



LAURA BUSH 21st CENTURY LIBRARIAN PROGRAM

Sample Application RE-260769-OLS-26
Project Category: Community-Centered Implementation

LTBB Cultural Library

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$94,085
Amount of cost share:	\$0

The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians will use this community-centered implementation project to build its tribal library workforce and cultural comprehension. Rooted in community-identified priorities, the project responds to cultural realities facing the Tribe, including the need to preserve and carry forward Odawa knowledge, language, and lifeways that are in jeopardy of being lost. The library already serves as a community-centered learning space, and its work is not limited to traditional public functions. It also involves stewardship of culturally relevant materials and access to community knowledge, which require intentional workforce development as the Tribal population ages. This project creates a structured pathway to library and information work for youth and emerging professionals while strengthening the library's ability to serve the broader community.

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.

Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians

Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program FY26 Narrative

1. Introduction:

The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians (“LTBB” or “Tribe” or “Waganakising Odawa/k”) is a federally recognized Indian Tribe reaffirmed by the United States Congress on September 21, 1994 in Public Law 103-324, as amended. LTBB serves as the **lead applicant organization** submitting a project proposal to the Institute of Museum and Library Services’ Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program. The Tribe respectfully requests \$100,000 to support the development and implementation of the Waganakising Library Workforce Pathway Project – an initiative designed to strengthening both community cultural learning and library workforce development within the LTBB community. Rooted in community-identified priorities, the project responds to cultural realities facing the Tribe including the critical need to preserve and carry forward Odawa knowledge, language, and lifeways that are in jeopardy of being lost. Within LTBBs Niigaandiwin Education Department, the Mzingangamik Cultural Library already serves as a community-centered learning space that supports cultural programming, access to knowledge, and intergenerational connection. This project builds upon these strengths by leveraging a tailored “Earn and Learn” Workforce Development Model that creates a structured pathway that introduces emerging professionals to library and information work while simultaneously strengthening the library's capacity to serve the broader community and sustain Anishinaabek knowledge systems.

2. Project Justification

The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians’ historic reservation area encompasses Emmet and Charlevoix Counties, located in Michigan’s Northern Lower Peninsula. The majority of LTBB’s 4,752 enrolled Citizens reside in the rural tri-county area of Charlevoix, Emmet and Cheboygan Counties, Michigan (1,137). Examining LTBB enrollment data, there are concerning trends regarding youth and elder citizenship. The Tribe’s youth population has rapidly declined by 51% (535 Citizens ages 0-18 enrolled in 2025 vs. 1,038 in 2010), and is expected to continue dropping. 44% of all Citizens are 50 years of age or older, demonstrating that LTBB’s citizenship is an aging population. Comparatively, the LTBB Tribal Elder (ages 55 and above) 15 year-mortality rate is 32.2%. As elders pass on, traditional knowledge - which has been severely eroded by US Federal Boarding School policies - continues to be in jeopardy of not being passed down and ultimately lost. Given these statistics, the preservation of traditional knowledge, language, and Anishinaabek lifeways is not some abstract cultural endeavor but a call to action to protect our tribal sovereignty and Odawa identity.

The Niigaandiwin Education Department houses both the Cultural Services Program and the Mzingangamik Cultural Library which work in tandem to provide cultural programming, resources, and professional development opportunities to the LTBB community. Program design is intentionally community-centered, built upon the results of co-design opportunities, community feedback, and direct assessment to ensure that services address the needs and interest of the Tribe. The Education Department has conducted several assessments to obtain input from Tribal Youth, Tribal Elders, and the greater community. In 2020, the department’s Academic Services (K-12) Program polled 92 LTBB families to determine what types of support to provide and received an overwhelming number of responses indicating need for cultural activities and connection. In 2023, Education staff conducted a Tribal Elder-specific survey that assessed barriers to participating in cultural workshops, preferred formats and design of events, and which activities/teachings to prioritize. 89 responses were received that emphasized the need for seasonal cultural activities. Also in 2023, Education conducted a survey that was offered at large-scale community events and received 494 responses regarding the types of cultural programming that the department should offer. Additionally, the Tribe implemented the 2024 Odawa Prosperity Project – a community-based initiative that sought to identify economic needs and priorities of LTBB Citizens. Development of a heritage center for cultural activities and events ranked as the highest land use development priority among participants.

