

Spirit Lake Tribe Library Enhancement Grant

ABSTRACT

The Valerie Merrick Library Enhancement Grant, serving Spirit Lake Dakota Nation in North Dakota, proposes that the project will be used to expand on existing library services by demonstrating an increase in outreach to young children and their families. Our project proposal would align with the educational programming. This will be done by increasing the library holdings with the emphasis on young children and their families, providing story time/activities to children, celebrate family night to a minimum of 50 families each year. We would also like to accomplish extending our library hours in the evening and open on weekends, host a monthly health education program, and provide a culture night with quilting or beading to a minimum of 50 families each year.

Successful completion of these projects will have a positive impact by increasing library services and reaching more community members. The emphasis for new purchases will be on providing appropriate materials with popular appeal and particular effort to expand the children and young adult collection. Relating to outreach, the availability of more materials will expand efforts to encourage library usage and recreational reading.

At the core of this effort is the provision of services to young children and their families. By providing opportunities for library use to children and their parents, the library will be able to establish a pattern of regular library use among children and families in addition to promoting lifelong enjoyment of reading. For preschool children, the library will utilize story hours and parent/child reading. Partnerships with the local Early Head Start for ages 0-3, Head Start for ages 3-5, and Wakanheza Oti (Sacred Children's Place) will be established and recruitment from the respective programs will be a priority.

An emphasis will be on the local Dakota culture to encourage language revitalization and preservation of the culture, language, and history. The library will host a weekly Dakota Culture Night to share teachings on making star quilts, beading and culturally appropriate materials about the history, myths and legends, historical landmarks and leaders of the Spirit Lake and other Dakota tribes. Since 2003, Spirit Lake Tribe has lost 15% of its fluent Dakota speakers and an immeasurable wealth of cultural resources.

As part of the outreach effort, the library will expand its hours to include 8 hours on weekends including 5 hours on Saturday and 3 hours on Sunday. This is particularly important as the library serves as a point of contact for accessing the internet. Less than 10% of reservation homes have the internet. As a result, their ability to access information is severely restricted.

By providing monthly health information sessions, the library expects to demonstrate its role as a community resource center. It is an opportunity to showcase materials such as books, journals, subscriptions, and online resources related to health available either at the library or through library exchanges and will provide health information/discussion opportunities to the community.

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1. STATEMENT OF NEED

Spirit Lake Nation Population Profile: The Spirit Lake Tribe has a history of social, health, economic, and educational hardship similar to other tribes in the Northern Plains. According to the Spirit Lake Tribal Enrollment Program, there are 7,256 enrolled members; 2,069 enrolled members live on the Spirit Lake Reservation. The U.S. Census Bureau (2010) states that the total population living on the reservation is 4,238. The Department of Interior lists 5,002 American Indian and Alaskan Natives (AIAN) alone or in combination living in counties in the area of Spirit Lake Tribe. This number includes people who are AIAN living in counties in which Spirit Lake is located and those counties adjacent to the county in which Spirit Lake is located.

Gender, Age, Marital Status: The US Census Bureau (2010) states virtually the same number of males and females live on the reservation. The median age for all of Spirit Lake Reservation is 23.4, younger than the state's median age of 37 and the nation's median age of 37.2. Women have a higher median age (23.5) than men (23.3). The reservation's *65 or older* population comprises 7.1% of the total population, lower than the state (14.5%) and national (13%) percentages. US Census Bureau (2006-2010) published 29% of Spirit Lake Reservation residents are married, lower than the state (53.5%) and U.S. (50.2%).

Education: The U.S. Census Bureau indicates that 80% of Benson County residents' age 25 and older *graduated from high school* and 10% had earned a *bachelor's degree or higher*. Both are lower than the state and national averages. The University of Wisconsin County Health rankings report 8.5% of Benson County residents who are 16 years of age and older are illiterate.

