

Keweenaw Bay Indian Community

*Learning from our Past, Connecting to our Future***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 live in Baraga County, which is where our library is located. The economy of this area is weak; the KBIC conducted a survey of adult members living on the Reservation in November 2013 in which 39% identified themselves as “not employed,” and 36.7% had an annual income under federal poverty levels. In fact, Michigan and Baraga County have continually ranked among the highest unemployment rates in the nation over the last several years.

Residents in this remote area 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 large metropolitan area. Access to services common in those areas, participation in supportive organizations, and training opportunities are not readily available here. According to the US Census Bureau's Quick Facts for Baraga County, 82.4% of people over age 25 graduated from high school, 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. In this project, the Library would like to improve user's access to cultural materials and programs. We believe we can do this by updating our Native American collection and creating programming that utilizes those resources. The specific community needs this project aims to address are:

1. Improve availability of modernized and culturally relevant materials for our patrons.
2. Implement additional culturally (and locally) specific library programs that help to fill gaps in programs currently offered in the community.
3. Provide a space for community members to practice Ojibwemowin; particularly those who do not have a computer at home to use digitalized language resources.

Recently, several tribal departments and the local community college administer programs that feature Ojibwe/Anishinaabe language, culture, skills and traditions to the community. Meanwhile, the library currently offers very little in programming and events to support and encourage traditional culture, language, storytelling, or local tribal issues for any age group. While the other tribal departments do sometimes offer classes or presentations in topics like traditional foods and medicines, there are a number of factors that prevent community members from attending these events. Problems such as distance or transportation to the presentation site, limited seating in sessions, and age-appropriateness are common limitations. Furthermore, the Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College (KBOCC) offers classes in Anishinaabe Studies; however, many community members cannot afford, or cannot commit to, taking a class.

The mission of the 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*. The KBIC and Ojibwa Community Library work hard to maintain and improve library services, and to increase library use each year. The tribe supports the library director's position, collection development, and some children's programming costs. Current library information includes: **Hours**—20 hours per week with services provided on Mon & Fri: 9:00-4:00; and Wed: 12:00-6:00; **Staff**—One Librarian, who is also a KBIC member; and **Patrons**—780 currently registered patrons and approximately 300 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; and, a summer reading program for adults and children. Other libraries in the area either do not provide sufficient hours, are very far away (over 30 miles), or ask patrons to pay for library cards and other access because they don't live in the same county. Currently, the library's collection has over 7,500 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.

The purpose of our proposed project is to supply updated resources and programs, which would allow us to become the go-to resource for culturally relevant materials. Specifically, we hope to reach youth, teen, adult, and elder KBIC members and descendants as well as anybody outside of these two groups such as local elementary and high school teachers and administrators.

Assessment conducted included two surveys, one during the 2018 KBIC Healthy Heart Fair and one during the 2019 KBIC Healthy Heart Fair, informal conversations with library patrons, and general staff observations. The surveys provided responses from 122 and 84 (respectively) participants, the majority of who are KBIC members or descendants. In total, over 88% of the respondents voted favorably for updating the library's materials, enhancing current programming to include more culturally relevant topics, and housing a language space within the library. Conversations with patrons indicate that events specific to our tribe and culture would be well attended and supported within the community. Finally, general staff observations show that there are many outdated and damaged materials in the Native Collection, which might make it difficult for patrons to find reliable information. Baseline data includes circulation statistics, collection size and condition, patron door count, and participation in the proposed language nook and programs. The Learning from our Past, Connecting to our Future project is the best approach because it allows the library to become a better community resource by providing current and relevant materials and programs as asked for by the community itself.

Project Design

Our Learning from our Past, Connecting to our Future Project fits into the IMLS Educational Programming project category, and will focus on promoting lifelong learning as its performance goal. It is a two part project that addresses the following project questions: How can we update and utilize our library's Native American collection; how can we provide programs and events that feature culturally relevant elements; and, how can we help tribal community members learn more about Ojibwe/Anishinaabe culture and language? There are a number of elements we'd like to complete for this project—all of which focus specifically on providing stronger resources for learning about Ojibwe/Anishinaabe culture and life-ways. First of all, we'd like to **update our Native American collection**, and put a stronger emphasis on modernized representations of indigenous people and our tribe's culture. This would include inventorying the entire collection, weeding outdated and damaged materials, purchasing new materials to either fill in the gaps or replaced damaged items, purchasing and installing a new shelving unit and media rack, and creating a clearly designated section for Native Youth and Young Adult materials. We will use previously curated lists from different sources such as lists provided by presenters during ALA annual and ATALM annual conferences, other tribal librarians, and Debbie Reese's *American Indians in Children's Literature* blog to buy materials. We will also use these resources to create criteria for the librarian to use when purchasing new materials once the lists are exhausted to ensure future items are ones that we want in the collection.