These findings emphasize the significant demand from LTBB community members for culturally grounded spaces, teachings, and opportunities that connect youth and families to ancestral knowledge. These outcomes also highlight related operational needs in order to sustain, organize, and expand culturally enriched opportunities. LTBB’s proposed project addresses a combined workforce, cultural preservation, and community access challenge. The Mzingangamik Cultural Library and Cultural Services Program are trusted community resources that support cultural programming, educational engagement, and access to knowledge. However, like many Tribal and rural communities, LTBB faces barriers to building a sustainable library workforce pipeline. Geographic distance from formal library training programs, limited local professional pathways, and the need for culturally responsive staffing make it difficult to recruit and develop future library workers using traditional models alone.

This challenge is particularly significant in LTBB's context. Library work within the Tribe is not limited to traditional public library functions. It also involves stewardship of culturally relevant materials, support for language and seasonal teachings, intergenerational relationship-building, access to community knowledge, and programmatic support for activities that help youth and families connect to Odawa lifeways. As the Tribal population ages and the youth population declines, the need to build systems that preserve, organize, interpret, and share community knowledge becomes even more urgent. Without intentional workforce development, there is risk not only to library service capacity, but also to the continuity of culturally grounded community learning.

This project is designed to meet identified needs by pairing community-centered library service with paid workforce development. Through a hiring of a Library Workforce Development Librarian and the creation of a structured summer internship, LTBB will build a Tribal library pathway that prepares emerging professionals while strengthening culturally grounded library access for the broader community. The Tribe will accomplish these results through the adaptation of the "Earn and Learn" Workforce Development Model to produce culturally responsive strategies that seek to strengthening the role of LTBB's Mzingangamik Cultural Library as both a cultural learning space and a viable workforce pathway. Paid internships, supervised mentoring, structured training, and reflective learning are recognized approaches for helping students and emerging professionals enter the library and information field. LTBB will adapt these practices to fit a community-centered, culturally grounded, rural Tribal context by leveraging Tribal Elders and mentors to assist in training library professionals in the processing, storing, and dissemination of cultural knowledge.

The proposed project will benefit all LTBB Tribal Citizens and descendants ("LTBB community") through the improved library programming, stronger access to organized cultural resources, and increased capacity to support learning that is community-centered and culturally meaningful. The **primary audience** for this project is the LTBB community, especially youth and emerging professionals age 26 and younger. If/when information is deemed appropriate for public consumption by traditional knowledge keepers, material will be made available through formats such as the LTBB website to engage the non-indigenous community.

The proposed project outlined in this narrative will create intergenerational spaces for the LTBB community rooted in ancestral knowledge and skills. These shared experiences will create dialogue within community and establish/enhance relationships. Through this work, a dynamic library workforce rooted in cultural stewardship will be result. **The goal of the project will be to establish a Waganakising Library Workforce Pathway Model.** This goal fits the scope of the Institute of Museums and Libraries Services' overarching Agency-Level Goals 1-3 (Championing Lifelong Learning, Strengthening Community Engagement, and Advancing Collections Stewardship and Access) as well as Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program Grant's Goal 1 and Objective 1.1 (Develop or enhance practices, programs, or initiatives encouraging students to pursue careers in library and information science).

The project goal will be met by the following objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Within the 12-month project period, staff will develop a Waganakising Library Workforce Pathway Framework.
- **Objective 2:** Within the 12-month project period, staff will implement the Library Workforce Development Program.
- **Objective 3:** Within the 12-month project period, staff will evaluate and refine the Library Workforce Development Program.

3. Project Work Plan

LTBB will complete the project in four connected phases.