Employment: 2010 U.S. Census Bureau states 65% of the Spirit Lake Reservation population between 20 and 64 years of age are in the labor force (labor force includes unemployed who were actively searching for employment); 55% of the labor force population is employed. This is lower than the state and national levels).

Income and Poverty. The *median household income* on Spirit Lake Reservation in 2006-2010 was \$26,118, lower than the state and national level; 47.8% of the reservation's residents lived *below the poverty level*, higher than the state (12.3%), and national levels (13.8%). The U.S. Census Bureau reports that 57% of Spirit Lake Reservation *children live in poverty*. Minnewaukan, Oberon, Four Winds, and Warwick Schools all have a higher rate of students who qualify for reduced and free lunches than the state rate, with more than 50% of students qualifying.

The Culture: The loss of cultural influence on the Spirit Lake Nation can be documented thoroughly through records of forced assimilation, colonization, and western educational and religious influences (Deloria, 1997; Szasz, 1999; Churchill, 2004). The efforts of the community and the college to provide citizens and students access to the Dakota culture, language, and history is minimal due to the loss of members of the tribe that are fluent in these tribal resources. In 2003 a Fluent Speaker Survey indicated that 8% of youth on the Spirit Lake Reservation age 13 to 18 were able to communicate easily in the Dakota language and an additional 40% had some knowledge of the language. At the opposite end, 60% of adults over 55 easily spoke the language and an additional 10% had some knowledge. However, for those in the 19 to 55 age groups, language ability is radically different; less than 10% could easily converse with elders and only about an additional 12% have some knowledge. The 2003 survey also identified 139 individuals from the reservation were fluent in the Dakota language. Of these "talkers", more than 90% were age 51 or older. As elders die, the number of fluent speakers also declines.

Needs Assessments: In our small rural community, our electronic counter recorded over 35,000+ patrons coming through our doors for the year 2017. Library staff developed a survey with intent to gauge patron satisfaction, to assess user need, and to learn more about the outcomes of using the library. We found that a majority of the community members value the use of the library as a resource to do resumes, job applications along with the ability to send and receive faxes. Our tribal library is the sole access point to high speed Internet and computers.

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Many people in the community have fixed incomes and cannot afford internet because you have to have phone services in order to have internet. Due to our rural location, internet services is still at slow dial-up speed. We are a valuable lifeline in addressing computer literacy by assisting the community with job skills, educational skills, and today's form of communication.

Our summer reading program has been a successful program and is one sought after by the community but is based on funding. The drive to increase community literacy through *family fun nights* and education through monthly topic exhibits will be continued and enhanced by including more of these events. The importance of the culture and language goes without challenge in tribal communities, and the Spirit Lake Community is no exception. Approaching culture and language from an exploratory and fun angle is intended with the Dakota Culture Night. These successful programs have been theme based and library staff coordinated.

Library Role: The Valerie Merrick Memorial Library (VMML) serves as a public library, providing a reference and research resource for Spirit Lake Nation residents and surrounding communities. The Library offers a variety of novels, ebooks, magazines, journals, and local newspaper subscriptions. **The Valerie Merrick Memorial Library Mission:** *Provide lifelong learning opportunities and a respectful, culturally relevant library environment that meets the needs of the Spirit Lake community.*

The library subscribes to online resources such as: National Library of Medicine, Native Americans to Health Information, and Online Dakota Interactive Network (ODIN). ODIN Interlibrary loan offers access to a vast array of materials not available internally. The library's collection of Native American authors, topics, and culture, are of special note. The National Library of Medicine/National Institutes of Health assists in obtaining health related acquisitions including accessing materials by Native researchers. Monthly health topic display and seminar providing information along with the Health/Nutrition Program to promote use of online and community resources. Children's books and videos are also available for the younger ages. Daily story time reading to children from the Wakanheza Oti (Sacred Children's Place) Daycare. Collaboration with Legal Services of ND to assist community members with preparing taxes. Information on the library holdings is available to the community via Internet. Library programming includes a yearly summer reading camp for children; age's 5-12. The library offers public access computer lab, fax and copying services, and special events such as family reading nights, weekend, traditional practices and learning opportunities. The library is open Monday thru Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. Currently we have 15,224 books, , 406 ebooks, 900 DVD's and 651 registered patrons.

