

Nooksack Indian Tribe: IMLS Enhancement 2017

ABSTRACT

The lead applicant for this IMLS Enhancement Grant is the Nooksack Indian Tribe. The Nooksack Tribal Library provides Native American research books for the community and local schools, computer and printing access, after school tutoring, a summer program, digital technology training, a digital equipment lab for Nooksack specific documentaries, a showcase space for Nooksack Tribal Artifacts, and a welcome space for all ages to enjoy the library's various sections. We plan to replace and/or refurbish furnishings, equipment and materials that are old, worn or obsolete, to improve and enhance the library's services, and to add a part-time library attendant to improve support for library users.

The timeframe for the project is immediate upon award notice.

Our intended audience is the 2,000 Nooksack tribal members of all ages, including 120 youth (during summer and all school breaks) who live in the area including those with limited literacy and information skills. The library also provides Native information and Nooksack-specific resource materials to local schools and communities as requested.

Specific activities, community needs to be met, and intended outcomes:

- Add a part-time Library Attendant to provide support to librarian and for patrons.
- Increase computer lab to 10 stations for adults/teens and increase to 6 stations for K-6 students. Computers are outdated and slow, new computers will allow easier access to research and encourage young people to utilize the library.
- Add new shelving for book collection: Bookshelves are worn and rapidly becoming unstable and unsafe: new shelving will hold more and will allow us to better define separate spaces within the library, making it more user-friendly.
- Expand the listening center for early learning: The current listening center is small and has a waiting line after school each day. An expanded center will serve more children and a dedicated, state of the art table and equipment will encourage them (and their parents) to use it.
- Add new tables for homework assistance/tutoring/reading groups/computer lab: Current homework/tutoring, reading tables are 20 years old with unstable bases. New, crescent shaped tables will allow a tutor or facilitator to sit in the middle and work with 5 individuals at a time.
- Expand and enhance Adult Reading section. Currently no designated Adult Reading section. We will purchase large print books, placing shelving to divide space, adding seating and titles requested by members to enhance the library experience for adults.
- Expand and enhance Teen section: Currently no designated Teen Reading section. Purchase popular fiction by Native Americans, add shelving to divide space, and add comfortable seating to expand the services offered by the library and give teens additional space to meet and do homework.
- Add museum quality display cases: Museum quality display cases will preserve artifacts that are currently deteriorating in inadequate storage in the community and will give many more people access to view, enjoy, and learn from these treasures.
- Add library card printing machine and accessories: Library cards foster accountability and a sense of membership, encouraging more people to utilize the library.

Our long-term outcome will be to create an environment more conducive to learning. We will promote intergenerational learning through digital literacy for all ages. Therefore more youth and community members will be drawn to the library, meaning a more literate and digitally skilled tribal population.