Phase 1: Project start-up, planning, and baseline preparation

LTBB will hire or assign the Library Workforce Development Librarian, finalize project roles, confirm partners and internal collaborators, and establish a detailed work calendar. During this phase, the project team will review existing assessment findings, conduct any needed follow-up stakeholder conversations, identify baseline data points, and finalize internship goals, mentor expectations, training priorities, and evaluation tools.

Phase 2: Pathway design and recruitment

The Library Workforce Development Librarian, under the supervision of the Project Director, will create the internship structure and supporting materials. These materials will include position expectations, an intern handbook, orientation resources, weekly learning objectives, mentor check-in tools, and training modules. Recruitment for the paid summer intern will then take place through outreach to LTBB youth, college students, recent graduates, and other emerging professionals interested in libraries, education, culture, archives, public service, or related fields.

Phase 3: Internship implementation and mentoring

During the summer implementation period, the intern will participate in a structured, paid learning experience supervised by the Library Workforce Development Librarian. The intern will receive hands-on experience in library public service, circulation support, basic resource organization, program assistance, outreach, digital tools, and culturally responsive community engagement. As appropriate, the intern will also participate in activities that deepen understanding of library work in a Tribal context, including learning connected to community history, cultural protocols, language-supportive materials, and respectful stewardship of local knowledge. Elders, cultural staff, language staff, and Education Department personnel may contribute guest instruction, mentoring, or contextual learning.

Phase 4: Evaluation, refinement, and dissemination

At the end of the internship cycle, LTBB will gather feedback from the intern, supervisors, mentors, staff, and participating stakeholders. The project team will review outputs and outcomes, refine the training model, and produce practical project deliverables including the pathway framework, mentor tools, internship guide, training modules, and lessons-learned summary. LTBB will then share results locally and with broader Tribal, rural, and library audiences.

This sequence allows LTBB to move from planning to implementation in a way that is manageable, documented, and responsive to feedback.

The project will be led by the LTBB Niigaandiwin Education Department. The Education Director will be the Project Director, and will oversee the grant, ensure compliance with program requirements, manage reporting and budget alignment, and maintain project connection to LTBB education and cultural priorities. The Project Director and Education Department leadership bring experience in Tribal education, culturally responsive programming, community engagement, program management, and interdepartmental collaboration.

The key implementation role will be the Library Workforce Development Librarian. This position will manage day-to-day project implementation, supervise the summer intern, coordinate training and mentoring activities, support pathway documentation, and help align the Cultural Library's workforce development activities with community needs. The position will combine project management, public service, instructional support, mentoring, and relationship-based coordination.

Additional LTBB staff will support the project as needed, including Cultural Services personnel, language staff, Education Department staff, communications support, and staff connected to archives, records, or community programming. These staff contribute expertise in Odawa culture, community priorities, youth engagement, educational planning, and stewardship of culturally relevant resources.

LTBB may also work with selected external partners such as local schools, colleges, or community-serving organizations that can help recruit participants, offer career exposure, or provide technical feedback on pathway development. If needed, LTBB may engage a consultant or evaluator with experience in library workforce development, program documentation, or culturally responsive evaluation. Collectively, the project team will bring the cultural knowledge, educational background, administrative capacity, and community relationships necessary to successfully complete the work.

Stakeholder engagement is central to the design of this project. LTBB has not developed this proposal in isolation. It is grounded in years of community input gathered through family surveys, Elder surveys, community event surveys, and broader community planning initiatives. Those processes have consistently shown the importance of culturally grounded learning opportunities, seasonal programming, community access to cultural resources, and spaces where knowledge can be shared across generations.

The Education Department's planning approach already uses co-design and community listening to guide programming. This project continues that practice by translating community priorities into a workforce development model that strengthens the library's ability to serve the community. Stakeholder input has shaped the project's emphasis on youth outreach, Elder-guided teaching, cultural responsiveness, and practical community benefit.

Throughout implementation, LTBB will continue to gather and apply stakeholder input. Early in the grant period, staff will confirm priorities through additional conversations or short feedback opportunities with youth, library users, staff, and partners. During implementation, the project team will use mentor reflections, intern check-ins, participant feedback, and staff review meetings to assess what is working and where adjustments are needed. This input will be used to improve the training modules, internship structure, scheduling, and final toolkit. As a result, the project will remain flexible, community-centered, and accountable to the people it is intended to benefit.

