



LAURA BUSH 21st CENTURY LIBRARIAN PROGRAM

Sample Application RE-259979-OLS-26
Project Category: Planning

CNMI Joeten-Kiyu Public Library

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$200,000
Amount of cost share: \$0

Joeten Kiyu Public Library, the State Library of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, will address family literacy programming that helps parents support children's reading development at home. The focus of the planning grant will include community literacy needs assessments, partnership development, curriculum adaptation, and pilot program design for after-school family reading clubs that incorporate indigenous storytelling traditions in the Chamorro and Carolinian languages. The project will also explore the development of locally produced children's books reflecting island culture. The project will help Joeten Kiyu Public Library develop a strategic roadmap for a full-scale family literacy program that strengthens family engagement with reading, expands community partnerships, and develops a sustainable framework for culturally responsive family literacy programming across the Northern Mariana Islands.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- 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.

INTRODUCTION

The Joeten-Kiyu Public Library (JKPL), the State Library of the Northern Mariana Islands, respectfully requests \$200,000 in funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program (LB21) to support a one-year planning project titled Families Reading Together: Planning a Sustainable Family Literacy and Indigenous Storytelling Initiative. This planning project will address a critical need to strengthen literacy development and family engagement with reading across the Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there is no coordinated public after-school family reading program that equips parents with strategies and techniques to support their children's literacy development in the home. Through this planning initiative, JKPL will analyze literacy needs across the islands, explore the development of after-school family reading clubs, distribute books to participating families, and design culturally responsive literacy programming that celebrates the indigenous languages and cultural traditions of the islands, particularly the Chamorro language and Carolinian language. The project will also explore the publication of locally produced children's books that highlight indigenous storytelling traditions and reflect the cultural identity of the Northern Mariana Islands. Planning activities will include community needs assessments, partnership development, curriculum adaptation, pilot studies, and the creation of prototypes and program models that can guide a future full-scale literacy initiative. Intended results include increased family engagement with reading, strengthened community partnerships, and the development of a sustainable family literacy framework that can be implemented throughout the islands. In addition, the project will align with national commemorative efforts recognizing the United States Semiquincentennial, the 250th anniversary of American independence, by emphasizing the importance of literacy, civic knowledge, and storytelling in preserving cultural heritage and strengthening democratic participation within American communities.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

In the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI), 65.7% of K-3 students were flagged for "Urgent Intervention", highlighting significant academic challenges that impact educational outcomes and family engagement with reading and early literacy¹. Literacy development is a foundational component of educational success, lifelong learning, and civic participation. In the Northern Mariana Islands, however, many families face barriers to accessing structured literacy programs that support early childhood reading development and parental engagement. While public schools provide classroom-based instruction, there is currently no coordinated after-school family literacy initiative designed to help parents and caregivers learn effective strategies for supporting their children's reading skills at home. This gap presents a significant opportunity for the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library to expand its role as a community learning hub and to support families as active participants in their children's educational development.

The need for family-centered literacy programming has been identified through ongoing library outreach, community engagement, and conversations with educators and parents across the islands. Library staff regularly interact with families who express a strong desire to support their children's academic success but often report uncertainty about how to help their children develop reading skills. Many parents ask librarians for guidance on how to choose appropriate books, how to ask meaningful questions while reading aloud, and how to make reading an enjoyable and consistent family activity. These conversations highlight the importance of providing structured programs that empower parents with practical literacy strategies.

At the same time, the Northern Mariana Islands possess rich cultural traditions of oral storytelling, language preservation, and community learning. Indigenous storytelling has long played an important role in transmitting

¹ https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/StateSSIPs2023/NorthernMarianIslandsSSIP_2023.pdf

cultural knowledge, history, and values from one generation to the next. Integrating these traditions into literacy programming presents an opportunity to strengthen cultural identity while also promoting reading engagement among young learners. By incorporating indigenous languages and storytelling traditions into family literacy programs, the proposed project will create culturally responsive learning experiences that resonate with island families.

To guide the development of this initiative, the project will draw upon the evidence-based Motherhead/Fatheread Family Literacy Program, a nationally recognized 8-week literacy program that trains parents and caregivers in reading, writing, and storytelling strategies designed to support children's literacy development. The program emphasizes interactive reading practices that encourage dialogue between parents and children, helping families build vocabulary, comprehension skills, and emotional connections through shared reading experiences.

Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of this model in improving family literacy outcomes. Case studies conducted between 2013 and 2017 in rural communities in Colorado found that parents who participated in the Motherhead/Fatheread program significantly increased positive reading behaviors and reported greater confidence in supporting their children's learning². In addition, preschool children whose parents participated in the program demonstrated measurable improvements in language development, including vocabulary growth and expressive language skills, as measured through Teaching Strategies Gold assessments. The proposed planning project will examine how this evidence-based program can be adapted to the cultural and geographic context of the Northern Mariana Islands. Unlike many mainland communities, the islands face unique challenges related to geographic isolation, limited access to educational resources, and linguistic diversity. Planning activities will therefore focus on identifying the most effective strategies for implementing family literacy programming in island communities while respecting local cultural traditions and language practices.

Importantly, the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library already possesses significant internal capacity to support this work. Six members of the library staff are certified Motherhead/Fatheread Adult Instructors and Story Exploring Instructors, providing the expertise necessary to guide curriculum adaptation, pilot programs, and instructor training.

The beneficiaries of this project will include families with young children across the Northern Mariana Islands, educators, librarians, and community organizations dedicated to supporting literacy and cultural preservation. Parents will gain practical knowledge and confidence in helping their children develop reading skills, while children will benefit from increased access to books and literacy-rich interactions within the home.

More broadly, the project will strengthen the role of libraries as essential community institutions that support lifelong learning and cultural preservation. By developing a sustainable family literacy model grounded in both research and local cultural traditions, the project will create a foundation for long-term literacy improvements throughout the islands.

Alignment with Program Goals and Objectives

This project is directly aligned with the LB21 Program Goal 2: Champion Lifelong Learning. Specifically, it meets Objective 2.1: Develop or enhance professional development and training programs to enable the library

² <https://coloradohumanities.org/whats-new/study-results/#:~:text=Research%20Results%20Published%20in%20Peer,Reader%2C%20after%20her%20first%20session.>

and archival workforce to meet the needs of their communities. Furthermore, the project strengthens the library's LSTA Plan (2022-2027) Goal 1: Promote Literate CNMI and Goal 2: Strengthen Institutional Capacity.

PROJECT WORK PLAN

The proposed planning project will be implemented by an experienced team of library professionals at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, the State Library of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project team brings extensive experience in public library administration, literacy programming, community outreach, digital services, and cultural preservation.

1. Erlinda C. Naputi, State Librarian and Director of the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, will serve as the Project Director. In this role, she will provide overall leadership and strategic oversight for the project, ensuring that all planning activities align with the goals of the library and the requirements of the grant program. As the head of the state library system, Ms. Naputi has extensive experience managing library programs, developing community partnerships, and administering federally funded initiatives that support literacy, education, and community engagement.
2. Beth Demapan, Technical Services Librarian, will serve as the Project Coordinator. Ms. Demapan will lead planning activities related to resource development, book selection, and the exploration of publishing culturally relevant children's literature that reflects indigenous storytelling traditions. She will also coordinate documentation and resource development activities to support curriculum adaptation and prototype program design.
3. Administrative management for the project will be provided by Vincent Sablan, Administrative Officer III, and Silverio Balisalisa, Library Services Coordinator. Together they will oversee fiscal management, procurement, and compliance with grant reporting requirements, ensuring that project resources are managed efficiently and in accordance with federal guidelines.
4. Technology support for the project will be provided by Omar T. Manacop, Systems Librarian, and Joey T. Songsong, Computer Programmer. They will assist in the development of digital program materials, online literacy resources, and technology infrastructure that will support family participation in literacy activities and enable the library to expand access to program resources through digital platforms.
5. Program design and pilot implementation will be led by Celina Foreman, Children's Librarian. Ms. Foreman will coordinate pilot cohorts of the Motherread/Fatheread Family Literacy Program and supervise program instructors who will facilitate family reading workshops and literacy activities.
6. Community outreach activities will be coordinated by Leoralynn Terlaje, Bookmobile Supervisor, who will expand the reach of the project through the library's bookmobile services. Through bookmobile visits and outreach events, the project will engage families in remote communities who may have limited access to library programs and educational resources.
7. Rey Jr. Deleon Guerrero, Pacific Room Supervisor, will contribute expertise in local history, cultural heritage, and archival resources. As supervisor of the Pacific Room—home to the library's special collections documenting the history, culture, and traditions of the Northern Mariana Islands—Mr. Deleon Guerrero will assist the project team in identifying historical and cultural materials that can inform the development of indigenous storytelling resources and culturally relevant children's literature. His knowledge of local heritage resources will help ensure that the literacy materials developed through

the project accurately reflect the cultural narratives and historical experiences of the Chamorro and Carolinian communities.