In June of 2013, Melvine Reierson was hired as the new director for the Library. Melvine is the daughter of the name sake "Valerie Merrick". She is continuing her education in the Master's Program for Library Services and has the same passion her mother did for learning and engaging young people in learning. Experienced librarian Mrs. Helen Jacobs has a BS in Elementary Education with a minor in Library Science. Mrs. Jacobs is a part-time assistant and has 40+ years' experience as an elementary school librarian. The Library interns are hired contingent on funding and provide coverage of evening library hours and assist patrons with research, computer operation, and health resource information. The interns work hours are weekly from September to April. In addition, the library occasionally has college work-study students assigned to the library to assist with inventory and circulation desk duties.

The VMML's quest to increase literacy includes youth, elder, and cultural community programming. Current programming begins with communication and is maintained through a monthly library newsletter that includes new acquisitions, library events, and usage data that is distributed monthly to all tribal and BIA mailboxes, college population, Board of Regents, schools, service providers, and on the college web site. Technology resources include a 12-unit computer lab with Internet access designated for public use. CCCC Information Technology (IT) Department provides technical assistance. Electronic resources are limited due to funding constraints and

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include American Indian Experience, Environment Complete, and an online subscription to ODIN (through North Dakota library consortium). A printer, a copier, and fax machine is available for public use.

Currently we would also like to continue in our efforts towards enhancing the community literacy program. An important project VMML would like to assist with engaging family reading is by promoting and expanding *1,000 Books before Kindergarten* Program. This program would help with families becoming more involved with reading to their children. The whole concept is simple and rewards for early reading are priceless. Our goal is to help establish small libraries in their own homes by supplying books, supporting and encouraging the families. Also providing small incentives for reaching milestones of reading 100 books, 200 books, 300 books and so on.

Purpose: The three major goals of this proposed project begin by providing Library Internship Program. Emphasis will be on promotion of librarianship as a career due to limited availability of librarians in rural, isolated areas. Additionally, the VMML will continue its campaign to increase library holdings as well as maintain family and community literacy programming. Thirdly, while the VMML enjoys the opportunity to provide entertainment opportunities for the community, we acknowledge this is a critical time to instill some of the Dakota Language and Culture into our patrons through our Dakota Culture Night Program. Some of the smaller activities will continue to play an active role at VMML, but for purposes of brevity, will be highlighted in project design of this proposal.

2. Project Goals and Expected Results

Spirit Lake Tribe Library Enhancement Grant will address three primary needs. The strategically designed project will be addressed in **three main goals**: **1)** The VMML will increase capacity for the future growth of the library; **2)** Maintain library community programming services and improve assessment of growth; and **3)** Leverage the VMML computer usage to include a Dakota Language and Cultural Immersion Program.

The **expected results** of this grant, should it be funded, will start with

- a. Provide proven programs to ensure our youngest children discover the **pleasure of books, develop critical emergent literacy and language skills, and start school ready.**
- b. The **staff of the VMML will be trained** and knowledgeable in the day-to-day operations of a community library and prepared to provide community, (elder, youth, & family), programming beyond the normal 8:00 am to 4:30 pm schedule, that is, evenings and weekends.
- c. Continued cultural programming with **family fun night, summer reading camp, acquisition of new materials, and a monthly health awareness promotion.**
- d. Finally, the high patron count will be leveraged **to provide a cultural and language night** that will ignite the perpetuation and revitalization of the Dakota Culture and Language that once flourished among the Dakota People.

The following goals and objectives have been carefully planned to serve the library and community.