LTBB will evaluate the project using a mixed-method approach that combines quantitative tracking with qualitative evidence. Evaluation will be aligned with the required performance areas of effectiveness, efficiency, quality, and timeliness.

Effectiveness will be measured by documenting the number of participants recruited, the number of interns completing the program, training hours delivered, mentoring sessions held, library and outreach activities supported, and project deliverables completed. LTBB will also assess changes in intern knowledge, confidence, and interest in library and information careers through pre- and post-assessments, structured reflection, and supervisor observations.

Efficiency will be measured by reviewing whether project activities are completed within the proposed timeline and budget, whether staff roles and workflows support implementation, and whether the tools created reduce barriers for future pathway cycles.

Quality will be measured through feedback from the intern, mentors, staff, community participants, and project partners regarding the clarity, usefulness, cultural relevance, and overall value of the learning experience and resulting resources.

Timeliness will be measured through ongoing review of the schedule of completion, including milestones related to hiring, planning, recruitment, training development, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination.

LTBB will demonstrate impact by combining data with narrative evidence. Completed tools, intern work products, stakeholder feedback, examples of improved service capacity, and evidence of increased readiness to support future library workforce development will all help show the value of the project.

4. Project Results

The intended result of this project is a tested, culturally grounded, community-based pathway that introduces emerging professionals to library work while strengthening LTBB's local capacity to preserve, organize, and share knowledge. Immediate results will include a paid internship experience, stronger staffing support through the Library Workforce Development Librarian, and improved training infrastructure for community-based library workforce development.

Project deliverables will include:

- a documented **Waganakising Library Workforce Pathway Framework**;
- a structured **paid summer internship model** with defined learning goals, competencies, and supervision tools;
- a **Library Workforce Development Librarian position and implementation framework**;
- an **intern handbook** and orientation packet;
- modular **training resources** covering public service, library operations, digital tools, outreach, and culturally grounded practice;
- a **mentor guide** with check-in and reflection tools;
- an **evaluation toolkit** including outcome measures, surveys, and reflection prompts; and
- a **final lessons-learned summary** for broader sharing.

Effectiveness of Deliverables:

These deliverables directly address LTBB's identified need for a stronger library workforce pathway and sustainable community-centered library capacity. The paid internship model creates a meaningful entry point for youth and emerging professionals to explore library and information careers. The librarian framework and mentor tools create structure and clarity so that the pathway is not dependent on informal practices or one-time staffing. The training materials create reusable infrastructure that strengthens future onboarding, community learning, and program continuity.

Together, these deliverables move LTBB beyond a temporary staffing solution. They create a system for cultivating future library workers while also strengthening access to culturally relevant learning opportunities for the LTBB community. In this way, the project addresses both workforce development and the broader community opportunity to preserve and engage Odawa knowledge in accessible, organized, and community-rooted ways.

Adaptability of Project Results:

LTBB will design project resources in practical, plain-language, modular formats so they can be used by other Tribal, rural, and small libraries. The final materials will distinguish between core pathway elements that should remain consistent, such as paid learning, mentorship, defined competencies, reflection, and community responsiveness, and adaptable elements that other communities can tailor to their own cultural context, staffing structure, and local priorities.

The project team will organize the deliverables as tools rather than abstract descriptions. Templates, implementation notes, sample schedules, reflection prompts, and lessons learned will be included so that other institutions can adapt the model without building it from scratch. By documenting both what worked and what LTBB adjusted along the way, the project will produce resources that are realistic and usable in settings with limited staffing and modest infrastructure.

LTBB will disseminate project results first to the LTBB community through presentations, summary materials, internal sharing, and community-facing updates. Youth, families, Elders, education staff, and Tribal leadership will be among the primary local beneficiaries of the project findings and tools.