Secondly, we'd like to better *utilize our Native Collection* to show its importance to the community. To do so, we plan to expand and enhance library events to encourage and support the learning of traditional culture, language, stories and storytelling, and modern issues facing our community and people as well as to foster a love of literacy. We'd also like to create **book kits** for youth, which will contain a culturally relevant story with additional items (such as a game or flash cards) to reinforce the material; purchase books for the tribe's **storybook trail** for families to enjoy stories and nature (this would include a family day/night event or two to promote the trail); update our **Summer Reading program** to include culturally relevant events and challenges for all ages; and build a **language nook** in the library where patrons can come to practice Ojibwemowin in a more private setting.

Objective 1: Enhance native collection to support and encourage traditional culture, language, and modern representation of our peoples.

- Activity 1: Inventory and weed (as necessary) the current Native American collection
- Activity 2: Purchase and install new shelving unit and media bag cart
- Activity 3: Acquire additional and updated materials to fill in gaps and further develop the collection
- Activity 4: Designate shelving space for Native youth and Native young adult materials
- Activity 5: Create book kits to further expand the collection
- Activity 6: Catalog items and make them available for circulation

Objective 2: Offer programs for adults and youth to support and encourage traditional culture, skills, culturally relevant topics, and/or storytelling.

- Activity 1: Update Summer Reading Program to include more culturally relevant events and a reading challenge
- Activity 2: Purchase books for the tribe's storybook trail located on tribal powwow grounds for families to enjoy (collaborate with Tribal Historic Preservation Office)
- Activity 3: Create a Language nook in the library for patrons to use language software and other online language resources, review printed language materials, and practice their speaking skills out loud in a private environment (collaborate with Tribal Historic Preservation Office)
 - Activity 3.1: Purchase computer, necessary software, external hard drive, computer station, and furniture for language nook
 - Activity 3.2: Acquire language resources and software for patron use
 - Activity 3.3: Process and catalog language resources for patron use

Objective 3: Encourage a love of literacy through programs and materials that support culture, language, and reading.

- Activity 1: Use previously created lists to curate age appropriate and modernized youth sections (as well as add to adult items), and to develop criteria to use to determine new materials to use once the lists have been exhausted.
- Activity 2: Add additional component to book kits to reinforce the story, such as a puzzle, game, or flash cards.
- Activity 3: Select fun and engaging stories for the story trail and create a story trail family event.
- Activity 4: Update Summer Reading program events to be culturally relevant, and create a reading challenge to increase attitudes towards reading.

Other Activities that must occur to complete the project:

1. Increase hours for the Librarian and provide a Library Assistant (both are responsible for performing all project activities)
2. Increase Library hours of operation
3. Purchase project materials (books, periodicals, DVDs or CDbooks)
4. Purchase library materials (computers, external hard drive, Book Kit items)
5. Process new items for circulation
6. Librarian attends IMLS and ATALM meetings, regional and local trainings and workshops
7. Advertise available services and project activities
8. Attend KBIC Healthy Heart Fair to promote project services and activities
9. Purchase books to giveaway during KBIC Healthy Heart Fair as promotion for project
10. Provide sign-in sheets for all project activities to track participation
11. Develop surveys and questionnaires to determine participant understanding and interest before and after grant activities.

Impact

There are three main goals that guide our project to completion. First, we'd like to enhance library collections to support and encourage traditional culture, language, and modern representation of our peoples. Secondly, we'd like to offer programs for adults and youth to support and encourage traditional culture, skills, and/or storytelling. Finally, we hope to encourage a love of literacy through programs that support culture, language, and reading.

We will assess community impact through the sign-in sheets mentioned above, community feedback, surveys, and a recorded number of books/events/visitors during the project period. This information will allow us to evaluate potential benefits, risks, and any changes that may be needed.

At the end of the project we expect to see an increase in library patronage and usage, an enhanced and updated Native American collection with material available for all ages, a small offering of programs and events for adults and youth that encourage Ojibwe culture, skills, and language, and an increase in attitudes that demonstrate a love of literacy and reading. There are four major intended outcomes that we believe will occur as a result of this project. We expect to see:

- a. An increase in knowledge of local tribal issues such as tribal history, powwow etiquette, and traditional foods.
- b. A gain in new language skills, and knowledge in culture, stories, and skills.
- c. An increase in awareness of modern representations of our people; hopefully, to others outside of our tribe, but still in our community (such as teachers from local school districts).
- d. Increased circulation of new materials and participation in new events.

