and help inspire youth towards the development of the field of library and information services with this funding. We will partner with area schools, intertribal departments, local business and community members to complete objectives of this project.

Rural communities are great places to live for many, however, poverty and deprivation exist in rural places with crucial economic, geographic and demographic factors, relating to distance, population sparsity, ageing, social isolation and market structure that can significantly impact people's lives and whether or not they have access to critical opportunities found in urban areas. Kaw Nation works to engage directly with our population to enhance opportunity and learning capabilities to ensure fair access to public services, and actively engage in shaping the community in which we serve. However, the tribe is not immune to economic downturn and without valuable grant funding opportunities; we are limited in our ability to best serve the community. The tribe works extensively to improve the quality of life and provide the best services that we can within our service area, but there are always many areas in which we can

improve services. One of our personal tribal goals is to “*enhance the Kaw Nation by being dedicated to investing in the Tribe’s future, treating the family as a whole, promoting education and self-sufficiency from childhood on, and achieving coordination across all programs and services*”.

Our child care development program is a great example of the utilization of resources the library provides. The children of the center engage in interactive storytelling events and participate in a library exchange program; the kids also attend the library throughout the summer session and enjoy all the benefits the library has to offer from the children’s room to checking out books and videos. Our relationship with the child care center and the community at large, allows us to let parents actively participate in their children’s reading. The inviting nature of our library provides a place where families can enjoy the space and we can actively support literacy development. One of the areas that we can improve upon within this area is to better engage early childhood learning. It is a known fact that children learn the majority of their social skills within their first five years of life. Infants and toddlers experience life more holistically than any other age group. Early childhood education will help guide our children along the path to being healthy, intelligent, productive and cooperative individuals.

We also want to make our library more accessible for mothers with small children. The addition of a Mommy & Me program will help parents become better educators of their children and take a more active role in the child’s development. Having an inviting area where parents can read with their children will help instill a love of reading and a pattern of behavior that promotes learning without it being forced. The addition of a children’s audio section will enhance reading skills with the ability to read along, promoting word recognition and helping the child to become a more independent reader. In addition, we will add specialized activities and events focused on child interaction including crafting projects that are culturally related to help enhance children’s understanding of tribal culture at a young age. We will also partner with Brace Books in Ponca City, OK to provide resource materials and engage in promotional opportunities to obtain local authors and storytellers for specialized events.

With last year’s Basic Library funding from IMLS, the library and learning center was able to upgrade our technology resource area by purchasing 7 new computers for use by library patrons enabling the library to continue engage the community by providing a community computer access center. The community is appreciative of this vital resource that helps in job searches, research, and learning of new skills, among other benefits. The library will continue to provide free internet access allowing many in this low income population the opportunity to use the computer center to conduct business, engage in job searches, research and many other useful assets the technology provides. Through this funding request, we will attempt to expand our services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats even further to promote lifelong learning, workforce development, digital literacy and support the communities/area schools need for education. We will do this with the addition of an afterschool tutor for the grossly underserved youth in the Kaw City/Shidler area. Currently there are no formal programs that provide tutors, with many children struggling with literacy and the ability to keep up math concepts, or more in-depth knowledge in a particular subject that helps them keep from falling behind their peers. Tutoring is often an important part of a student’s education, with mentoring that provides remedial, enrichment, or other needed support. A tutor

can help our children develop learning strategies that can help them better perform in school and overcome many obstacles to learning. Sometimes, simply helping students become better organized or develop better study skills can be the difference in drop-out or future success, our children can be given to-do lists to remind them of what they need to do and what materials they need to complete a task, making things less overwhelming, we can help organize notes and/or how to use those notes to help them study, playing a vital role in the learner's education by providing assistance with one needed area, or a variety, depending upon the students individual needs. We feel that this is one of the best things and specific areas that we can improve upon will help our local children succeed in school.

In addition to this, we wish to add a parent/teacher resource section. This will provide the capability to become directly involved in our area schools and become a liaison between home and school with the final goal to help all parents participate more fully and effectively in their children's educational development, as well as to support our financially strapped school district and teachers in gaining knowledge and resources that they would otherwise not have access to. In the past, Kaw Nation has had multiple partnerships with our area school districts that help us to improve the services we provide and to help the schools better deliver educational opportunities to area youth and the schools have been grateful for our contribution to the community. The principals and teachers are always very welcoming of our efforts and take an active role in working with our library services in order to determine what items best help them to promote learning. Through our combined efforts we are building more positive relationships between home and school; as well as developing and maintaining needed supports within the community.

Another area that we can improve upon and would also be very beneficial to the services that we provide would be the addition of a high school/college intern of Kaw descent. With regards to this request, our economic development vision statement within the tribe's Integrated Resource Management Plan states: *"To build the human and capital assets of Kaw Nation through a portfolio of diversified business and employment opportunities, Tribal Citizens skills and training development, partnerships with public and private entities, and economic resources that provide both services and revenues."* Within these strategies we wish to "provide training, business, and management skills for all Tribal Citizens". Not only could the addition of an intern improve and enhance our library and learning center's ability to serve the community, it would help us to promote within our tribal organization and recruit future professionals to the field of library and information services, a shared goal of IMLS and Kaw Nation.