1. Statement of Need

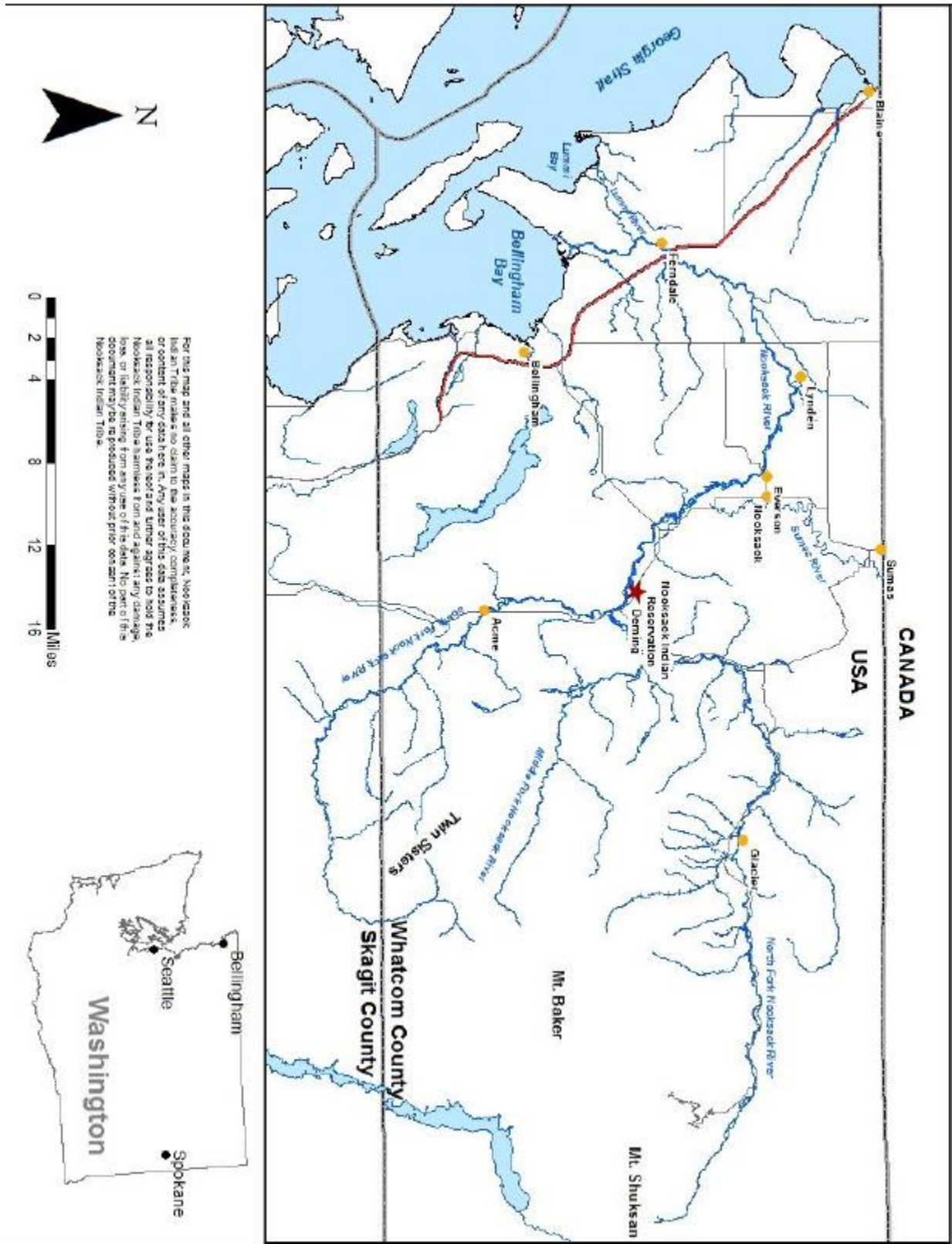
- A. *Briefly describe your community, including population profile, location, economy, educational levels, languages, culture, and other characteristics that you consider important.*

Community: The Nooksack tribal members are Coast Salish peoples with a language and culture going back to time immemorial. Every year the Nooksack people join the other Salish Tribes in the annual Canoe Journey, celebrating our culture and our ancient relationship with the sea and the Northwest. The Coast Salish peoples interact socially, culturally, economically and for common goals and the Nooksack people are active participants in these interactions.

The Nooksack Indian Tribe (NIT) is a federally recognized tribe under the Point Elliott Treaty of 1855. The Tribal Council is the duly elected governing body consisting of eight council seat(s) serving a four-year office term per the constitution and by-laws of the Nooksack Indian Tribe. Tribal Council has leadership roles and designated authority for following seats: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary Positions. The Tribal Council typically exercises executive governing authority by review and enactment of Nooksack Tribal Resolution process. The Nooksack Tribal Chairperson with the Vice-Chairperson or Secretary as alternates is duly authorized to sign and execute laws, resolutions and action items as set and approved by the Nooksack Tribal Council.

The Nooksack Reservation is located in Deming, Whatcom County, in the north-west corner of Washington State. Nooksack Indian Tribe land base is estimated to be 305.2 square miles. The Nooksack Indian reservation is located near US/Canada border, 17 miles east of Bellingham, WA in the unincorporated town of Deming; population 353, with the Nooksack Tribe's current enrollment at estimated 2,000 members. See map of Nooksack Tribe location below. In addition to our 2.2 acre Reservation, the Tribe has over 282 acres in fragmented Fee and Trust lands as well as over 2000 acres in private allotments. The Oregon Treaty of 1846 divided the ancestral populations of the Nooksack Tribe and traditional geographic territory at the Canadian/US Border. As a result many Nooksack tribal members frequently travel across the U.S./Canadian border to visit family and relatives. Tribal housing is dispersed from South to North Whatcom County, with some tribal service offices located in Deming and other services located in north Whatcom County.

Lack of literacy has been a persistent problem for the Nooksack people since the era of assimilation. Only 20% of the tribe's youth currently graduate high school, and unemployment is estimated conservatively from 20% (US Census) to closer to 50% (Nooksack data collection). Poverty is also a concern, especially for families with young children, with a nearly 40% poverty rate for families with children under 5. (US Census Community Survey 2015). A cycle of illiteracy-poverty-dysfunctional families in repeated generations has persisted since fear of education developed as an outcome of the Boarding School period. The very survival of our small tribe in the 21st century depends on breaking this cycle including providing 21st century, culturally appropriate Library services.



