

Keweenaw Bay Indian Community
“Enriching our Community through Digital Literacy”
ABSTRACT

LEAD APPLICANT: The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community

ACCOMPLISHMENT PLANS: Provide the community with access to programming and resources that not only develop digital literacy skills, plus promote using those skills to educate themselves, develop careers, provide potential job opportunities, create new material and content, plus look and apply for work.

TIMEFRAME: October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2019

COMMUNITY NEEDS: No library in Baraga County offers programs for computer skills assistance or programs to show community members how to use technology. Programs that address these themes are available in the neighboring county, but community members would need to drive over 30 miles to attend. Recent community surveys indicate that not only do people see that programming like this is needed, but it also illustrates community members are interested in this type of programming.

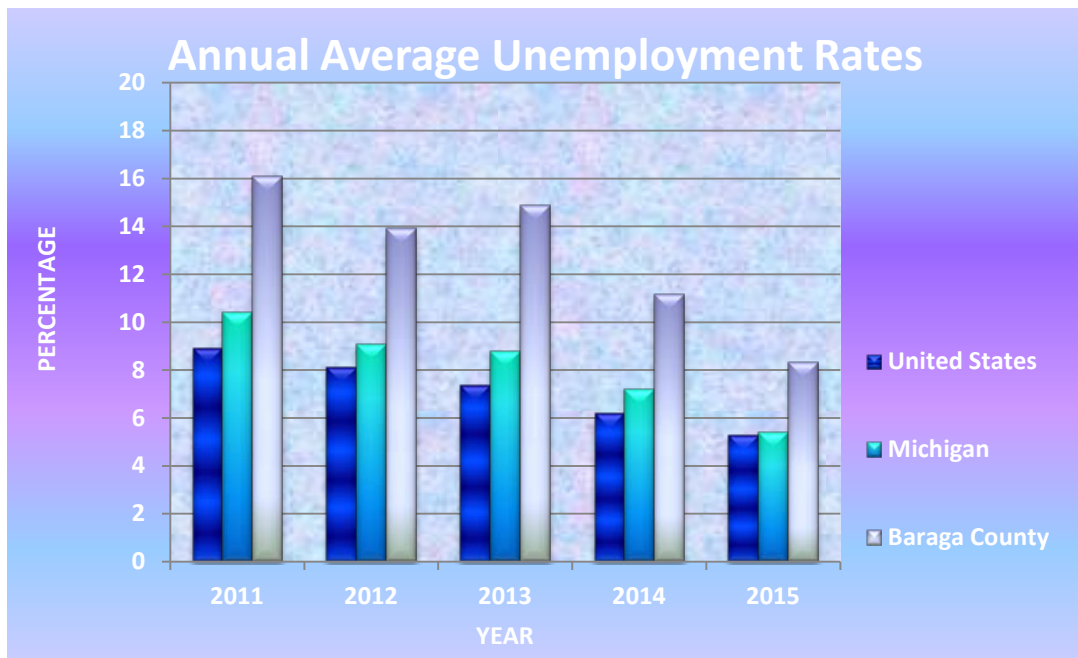
INTENDED AUDIENCE: Adult and elder community members; upper elementary and middle school children; local high school and community college students; and other community members who are interested in learning how to use digital literacy skills to grow.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES, GOALS, OUTCOMES, AND RESULTS: Our project goal is to improve the quality of and expand the quantity of programs and services provided to our community members. Objectives include: Expand library hours, services, and access to updated information and resources; provide programs and technologies which advance digital literacy skills, education, and careers; and produce information and projects illustrating our Ojibwa culture and heritage. Activities include: Michigan Technological University’s (MTU) Building Adult Skills in Computing program (B.A.S.I.C.), an after-school coding club in conjunction with MTU Copper Country Coders, and presentations and workshops to promote higher education and career development in connection with digital literacy skills. Outcomes and goals expected are removing barriers to technology, digital literacy, and improving the use of Library services. We believe that there will be an increase not only in the traffic to the Library, but also in our online traffic. This project will allow greater accessibility to our library’s resources, and also provide patrons with the skills to use technology which will motivate them to participate in the Library’s services. Furthermore, patrons will become self-sufficient, and able to complete online tasks, such as searching and applying for work or school, or taking online classes which may lead to a new career, small business, or furthering their education levels.