The library serves many elderly patrons as well. These patrons enjoy multiple benefits that our library offers including a large print section and a computer access center. Our library appreciates our senior population and attempts to offer services that reflect the wide interests of today's older adults. Our staff helps older patrons access the computer center and offers guidance in order to help them explore the world of technology including how to access the internet, set up email, conduct online banking and bill pay, as well as access online health information. With this funding we would like to expand services to elder patrons, as well as the community in general with the addition of a coffee nook /reading corner to provide an inviting area to read/research beyond the computer stations. We would also like to add a book club that will feature current and popular reading materials to help promote literacy and a love for books.

Our final area of focus surrounds our staff within the library and learning center. In order to best serve our community and tribal citizens we must maintain a professional and highly trained staff. Kaw Nation will commit our staff to attending orientations and trainings provided by IMLS, as well as working diligently to improve our scope of services through Librarian Certification efforts and continuing education of our staff. Our librarian, Lauren Murray works tirelessly to improve our services, membership and outreach. Lauren originally became employed at Kaw Nation in September of 2010. Since that time, Lauren has moved through the ranks of Library Assistant to become our Librarian and has engaged in multiple trainings and webinars to improve services, but has yet to become a certified librarian. We will use a portion of our funds to further her education and invest in her skills to improve services and outreach in order to advance the delivery of our library and information services.

Lauren will work with a project team that will meet monthly and help advise and guide her as needed with this funding and the projects she will implement. The project team will consist of the Kanza Museum Director, Crystal Douglas; the Grants & Contracts Director, Bernadette Hicks; the Grant Compliance Specialist, Ruth Kizer and Language Director, Desiree Storm Jones. (Please see attached resumes) All members of the project team have intricate rolls and have been heavily involved in the success and management of our Library and Learning Center services and will work with Lauren throughout the project period to ensure project success.

## **Impact**

By the end of this project period, we anticipate the ability to provide a more well-rounded approach to community engagement, increased membership and community involvement and a higher level of services to the community and school districts that we serve. We will see improved literacy, higher levels of professionalism from our staff and internal growth and development of Kaw Tribal members through the internship opportunity. As a result of our program upgrades through the accomplishment of the goals set forth within this proposal we will have a stronger library services program and a better ability to serve the community.

To determine our success, we will provide impact and customer satisfaction survey's to library patrons post-funding to determine our areas of improvement and also our strengths and weaknesses. We will use this information to provide continual improvement to our library and learning center- learning from the community that we serve what their specific needs are and where we are helping to improve quality of life and literacy within our service area. While outcome-based measurement is relatively a new feature to our library, we will have the ability to grow from these measurements and define areas where we can better serve patrons. Our output and activity metrics will be mainly inwardly focused to assess our effectiveness and efficiency of activities and programs and will analyze program participation, satisfaction of activities, cost effectiveness. In addition, we will attempt to use our customer satisfaction surveys to measure effectiveness from a patron point of view to determine what best serves the community, and identify risk factors that impact the success of our initiatives and how we can mitigate those risks in the future.

We will also continue to use sign-in logs to determine if we have increase in participation, as well as viewing actual membership status to see how many members are gained, retained and memberships utilized. We will also review our circulation records on a quarterly basis to determine the number of materials being checked out and what the most popular areas of interest are. Another method will be to research with our local school district to inquire if reading habits have improved as a result of our interventions and we will ask that our Child Care development program report to us quarterly regarding early reading numbers and statistics.

Our Tribal Librarian will use this information to evaluate our overall programs internally and report this information to our Tribal Chair and Council, who will then pass the information forward to the General Council.

The Librarian will work with the Grants and Contracts staff to complete goals and objectives of this funding and ensure that staff follows the guidelines set forth in the OMB regarding allowable costs. Pictures of activities will be taken and published in the Tribal Newsletter disseminated to all tribal members and will also take advantage of press release opportunities with local newspapers to increase knowledge and participation of our library services.

Attendance logs will help determine project output, and impact can be determined with written responses and will be useful in continual improvement of library services. Ideas for future actions will also be able to be obtained from tribal and community input.

As a result of this funding, Kaw Nation is confident that we will be able to support program activities beyond this funding through their initial establishment by IMLS funding. The items and programs established will ensure that we are able to provide a higher level of professional services and quality activities through the increase in institutional expertise and capacity building. This project will lead to systematic change within our organization through a continual improvement process resulting from customer satisfaction surveys and community input.

We feel strongly that our library contributes in a meaningful way to the quality of life in our community and provides a safe place for patrons of all ages to enjoy the resources and materials that we offer. Because of the rural area that we live in, we want to enhance our services to better meet the needs of the community that we serve, to increase membership and to be a resource to the underserved population of students within our district. The Kaw Nation is thankful for this funding and appreciates the tremendous opportunity to become a community pillar as a result of funding through generosity of IMLS. Without this vital funding we could not provide the learning experiences for students and families, or continue to develop our resource materials and collection allowing us to stay current and innovative with the changing needs of our community.

**Kaw Nation will acknowledge funding support from IMLS in all publications and products that result from this funding.**