8. Importantly, several members of the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library staff are certified instructors in the Motherread/Fatheread Family Literacy Program, providing the project with strong internal expertise in family literacy instruction, storytelling, and parent engagement strategies. This existing capacity will allow the project team to effectively adapt the evidence-based literacy model to the cultural and linguistic context of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The combined experience of the project team in library administration, literacy instruction, cultural programming, and community outreach positions the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library to successfully complete the proposed planning activities and develop a scalable model for family literacy programming.

Planning activities will begin with a comprehensive literacy needs assessment that includes surveys, focus groups, and community listening sessions. These activities will gather input from parents, educators, and community leaders regarding barriers to literacy engagement and opportunities for program development. Following the needs assessment, the project team will adapt the Motherread/Fatheread curriculum to incorporate culturally relevant storytelling traditions and local language elements. Prototype literacy workshops and pilot reading clubs will then be implemented to test program models and gather feedback from participants.

Throughout the project, evaluation activities will collect both quantitative and qualitative data on program participation, parental reading behaviors, and family engagement with library services. Stakeholder engagement will be a key component of the planning process. JKPL will conduct community listening sessions, community conversations, focus groups, and surveys to gather input from parents, educators, and community leaders. This feedback will inform program design and ensure that the final literacy initiative reflects community needs and priorities.

PROJECT RESULTS

The primary outcome of this planning project will be the development of a comprehensive and sustainable framework for implementing family literacy programming throughout the Northern Mariana Islands. Key deliverables will include a detailed family literacy needs assessment report, culturally adapted literacy curricula, pilot after-school reading clubs at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, and prototype children's books incorporating indigenous languages and cultural narratives.

The project will also generate program guides, training materials, and evaluation tools that can be used by other libraries and educational organizations interested in developing family literacy initiatives. Results will be shared with the broader library community through conference presentations and professional publications, including presentations at professional gatherings such as the Pacific Islands Association of Libraries, Archives, and Museums (PIALA) Conference, the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM) Annual Conference, the Hawaii Library Association Conference, and/or Northern Marianas Library Association Quarterly Meetings. JKPL will submit articles and reports to library journals and publications, including the Pacific Islands Association of Libraries, Archives, and Museums' (PIALA) annual report, the Northern Marianas Library Association's annual report, and/or the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library's newsletter *Bookmarks*, etc.

To ensure long-term sustainability, the project will strengthen partnerships between the library, schools, cultural organizations, and community groups. These partnerships will help ensure that the family literacy initiative continues beyond the grant period.

By the conclusion of the project, the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library will have developed a strategic roadmap for implementing a full-scale family literacy program that promotes reading, preserves indigenous storytelling traditions, and supports educational success for families across the Northern Mariana Islands.

National Impact Statement

The proposed planning project led by the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library in the Northern Mariana Islands will contribute to the national conversation on family literacy, culturally responsive library services, and community-based education in geographically isolated regions of the United States. Libraries across the nation increasingly serve as community learning hubs that support early childhood development, family engagement, and lifelong learning. However, many rural and island communities continue to face unique challenges related to geographic isolation, limited educational infrastructure, and restricted access to culturally relevant literacy resources. This project addresses these challenges by developing a culturally responsive family literacy framework that integrates indigenous storytelling traditions, community engagement, and evidence-based literacy instruction.

The planning activities funded through this project will generate knowledge and models that are transferable to other small island states, rural communities, and underserved populations throughout the United States and its territories. By adapting the evidence-based Motherhead/Fatheread Family Literacy Program to incorporate indigenous storytelling and multilingual learning environments, the project will demonstrate how libraries can integrate cultural heritage with literacy education to improve family engagement and early childhood learning outcomes.

The initiative will also contribute to national efforts celebrating the United States Semiquincentennial, the 250th anniversary of American independence. Through storytelling, community literacy activities, and culturally relevant children's literature, the project will highlight the role of diverse voices and cultural traditions in shaping the American story. The Northern Mariana Islands represent a unique part of the American experience, and this project will showcase how libraries in U.S. territories contribute to national educational and cultural goals.