Goal 1: The VMML will increase capacity for the future growth of the library.
Objective 1.1: Develop and implement a mentor/protégé plan for new librarian/experienced librarian
Expected Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 A plan will be in place to follow for mentor and protégé of VMML. 📄 Be proactive in finding student intern to develop and train. 📄 Report and grant writing will be in-house and day-to-day operations of the library will be complete.
Objective 1.2: Training and professional development for interns and works study
Expected Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Staff will receive hands-on training in librarianship (cataloging, ATRIUM, policy) 📄 Staff will receive training in research methods and literature search & review versed in research methodology, librarianship

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Staff will be versed in language of librarianship, research and policy ☞ Weekend and night hours will be on a consistent basis.
Goal 2: Maintain library community programming services and improve assessment measurements on growth
Objective 2.1: Enhance and promote community programming
<p>Expected Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Programming at the VMML will be available, evaluated, and assessed for productivity. An educational center that involves family exists in the community. Programs that are culturally enriching maintain importance. ☞ Improve appreciation of reading through outreach campaign and emphasis family literacy activities ☞ Integrated weekly story hour for the Wakanheza Oti (Sacred Children’s Place) Daycare with visiting faculty and parents. Also, promote the <i>1,000 Books before Kindergarten</i> Program emphasizing on the importance of early literacy. ☞ Maintain summer youth reading camp ☞ Youth continue to be entertained through latent educational endeavors. ☞ Administer a health survey to the community
Objective 2.2: Increase current book holdings
<p>Expected Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Through acquisition of new books and furnishings, VMML will monitor patronage and encourage community usage of our facilities and services, but will concentrate more so on quality of service. ☞ Additional shelved items for community usage ☞ Improved and increased service to community ☞ Increased literature for research and development for community ☞ Evaluation of current use and value-added of digital library (Amazon)
Objective 2.3: Showcase monthly exhibit that educates about health disparities and disease prevention
<p>Expected Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Continued expansion of health education efforts to include cancer prevention and education, mental health, and nutrition and positive health practices will promote lifelong healthy lifestyle practices for the Spirit Lake tribal community. ☞ Service is enhanced and community is educated with important health topics monthly. ☞ Education for patrons on ethical research, review of the literature, and health issues and disease prevention ☞ Research is shared as beneficial to community.
Goal 3: Leverage the VMML computer usage to include a Dakota Language and Cultural Program
Objective 3.1: Augment usage of computer cluster to include valuable lessons in Dakota Language & Culture
<p>Expected Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Encouraging cultural diversity exploration will increase community awareness of other world cultures, in addition to increasing knowledge of our own rich Dakota culture, language, and history. ☞ Increase the knowledge of the Dakota Language and Culture ☞ Increase fluency of Dakota Language and Culture starting at youth, but not limited to this group ☞ Computer usage will increase because Dakota Language and Culture is important to the community of computer users. ☞ The VMML will contribute to more “talkers” in the community. ☞ Learning the Language and Culture will become better known in the community through the services provided by the VMML.
Objective 3.2: Utilize a thumb reader for computer usage and data collection

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Expected Results

- 📄 Collect data for assessment purposes and future needs of VMML
- 📄 Assessment will be conducted on Dakota Language and Culture program both before and after.
- 📄 Accurate time usage will be documented and available for evaluation and assessment purposes

Table 1: Library Usage Statistics

Month	Computer Usage-Adults	Computer Usage-Child (K-12)	Total Computer Usage	Book Checkouts-Adult	Book Checkouts-Children	Total Book Checkouts	Patron Count
TOTALS 2017	3770	1669	5439	3853	279	4122	35,190
TOTALS 2016	4332	1657	5989	3884	433	4317	32,221
TOTALS 2015	3726	2033	5759	2552	317	2882	30,972
TOTALS 2014	3498	2058	5556	2003	613	2616	31,414
TOTALS 2013	3554	2219	5773	2062	518	2580	31,000

3. Impact

Goal	Resources	Timeline
1. The VMML will increase capacity for the future growth of the library.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Human Resources 📄 DIA 📄 Community 	Award Announcement Each Semester Monthly