COMMUNITY OUTCOMES: We wish to serve the community and encourage people to utilize library resources, and provide a place where people are able to develop strategies so they can all advance their skills and education levels.

1. Statement of Need

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC), a federally recognized tribe, is located on the L’Anse Indian Reservation, which is located on the Eastern base of the Keweenaw Peninsula in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. It is comprised of two counties, Baraga and Marquette. There are a total of 3,642 Tribal Members of which 1,120 tribal members live in Baraga County, where our library is located. The economy of this area is tenuous; the KBIC conducted a survey of adult members living on the Reservation in November of 2013 in which 39% identified themselves as not employed and 36.7% had annual incomes under federal poverty levels. In fact, the past five years Michigan and Baraga County have continually ranked among the highest unemployment rates in the nation:



Residents in this remote region face long distances between communities and endure long, harsh winters. The L’Anse Indian Reservation, in Baraga County is nearly 500 miles from Lansing, Michigan’s capital, and almost 400 miles from Minneapolis, the closest metropolitan area. Access to services common in those areas, participation in supportive organizations, and training opportunities are not readily available here. Our Culture is important to our Community and so are our Tribal members; we are currently in the process of trying to revitalize our sacred Native language. According to the United States Census Bureau quick facts for Baraga County: persons over 25 have a high school graduation rate of 82.4%, but only 13.1% have a bachelor’s degree or higher.

The KBIC has a small library, the Ojibwa Community Library, which is open to both tribal members and the surrounding community. The mission of the Ojibwa Community Library is to provide a collection of print and non-print materials to meet the lifelong learning, recreational, research, cultural, and informational needs of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community for all ages from toddlers-to college age-to elders. The KBIC and the Ojibwa Community library work hard

to maintain and improve library services and increase library use. The tribe supports the library director's position, collection development, and children's programming costs. Current Library information includes: **Hours:** 20 hours per week with services provided on: M, F: 9:00-4:00; and W 12:00-6:00; **Staff:** One Librarian, who is also a KBIC member; and **Patrons:** 656 currently registered patrons and approximately 260 of them use the library monthly.

Our library is vital to the community because we consistently provide: access to print and non-print information for the tribal community and surrounding areas; other services such as laminating, photocopying, scanning, and printing; inter-library loan services; a summer reading program for adults and children. Other libraries in the area either do not provide sufficient hours for everybody to use them, are very far (over 30 miles) away, or ask patrons to pay for library cards and other access because they do not live in the same county.

Currently, the library's collection has over 2,660 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 small section for teens/young adults featuring both Native American items and popular titles; and a modest children's section also featuring both Native American materials and popular titles in fiction and non-fiction. We also have a limited selection of DVDs that includes both Native American topics and newer popular movies. Additionally, the library is home to six public computers and six android tablets for use during programming. We also offer wireless internet connections for patrons and the other services mentioned above.

Our project's purpose is to provide the community with access to programming and resources that not only develop digital literacy skills, but also promote using those skills to educate themselves, develop careers, provide potential job opportunities, create new material and content, plus look and apply for work. We specifically want to work with the following **audiences:** a) adult and elder community members, b) upper elementary and middle school children, c) local high school and community college students, and d) other community members who are interested in learning how to use digital literacy skills to grow.

The assessment completed to identify our community's needs was observation of and informal conversations with library patrons, plus written surveys. The observations and conversations resulted in discovering that no library in Baraga County offered programs for computer skills assistance or programs to show community members how to use technology so they can apply for work and school, take classes online, create new content, further careers, or just search for work. Programs that address these themes are available in the neighboring county, but community members would need to drive over 30 miles to attend. Additionally, surveys that were given to participating youth in the KBIC's tutoring program and to adults who attended the KBIC Health System's Healthy Heart fair indicate that not only do people see that programming like this is needed, but it also illustrates community members are interested in this type of programming.

We sent out 90 surveys to the children, and received all of them back. The highest percentages in all grades were interested in a Summer Club/ After School program on the topics offered—coding, apps, animations, and video games. Of the surveys completed (132 total) for the adults, we discovered that over 85% of the people completing the surveys stated they were “interested

to very interested” in participating in a program about learning more on how to use a computer, tablet, smart phone, etc. Additionally, 80% stated they were “interested to very interested” in learning how to download media onto their devices.