- B. *Current role of the library in the community and the services it provides (e.g., mission, goals, hours and days of operation, staffing, size and content of collection, number of registered patrons, circulation statistics, computer technology, Internet connectivity and access, public programs offered, etc.).*

IT IS THE MISSION of the Nooksack Tribal Library to promote community, literacy, education, employment, and on-going reading enjoyment for our patrons by providing culturally-relevant materials, services, and programs that support Nooksack lifeways learning and Native American research.

Days/Hours: Monday through Friday from 9am to 6pm

Staffing: Librarian and assistant

Number of Patrons: 296

Community member's ages

0-18: 472

Ages 19-35: 509

Ages 36-55: 501

Ages 56+: 316

Historical Perspective: Until 2001 there were no specific library services for Native Americans in this area. The Deming Library is a general public library in the area that maintains a collection of books on general topics for the geographic regions. It serves its purpose well, but does not focus on Native American holdings, nor on the unique needs of the Native American Community. In 2001, we began with about 50 books, in a bookcase in our Education Department. We were able to hire a part-time librarian and increase holdings to 2,500 by 2003, then added a server, computers, internet access and printers soon after. In 2003 an IMLS Enhancement Grant provided the funding to expand the library, provide specialized services to our children, youth and Elders, manually catalogue holdings, and provide some shelving and library furniture for our patrons.

In 2012, the Nooksack Indian Tribe expanded the library services through the relocation of the library facility to a stand-alone building adjacent to the Education Department at Timber Ridge (a rurally located cluster of buildings that is currently leased by the tribe). This brought the library closer to the after-school program, the alternative high school, the Head Start program and the language classes at Timber Ridge which allows more students the opportunity to utilize the facility. This location also brought library services closer to more Tribal housing sites, making it more convenient for a greater number of community members.

Current Users: We are a small library in a rural and remote setting, but our presence is important to the Nooksack community. The Nooksack Tribal Library provides Native American fiction, nonfiction, research books, magazine subscriptions, DVDs and computer and printing access for community members and local schools. The library also provides after-school tutoring for elementary to high school age students, a summer reading program for the Summer Youth Program, digital technology training and a digital equipment lab for community members. The library is producing Nooksack specific documentaries; and working on a space to highlight Nooksack Tribal Artifacts. It is a welcome space for library patrons of all ages to enjoy the library's various sections.

Many of the Nooksack tribal people live in homes characterized by substance abuse, verbal and physical aggression, sexual abuse, mental illness, poor marital relations, and poor discipline habits. Social problems of this nature have led to a disturbing rate of substance abuse amongst the Nooksack population, including young people. The Library is a quiet, calm, safe place for some of these youth, and it is our goal to continue to provide this sanctuary as a place for learning and respite.

C. Describe the purpose of the proposed Enhancement grant project as it relates to a specific need that you have identified. What specific audience(s) will the library serve with this project? (e.g., particular age groups, underserved community members, other types of target audience)

- During peak times (such as after school) the current librarian is unable to provide all the assistance needed, and she often needs help with administrative tasks as well. During peak hours which are from 2-6 during the regular school year and expand to all day 9-6 during the summer months and school breaks, we are stretched to our limits helping patrons. We are creating new patron accounts, checking out books, working on administrative tasks, tutoring children with homework, answering questions for adults in need of research guidance and monitoring the limited computer stations and wait lines. This is in addition to implementing the Summer Collaborative Reading Program Curriculum. An assistant would be used to help with the computer lab wait times and tutoring during peak hours in addition to assisting with the Summer Reading implementation. During non- peak hours the assistant would assist with the editing and producing of the tribal documentary series as well as cataloging and getting books back onto the shelves and into circulation.
- Currently the computers are outdated and slow. A lot of young people (mostly school aged 5-18) utilize the library and they often have to wait for a computer to do research and homework. School age patrons complain of their computer often freezing up during the creation of an important PowerPoint presentation or an important WORD document because there isn't enough memory in our old donated computers to handle the simple task of middle school homework.
- The bookshelves are worn and becoming unstable and unsafe: we need to be able to hold more books and better define separate spaces within the library. Teens especially like to spend time with their peers. Young library users require shelving that they can reach easily.
- The current listening center for early learning is small and has a waiting line after school each day. We need to be able to serve more young children ages 3-8 and a dedicated, state of the art table and equipment will encourage them (and their parents) to use it.
- Current homework/tutoring, reading tables are 20+ years old with unstable bases. We need steady tables, and some need to be the size and shape for a tutor or facilitator to sit in the middle and work with 5 individuals at a time. This would serve students up to age 18 primarily.