Goal 1 Action Items: The human resource manager will solicit applications for a library intern. The first solicitation will be for those that are already experienced in librarianship, and if the call does not produce potentials, the next call will be for those interested in learning the field. Melvine Reiersen and Mrs. Jacobs will be asked to help with the above process. A monthly report will be provided by Melvine Reiersen to help oversight to determine the growth of the new intern. The new librarians salary will be reduced from the IMLS grant funding to begin self-sustaining capacity for this position. The remaining year will allow the new librarian time to activate his or her role as librarian and utilize Mrs. Jacobs for consultation. Mrs. Jacobs will be consulted monthly by oversight to visit the library and the new librarian to evaluate how the program is doing with the new librarian. Mrs. Jacobs will provide oversight with an overview of her visit after each consultation. New staff will be required to take a research methods course to learn the language of research. Report writing training will be provided to the new librarian. Evening and weekend hours will be addressed and implemented to ensure hours are available to the community.

Goal	Resources	Timeline
2. Maintain library community programming services and improve assessment measurements on growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Existing Librarian 📄 Library Interns & Work Study 📄 Faculty & Parent Volunteers 📄 Summer reading camp coordinator 📄 Health survey instrument 📄 Library holding acquisition 	Ongoing by semester monthly annually annually (spring) ongoing annually

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- ☞ Evaluation plan for current digital holdings monthly
- ☞ Entrance exhibit

Goal 2 Action Items: The VMML Staff will to continue their efforts of the community literacy program that will be enhanced and expanded, increasing academic success for children and parents, strengthening family interaction and family involvement, encouraging community ownership of the public/tribal library, and building families of readers. Promotion of family fun nights that focuses on providing literacy activities and building family reading skills. Polling of community members through suggestion boxes, surveys, and electronic mailings on what book holdings are required or recommended for the VMML. To expand summer reading camps that will include other youth programs on campus and community. Continue efforts in expanding the *1,000 Books before Kindergarten* program to promote early literacy. Administer health survey to community. Exhibits are planned and completed each month to provide education of research and dissemination of health related topics and disease prevention.

Goal	Resources	Timeline
3. Leverage the VMML computer usage to include a Dakota Language and Cultural Program	☞ Community	Monthly
	☞ Library staff	Ongoing
	☞ IT Staff for technology	1 st semester
	☞ Advertisement	Ongoing
	☞ DIA to help with survey	Periodically/ongoing

Goal 3 Action Items: VMML staff will be fully versed in the computer usage policy. The continued support of eReaders will be monitored closely to ensure the library moves towards providing the community with contemporary resources and if this service is impacting the community in a positive way. Library staff will periodically evaluate and assess the programs within the VMML through focus groups and surveys. Analysis of surveys and focus groups (this is especially important for assessment and evaluation of new tools in the library) will be conducted and results disseminated to administration and library staff.

4. Communication Plan

Evaluation and dissemination are two highly important topics for a library and proper dissemination practices are critical to Native American communities. Past research and dissemination among tribal communities have not always been heroic or ethical there can be sour tastes lingering among tribal communities. It is vital the VMML include methods of proper usage of research and literature and make sure the community is aware of the how research, evaluation, and dissemination are, if used properly, can benefit all parties involved. Improving the implementation of library services will assist in achieving positive public outcomes for the families in the community. It is vital that VMML continues with the development of a community literacy program that will increase the academic success for children and parents, strengthening family interaction and involvement, encourage family ownership of the library, and build a family of readers. Educating families, the importance of early literacy development will also play a principal role. Through acquisitions of new books and services, VMML will see an increase in patronage and expand the usage of our facilities and services. The expansion of our health collection that include diabetes prevention and education, mental health, nutrition and positive health practices will promote lifelong healthy lifestyle practices for the Spirit Lake Tribal Community.

This evaluation plan will utilize 8 basic items that are highly important in an evaluation plan.