We believe that these surveys demonstrate a real interest in the programming we propose and believe that this proposed project approach is the best solution to achieve incremental changes by offering people the opportunity to work closely with technology and providing innovative programming that focuses on using new skills that will allow our community members to educate themselves, search for and apply for work, create their own desired products and content, enhance their careers or education levels, and fulfill a gap in our community.

2. Project Design

The Ojibwa Community Library and the KBIC feel that our *Enriching our Community through Digital Literacy* project is the most effective solution to the aforementioned needs of our tribal community. This project will serve the community and encourage people to utilize library resources, and provide a place where people are able to develop strategies and advance their skills and education levels. Collaborating with Michigan Technological University, the project will enable us to provide services that were previously not available in our community. Our project goals coincide with the Tribe’s vision in its strategic plan to continually improve the quality of, and expand the quantity of, programs and services provided to our community members. This project also aligns with IMLS goals of expanding services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats, supporting an individual’s need for lifelong learning, workforce development, and digital literacy skills; and developing partnerships with another agency. It also places the learners at the center and prepares our community members to be full participants in our local community. For this project, our objectives are:

- Expand library hours and services
- Provide increased access to updated information and resources
- Provide community support through programs which advance digital literacy skills
- Focus on 21st century skills to advance education and careers
- Provide a variety of technologies
- Offer opportunities for children to develop new skills
- Produce information and projects illustrating our Ojibwa culture and heritage

The Ojibwa Community Library has developed three major programs, discussed below, to accomplish our project goals, and several other activities to complete our project:

1) Michigan Technological University’s (referred to below as Michigan Tech), Building Adult Skills in Computing program (B.A.S.I.C.), led by Chuck Wallace (see attached resume), is a nationally recognized program which aims to help adults and seniors build digital literacy skills by pairing student tutors with adult participants to work closely on developing basic essential computer skills and answer questions. In fact, a recent survey disseminated to our teenagers by our Youth Director concluded that the majority of respondents chose intergenerational

engagement as being most important to them, traditional culture teachings, and addressing historical trauma and strengths all of which will fit right in with this project. The Library's role will support the development of digital literacy skills by providing books, materials, and a resource list to participants. The Library will also provide a space for participants to ask questions and receive assistance from the tutors, as well as provide laptops and/or desktop computers for the participants to use during their sessions with the tutors in the library. The library will host these workshops six months per year for adults and elders in the community. Together, we will develop questionnaires and surveys to be taken by participants periodically throughout the course of the grant programming to receive feedback, and to determine if participant understanding and interest has increased.

2) An after-school coding club, in conjunction with Michigan Tech's Copper Country Coders, and also led by Chuck Wallace, will be held at the library every two weeks for 7 sessions each year for upper elementary school students and middle school students. The consultant will develop a program to teach these students basic computer coding, and potentially develop small graphics or animations as a result of the assignments they complete. They will also encourage older or more advanced students to mentor younger or less advanced students during the sessions. The consultant will also collaborate with the librarian to develop questionnaires and surveys to determine if participant understanding and interest has increased throughout the programming period.

3) Finally, KBIC member Jill Hodges Executive Director of Institutional Equity at Michigan Tech (see attached resume) will host presentations and workshops for high school and community college students, as well as other adults in the community to promote higher education and career development in connection with digital literacy skills. She will facilitate four sessions and one campus tour each year. Each session will focus on a different theme, which will be predetermined by the consultant and librarian with input from community members, and she will end the school year with the campus tour.

In addition to the three major programs, Library staff will also develop STEAM kits that will be available to circulate to the library patrons and provide Makerspaces in the Library. *Teaching Librarian* recently published a great article which discusses Makerspaces as an idea in librarianship that is being adopted so quickly, it may be a new library model: "A Makerspace is an evolutionary step in library facilities' design and programming." Incorporating a whole host of activities like robotics, engineering, sewing, coding, carpentry, cooking, electronics, rockets, furniture making, anything that sparks curiosity and engages critical thinking can be part of the maker movement. The STEAM kits will serve to expose community children and their families to a variety of science, technology, engineering, arts, and math projects with either a cultural component, or resulting in a cultural project. We believe that the STEAM kits can be used as an introduction to technology and digital literacy in a way that is easily accessible to families. The kits will be contained in a small bin or backpack, and will include materials to complete the projects or experiments, and print or DVD materials to further educate or instruct the user. Library staff will develop a few short workshops each grant year to provide further instruction for using the kits.