We believe that this project will impact our community in a positive way. Updated resources will be useful to a variety of community members, as well as to local teachers, homeschoolers, and researchers. More culturally relevant resources for youth and young adults/teens will provide them with a more modernized representation of native peoples that is typically lacking in school curricula. Programming and events with a focus on local tribal issues or culture and traditional life ways tend to be popular, and the library will be able to help fill in gaps where other departments may be limited—particularly when it comes to improving attitudes toward reading/literacy. People will be better informed about culturally relevant issues that impact them, their community, and their tribe as well as have better access to resources that encourage these topics. They will have the resources available to encourage youth, and can have the skills to model for others in the community. Finally, they can have the awareness and skills to discuss local issues, cultural practices, stories, and perhaps parts of the language.

We will evaluate events based on attendance, observed participation, and the performance measure surveys provided by IMLS after each event. Furthermore, we will also use statistics to measure any changes in circulation and patron library card registration. Finally, we can use additional questionnaires and informal discussions or observations, typically the best

way to get information in our community, to follow up with participants of the Summer Reading Program, storybook trail and its events, the language nook, and those who use our book kits. The Library currently records the following statistics for monthly reporting: door counts, computer use, program attendance, circulation, and new card registration.

Library staff is trained to keep statistics for reports and doing so is part of the daily routine. Statistics for this project will be evaluated and compiled monthly. The information will be reliable because it would come directly from participants, who are our primary source of information. Also, information will be provided to us through our computer system (circulation statistics, patron registration) and from library staff working at each event.

Communications Plan

Our audience is KBIC tribal members and descendants— specifically youth, adults, and elders— and general community members. The library will extensively use Tribal mediums such as the Tribal newsletter, radio, and emailing lists to reach out to community members in addition to local outlets such as paid advertising in local papers. We also plan on creating fliers, and distributing them in community businesses, the government center, and other Tribal departments, KBIC Healthy Heart Fairs, local schools (Elementary through High School and the KBOCC), 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. 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 our Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College.

We will regularly seek feedback through various elements of evaluation—surveys, questionnaires, observations in real time, informal interviews, and statistics compiled—to help us determine changes that the community would like us to undertake for project elements. Additionally, we will develop relationships with other KBIC tribal departments, such as the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) and KBIC Pre-Primary School, which might help us to better ascertain additional resources and further methods of utilization, as well as to help us promote programming and materials. We will also regularly ask community members and

participants for suggestions for materials and resources for book kits, the Native American collection, the storybook trail, Summer Reading program, and the language nook to ensure that our audience understands that they have input in our programs and materials.

Sustainability

Much of the project will be sustainable after the project ends. Items for the Native Section are not published frequently, and can be budgeted into the library's small book purchasing funds from the tribal government. Books for the Book Kits and Storybook Trail can also be added.

Furthermore, there are opportunities during the grant period to develop relationships with other tribal departments and other organizations such as the Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College (KBOCC) to work on sustaining the other aspects of the project—specifically, the Summer Reading Program and reading challenge. Meanwhile, other tribal departments may need a way to do community outreach and could do so by providing presentations for the Summer Reading Program events with the library listed as a co-sponsor. Moreover, the librarian already conducts most of the summer sessions, and can continue to do so with the new resources that will be made available through the updates made during this project and with community volunteers. Additionally, the reading challenge portion of the Summer Reading Program can be continued by finding local sponsors to fund prizes to encourage participation.

The language nook's technology updates can be added into the scheduled updates for the library. Also, our relationship with the Tribal Historic Preservation Office will allow us to continue to find and receive valuable language materials.

Finally, once the tribal council witnesses aspects of the project, we may be able to petition them to increase our programming budget. Professional development training gained during the project period will be crucial in maintaining the library staff's ability to provide current services and customer service. Any resource guides produced will also be available and will be able to "live-on" afterward as they will be easily updated each year.

By providing updated materials and resources for the community, we will be able to develop a better relationship with our local schools and become a go-to resource for teachers and instructors. By developing partnerships with other tribal departments such as the Tribal Historic Preservation Office, KBIC Pre-Primary School, KBIC Youth Programs, and KBIC Health System we will be able to sustain the project elements and make a difference for our patrons. Our project will also provide us with the tools, training, and resources to provide and develop culturally-based activities and programs. The *Learning from our Past, Connecting to our Future* project will provide educational, community, and cultural resources and links as well as opportunities for increased interest in literacy to all community members. These elements provide a strong foundation to encourage change throughout the community.