- The most basic category of assessment is a Count of participants. The project also needs to track the demographics of the participants. : How many patrons are completing the program(s)? Who are the patrons that are utilizing services?
- The next category of assessment is referred to as Reaction and Satisfaction. Positive patron reactions can be an indication that participant learning styles and expectations are being addressed and that their social needs

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are met through a feeling of being respected and accepted: Are the patrons satisfied with the service provided? Do potential patrons feel the potential service meets their needs? Are patrons being treated adequately?

- The third category is learning. Participant learning is used to help determine program effectiveness and participant success. This information is collected through reaction surveys, grades, and completion reports: Are programming offerings effective to patrons (youth, elder, family)?
- The fourth category is organizational Cultural: In a tribal community library; cultural needs of community members are vital and the one-on-one attention patron's get from this library will be clear for measurement.
- Application and Implementation: Community leaders will recognize if this library is effective by determining how well patrons are applying their new skills.
- Impact: If patrons and staff are successful, a ripple effect will result. Are patrons continuing to want the programming and/or service?
- Return on Investment (ROI): Is the ROI significant?
 - $\frac{\text{Total Benefits} - \text{Fully Loaded Costs}}{\text{Fully Loaded Costs}} \times 100\% = ROI\%$
- Intangibles: Patron stories, more confidence, results come from surveys. Each successful patron means greater success for the community and greater success for Native Americans.

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Question	Data Collection Tools	Responsible Groups	Timeline / Event
1. What contextual factors promote or impede VMML success?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Patron Surveys 📄 Community Surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VMML Staff VMML Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each Semester Monthly
2. How effective is the administrative structure of the VMML IMLS Enhancement project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Advisory Meetings 📄 Patron Surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration Librarian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly or Semi-Annually
3. How effectively does the VMML IMLS Enhancement project engage its partners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Advisory Meetings 📄 Patron Surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration Librarian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly Quarterly
4. How well do VMML programs prepare patrons for the Dakota language & cultural fluency?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Pre and Post Test Assessments 📄 Self-efficacy survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library Staff Library Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each Semester Each Semester
5. How effective are the VMML strategies for improving literacy among its patrons and youth programming?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Pre and Post Test Assessments 📄 Programming Completion Rates 📄 Retention Rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Librarian VMML Staff VMML Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each Semester Each Summer/After Program
6. What is the impact of the VMML project on the community, the college, and the community schools?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Community Surveys 📄 Patron Surveys 📄 Focus Groups 📄 School Surveys 📄 School Fairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Librarian and Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After year 1 Ongoing After year 1 After year 1 Annually
7. Does the VMML provide effective educational resources to the community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Community surveys 📄 Patron surveys 📄 Suggestion boxes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Librarian VMML Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing
8. Can the VMML maintain service to the community without IMLS funding?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Financial reports 📄 Tribal support (resolutions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tribal Finance Tribal Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing

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Schedule of Completion for Project Year 1

ACTIVITY	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT		
Family Reading Night													\$12,500	
Story Hour													0	
Summer Reading Camp													\$1,000	
Dakota Culture Night													\$3,600	
Head Start Monthly Activity														\$1,600
Acquisition of New Library Materials													\$12,500	
1,000 Books before Kindergarten													\$2,400	
Monthly Health Topic: Access to reliable, electronic health resources, printed materials, books, videos, and reference materials will be provided to community members													\$1,800	

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Schedule of Completion for Project Year 2

ACTIVITY	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT		
Family Reading Night													\$12,500	
Story Hour													0	
Summer Reading Camp													\$1,000	
Dakota Culture Night													\$3,600	
Head Start Monthly Activity														\$1,600
Acquisition of New Library Materials													\$12,500	
1,000 Books before Kindergarten													\$2,400	
Monthly Health Topic: Access to reliable, electronic health resources, printed materials, books, videos, and reference materials will be provided to community members													\$1,800	