We also believe that the following additional activities are needed to complete our project:

1. Increased hours for Librarian and provide an assistant
2. Increase Library hours
3. Purchase project supplies (books, periodicals, DVDs or CDbooks)
4. Purchase library supplies (computers, laptops, wireless router, and STEAM kit supplies)
5. Process new materials into system for circulation
6. Create list of materials available for project participants
7. Librarian attends IMLS and ATALM meetings, and regional trainings
8. Advertise available services and project activities
9. Librarian works with Michigan Technological University Consultants to develop and schedule sessions for the basic computer skills workshops, computer coding club, and higher education and career development workshops
10. Librarian and Library Assistant work together to develop and maintain STEAM kits, and best-practices workshops
11. Librarian collaborates with consultants to develop questionnaires and surveys to determine baseline participant understanding, and to discover participant understanding and interest after the grant program is complete

Activity 1: The Librarian Assistant will receive additional training as needed by the Upper Peninsula Regional Library Cooperation, and will be prepared to work extra evenings and weekends. The Librarian Assistant will also work while the librarian is attending trainings, collaborating with consultants, or facilitating the library's grant project programming.

Activity 2: The library's hours will be extended to provide longer evening and weekend hours to the community.

Activities 3, 4, and 5: We will purchase project books, magazines, and other print and non-print resources which can be read at the library, or checked out by visiting the library. All materials will be purchased with grant funds, and wherever possible will be focused on career development, higher education, digital literacy, computer coding, and technology. Library supplies to be purchased include: computers, laptops, and a wireless router.

Activity 6: Library staff will enter all new materials into the system so they are categorized and organized for distribution. After all materials have been entered into the system, the staff can prepare a list of materials available that will be distributed to project participants.

Activity 7: The Librarian or Library Assistant will attend the IMLS grantee meeting or ATALM conference, local or regional trainings and conferences.

Activity 8: Library staff will attend the KBIC Health System Center's Healthy Heart Fair each year to showcase a display of the library project and project services offered. They will also provide a survey to gather customer satisfaction information, and obtain any ideas community members might have or would like to see in the future at our library. We will also promote our services and project activities via our tribally owned radio stations and newsletter, local newspaper, fliers, and on our Facebook page. Fliers will be posted around the community in local businesses, tribal government center, email lists, the Ojibwa Casino, tribal gas station, the

Ojibwa Seniors center, and other tribal buildings. We will give full credit to IMLS for making this project possible.

Activity 9: The Librarian will collaborate with the consultants from Michigan Tech to plan, schedule and facilitate basic computer skills workshops, the after school coding club, and higher education and career development focused workshops. The librarian will provide all project staff and participants with a schedule of the other project programs and services that they can attend or utilize.

Activity 10: The Librarian and Library Assistant will work together to create and maintain the circulating STEAM kits, as well as create short periodic workshops that illustrate to patrons how they can use the kits.

Activity 11: The Librarian and consultants will collaborate to create questionnaires and surveys to determine participants' understanding of these topics at the first session for the computer coding club, computer skills workshop, and higher education and career development workshops to determine participants' baseline understanding and interest. The surveys and/or questionnaires will continue periodically throughout the grant timeline for feedback. Finally, we will create a final survey/questionnaire to determine the participants understanding and interest at the end of the programming.

Activity 12: Compile and submit monthly, quarterly, and final reports for Tribal Council and IMLS.

Throughout the course of the grant period, we will provide surveys and questionnaires to determine how our participants are improving, understanding, and developing their new skills. The Ojibwa Community Library will also determine how interested they are in the sessions we are providing as well as what we can do differently to improve our programming to better meet community needs. In addition, sign in sheets will be utilized to keep track of the number of participants for each activity. All of this information will be compiled by the Library staff and reported monthly to the KBIC's Education Department Director for Tribal Council.

3. Impact:

Performance Goals:

The *Enhancing our Community through Digital Literacy* project supports the IMLS agency goals for *Learning* by developing and providing inclusive and accessible learning opportunities for our community. Since our project focuses directly on developing new skills with regard to technologies, our performance evaluations will measure participant comprehension, and reflect understanding of the concepts they've been introduced to and/or worked on during sessions, workshops/presentations, as well as while using the STEAM kits. We'll also survey participants to determine if they are *more* or *less* interested in the topics. These surveys will include the IMLS required performance measure statements, and will be introduced at the project's start and conclusion, as well as periodically throughout the project period. In addition to questions related to the IMLS required performance measure statements, we will also include questions about how

participants can use the information to apply for work and/or school, further their careers, create new materials and content, search for information online, and use the library's online resources.