Beyond the local level, LTBB will share project materials and lessons learned through relevant library, Tribal, and rural networks. Dissemination strategies may include conference proposals, webinars, partner sharing, listserv distribution, and digital access through an appropriate online platform. Where materials involve culturally specific content, LTBB will follow guidance from traditional knowledge keepers and only share information deemed appropriate for wider public use. This approach ensures that dissemination is both useful and respectful.

Sustainability:

LTBB will sustain project benefits by embedding the pathway within the ongoing work of the Niigaandiwin Education Department, the Cultural Services Program, and the Mzingangamik Cultural Library. The training modules, internship materials, mentor tools, and pathway framework will remain available for future internship cycles, staff onboarding, volunteer development, and broader educational use.

The project will also strengthen LTBB's internal systems by clarifying workflows, documenting practices, and demonstrating the value of investing in library workforce development as part of cultural preservation and community education. LTBB intends to use the results of the project to inform future staffing decisions, strengthen partnerships, and support future grant seeking. Even after the grant period ends, the Tribe will retain the most important benefits of the project: a tested model, reusable materials, stronger local workforce readiness, and a practical strategy for preparing future library workers in a Tribal context.

The Waganakising Library Workforce Pathway will help LTBB respond to a pressing community need with a practical and culturally grounded solution. By connecting workforce development to the lived role of the Cultural Library, LTBB will create a pathway that serves youth, honors Elders, strengthens the transfer of knowledge, and builds long-term local capacity. The project is intentionally rooted in community voice, designed for adaptation, and structured to leave lasting benefit beyond the grant period. Through this work, LTBB will not only prepare future library workers; it will strengthen the systems that help Waganakising Odawa knowledge, language, and lifeways remain visible, accessible, and carried forward.

Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program - FY26 Schedule of Completion
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	2026				2027							
Activity	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Objective 1: Within the 12-month project period, staff will develop a Waganakising Library Workforce Pathway Framework.												
The Library Workforce Development Librarian will be hired.												
The Library Workforce Development Librarian, under the guidance of the Project Director, will evaluate past needs-assessments and participant feedback from previous cultural programming to gather information about community needs and interests, and identify baseline data points.												
Leveraging data and community input, the Library Workforce Development Librarian, under the guidance of the Project Director, will establish internship goals, mentor expectations, training priorities, and evaluation tools.												
The Library Workforce Development Librarian will solidify stakeholder commitments to project.												
The Library Workforce Development Librarian, under the guidance of the Project Director, will develop a paid summer internship program with defined learning goals, competencies, and supervision tools.												
The Project Director will work with the LTBB Human Resources Department to create a library internship job description including related orientation materials and post the job opportunity.												
Objective 2: Within the 12-month project period, staff will implement the Library Workforce Development Program.												
A Library Intern will be hired.												
The Library Intern will complete a pre-assessment to gauge technical and cultural knowledge prior to engaging in the project.												
The Library Intern will participate in a structured, learning experience under the supervision of the Library Workforce Development Librarian that will include hands-on experience in library public service, circulation support, basic resource organization, program assistance, outreach, digital tools, and culturally responsive community engagement.												
The Library Intern, under the supervision of the Library Workforce Development Librarian, will participate in learning activities connected to community history, cultural protocols, language-supportive materials, and respectful stewardship of local knowledge.												
Objective 3: Within the 12-month project period, staff will evaluate and refine the Library Workforce Development Program.												

The Library Intern will complete a post-assessment to gauge technical and cultural knowledge after engaging in the project.											
The Library Workforce Development Librarian will gather feedback from the intern, supervisors, mentors, staff, and participating stakeholders.											
The Library Workforce Development Librarian, under the guidance of the Project Director, will review and evaluate outputs and outcomes.											
The Library Workforce Development Librarian, under the guidance of the Project Director, will refine the training model, mentor tools, internship guide, and training modules and develop a project evaluation report based on feedback and outcomes,											
The Library Workforce Development Librarian will disseminate project results to Tribal, rural, and library audiences.											
Ongoing Throughout the Budget Period:											
LTBB will participate in training and submit progress reports, as required by the funder.											