The knowledge produced through this planning project—including needs assessments, pilot program results, culturally adapted literacy curricula, and prototype children's books—will be shared with the national library community through professional conferences, publications, and presentations. Findings will be disseminated through the annual conference of the Pacific Islands Association of Libraries, Archives and Museums, which serves as the primary professional network for libraries, archives, and museums across the Pacific region.

By documenting the planning process, program models, and evaluation outcomes, the project will provide a roadmap that can guide other libraries interested in implementing family literacy initiatives in culturally diverse and geographically remote communities. In doing so, the project advances the mission of the Institute of Museum and Library Services to strengthen libraries and museums as essential institutions that support learning, creativity, and cultural preservation throughout the United States.

Evaluation Plan and Impact Measurement

Evaluation Metrics Table			
Goal	Metric	Data Source	Measurement Method
Assess literacy needs	Community literacy assessment completed	Survey responses	Needs assessment report
Strengthen family reading behaviors	% of parents reporting increased reading confidence	Pre/Post surveys	Statistical comparison
Pilot literacy programming	Number of pilot reading clubs	Program records	Participation data
Develop culturally relevant materials	Number of prototype books developed	Project documentation	Publication records
Build institutional capacity	Number of staff trained	Training records	Certification documentation

Evaluation will be an integral component of the proposed planning project. The evaluation strategy will focus on measuring both the effectiveness of the planning activities and the potential impact of the proposed literacy initiative on families and communities in the Northern Mariana Islands.

The evaluation framework will include both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data will be collected through surveys, participation records, and program documentation, while qualitative data will be gathered through interviews, focus groups, and participant feedback.

The evaluation will address the following key questions:

1. What are the literacy needs and barriers faced by families in the Northern Mariana Islands?
2. How effective are pilot family literacy activities in increasing parental confidence in supporting children's reading development?
3. How can the Motherread/Fatheread model be adapted to incorporate indigenous storytelling and multilingual learning environments?
4. What partnerships and community resources are necessary to sustain a long-term family literacy initiative?

Baseline data will be collected at the beginning of the project through community surveys and focus groups. These findings will inform program design and curriculum adaptation. During the pilot phase, participants will complete pre- and post-program surveys measuring changes in parental reading behaviors, confidence in reading aloud, and frequency of family literacy activities.

Additional evaluation methods will include:

- Tracking participation rates in pilot reading clubs
- Monitoring book distribution and resource utilization
- Documenting community feedback through community conversations/ listening sessions
- Recording instructor observations during pilot programs

Evaluation findings will be compiled into a comprehensive project report that documents lessons learned, program models, and recommendations for future implementation. The final evaluation report will also include

data visualizations, participant testimonials, and case studies highlighting the impact of family literacy engagement. The evaluation results will guide the development of a long-term implementation strategy and will be shared with the national library community through conference presentations and professional publications.

Logic Model				
Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
IMLS grant funding	Conduct literacy needs assessment	Community literacy report	Increased understanding of literacy needs	Sustainable literacy programs
Certified Motherread/Fatheread instructors	Adapt literacy curriculum	Training materials	Increased staff capacity	Improved family literacy engagement
Library staff and outreach team	Pilot family reading clubs	Program sessions	Increased parental confidence	Improved early childhood literacy
Community stakeholders	Host community listening sessions/ conversations	Stakeholder partnerships	Stronger collaboration	Regional literacy model
Cultural experts	Develop indigenous storytelling materials	Prototype children's books	Cultural preservation	Expanded culturally relevant literature

PROJECT TIMELINE for “Families Reading Together: Planning a Sustainable Family Literacy and Indigenous Storytelling Initiative”

	Activity (Year 1)	Schedule of Completion											
		Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12
1	Project kickoff meeting, staff orientation, finalize planning framework												
2	Community outreach and stakeholder engagement												
3	Conduct literacy needs assessment and surveys												
4	Analyze data and identify program priorities												
5	Adapt Motherread/Fatheread curriculum to local context												
6	Develop prototype literacy workshops and reading club models .												
7	Pilot family reading clubs and storytelling sessions												
8	Develop prototype children's books incorporating indigenous languages												
9	Conduct evaluation surveys and collect participant feedback												
10	Analyze results and prepare strategic implementation plan												
11	Disseminate findings and present results at professional conferences												

Key Project Staff: Library Director Erlinda C. Naputi; Technical Services Librarian Beth Demapan; and Systems Librarian Omar T. Manacop