Projected results:

By removing barriers to technology, digital literacy, and by improving the use of Library services which are readily available, we believe that there will be an increase not only in the traffic to the Library, but also in our online traffic. This project will allow greater accessibility to our library's resources, and also provide patrons with the skills to use technology which will motivate them to participate in the Library's services. Furthermore, patrons will become self-sufficient, and able to complete online tasks, such as searching and applying for work or school, or taking online classes. This project will result in more confident participants. The Ojibwa Community Library envisions that regular participants will utilize and advance their newly acquired computer skills, and become motivated to create new technology-centered projects, which may lead to a new career, small business, or furthering their education level. We also think that this project will lead to increased participation in other Library programs such as Summer Reading Program. We also hope to see an increase in the use of the library's online services such as the Great Lakes Digital Library and Zinio.

4. Communications Plan:

This project aims to work with the following audiences: a) adult and elder community members interested in developing digital literacy skills to search/apply for work or school, take online courses, or in career development; and b) upper elementary, middle, and high school students interested in computer coding, or learning more about higher education opportunities in a technology themed field.

The library will extensively use Tribal mediums such as the Tribal newsletter, radio, and emailing lists to reach out to community members. We also plan on creating fliers, and distributing them in Senior Housing, and the Senior Center, as well as in community businesses, the government center, and other Tribal departments, local schools (both elementary through High school and the community college), as well as via social media on our Facebook page. The Library Director will be assigned to do the outreach, promotion and dissemination; however, if she is not available, or cannot do these assigned tasks, the Library Assistant can also create the materials for promotion and dissemination.

The Ojibwa Community Library will be transparent and will communicate to provide outreach for the project, and also to disseminate the results and findings of the project, which will continue throughout the project period. We will use surveys, questionnaires, and face to face discussions to promote audience engagement, in addition to encouraging participants to become mentors to other participants during some project programs. We will collect and report on our findings to the Tribal Education Department and Tribal Council during our monthly reports. We will also continue to use the information collected to help promote project activities by stating what we worked on previously, or by collecting testimonials from participants to motivate others to try the program. The Library will regularly seek feedback from participants, consultants, as well as from the Tribal Education Department and the Tribal Council. In addition, we can communicate lessons we've learned from the project activities to other Tribal libraries via email

lists, ATALM poster presentations, other libraries and schools locally (informal conversation and email), on our Facebook page, or other social media venue, and to local universities such as Michigan Technological University and Northern Michigan University.

5. Sustainability:

The *Enriching our Community through Digital Literacy* project lends itself to a sustainable life after the grant period ends. Participants in the B.A.S.I.C. sessions can volunteer to become community tutors, and can be trained by the tutors from the B.A.S.I.C. program to work closely with community members to help maintain the program in our area. Additionally, we can reach out to schools to see if they would like to partner up with the library and either sponsor a computer coding club, or host one for the local youth. Youth who participate in the program can also become mentors to younger children who are just starting to learn about coding. We believe that this form of mentoring will help to maintain a program within the library. Furthermore, we can continue to work closely with the local university to host occasional educational programming about the school, and information that is useful to students wanting to continue in their education; we can also expand this idea and reach out to other higher education institutions who may want to use the library as a point of outreach into this community. Finally, once the STEAM kits are in place, we can continue to budget for new materials as part of our collection development. We'd be able to change out the kits' contents to promote new hobbies, or ideas as community interest requires. We believe by encouraging participants to participate, to be actively involved in becoming mentors and learning new skills and methods, and advance opportunities to grow, community members will want to continue many of the programs we will be conducting. This project will allow the Ojibwa Community Library to become a cornerstone of community growth, promote an image of continual growth, and show that we are willing to meet community needs and interests.

With the successful completion of this project, we can also motivate other small rural libraries and Tribal libraries to try projects such as this. The Ojibwa Community Library will exemplify growth, and mentor other communities with the steps necessary to collaborate with local agencies to create programming such as a sustainable computer skills group, computer coding club, and STEAM kits. Library staff can help them reach out to community colleges or schools near them to provide critical outreach in their communities. We intend on continually collaborating with neighboring agencies, as well as sharing resources with others so that they, too, can implement these programs in their communities.