- There is currently no designated Adult Reading section. We need more large print books for elders (55+) and we need to delineate the space and add more titles that are requested by adults to serve this population of adults over the age of 18, including parents who bring children to the library.
- There is currently no designated Teen Reading section. It will increase the use of our library by teens if we can add fiction by Native Americans, we need to add titles requested by teens, and we would like to place shelving and comfortable larger chairs to define and enhance the space so the teens have their “own” space to meet and do homework
- There is currently no appropriate display area for historic artifacts. It is important to preserve artifacts that are currently deteriorating in inadequate storage in the community and having these safely on display will give many more people access to view, enjoy, and learn from these treasures, and being able to see them will increase cultural literacy and pride.
- There is currently a scanner and software to create library patron accounts but we have no ability to make library cards for our patrons: library cards foster accountability and a sense of membership, encouraging more people to utilize the library.

D. What type of assessment was conducted to identify this need as a priority for the library? Describe the results of the assessment, including baseline data that can be used to compare with final results to determine the project's success. Why do you consider your approach to be the best solution to meet the needs of the targeted audience?

Over time, the head librarian has been working with the patrons of the library and heard the users request items, as well as seeing areas that are not working the way they should – such as lines to use resources, seeing very young children having to climb up on big chairs or watching teens stuff bits of paper under table legs in order to make them less wobbly. Seeing potential readers come to look for certain titles and not finding them, or watching young patrons line up to use computers after school, it is obvious that it’s time for some much needed updating of the many basic elements of the library. The librarian has requests from parents of children who use the library. These parents would like a more dedicated space so they aren’t all sharing the same rooms. More adult type seating so they could browse a new and wider selection of current books would encourage them to stay longer and invite their adult friends to join them. The elders attend special classes the library holds just for them. However, the current library has to borrow the space of another building to hold these classes. By creating a space for elders with new shelving, rugs, comfortable seating and large print books we reach out to our elder community and show them their presence and use of the library resources are a priority for us. They will have a comfortable and quiet place to meet and browse books as well as being able to use new tables and chairs for elder classes put on by the library. We will no longer have to borrow space. By the end of the first year grant cycle we would like to see at least another 50 patrons of adult and elder age with another 50 a year after that.

2. Project Design

We will:

- Hire a part-time Library Attendant to support the library patrons.
- Increase computer lab to 10 stations for adults/teens and increase to 6 stations for K-6 students
- Add new shelving for book collection
- Expand the listening center for early learning
- Add new tables and seating for homework assistance/tutoring/reading groups/computer lab
- Expand and enhance Adult Reading section
- Expand and enhance Teen section
- Add museum quality display cases
- Add library card printing machine and accessories

Activities:

1. We will publicize the job announcement for the Library Attendant, conduct interviews and hire, within the first month or two depending on the response to our announcement.
2. The local Whatcom County Library system may have a staff member who specializes in how to provide the best layout for library use, and who could volunteer some time to help us create the most user-friendly arrangement of seating, tables, rugs, and throughways.
3. We will order the supplies and equipment immediately.
4. Once delivered, we will remove the older items, put the currently leased outdated tables and chairs in storage, and set up the new library.
5. We will plan, publicize and hold a “Grand Re-Opening” of the new, improved Nooksack Library and invite the community, including students, parents, elders, local schools, and staff from other area libraries to visit and see what we have to offer!

Partners:

Our partners include...Western Washington University which provides volunteer teacher candidates from Woodring College of Education. These tutors help us quarterly with tutoring and other various tasks. The Nooksack Youth Department has an enrollment of 120 students during the summer and we provide all day reading curriculum for those students here in the library. The Nooksack Language Department advises us on language and culturally appropriate advisement while making tribal documentaries that the library is producing.

- *Information about the roles and commitments of partnering organizations, if applicable*

We will be working with the Center for Pacific Studies, Whatcom Historical Museum, Candace Wellman, Native American Historian, and on occasion, Whatcom County Library. Input from these people will help us better select materials for use to meet our objectives and goals, and/or redirect our approaches. Library usage data will indicate whether our approach is increasing the attractiveness of the library or needs modification. These inputs will be ongoing, allowing us to revise or augment certain resources in order to better improve the accessibility and perceived benefits of the library and of reading.

3. Impact

Describe the intended performance goals and benefits of this project for the library.

Goals: Our short-term goals are to increase the services at the library, and to make it a safer, much more welcoming, comfortable place with a larger range of the kinds of resources the community wants. We hope to attract a larger audience and increase patronage by 50 people in year one and again in year two.

Expected Outcomes: Our long-term goal is an increasingly literate tribal community that finds the library an inviting place, that feels like it belongs to them, and that provides them with a safe, familiar, and positive opportunity to learn about their past, present and their future potential.

4. Communications Plan

Describe the project's communication plan.

To publicize the “new” library we plan an Open House celebration with cookies, and prizes to celebrate the new, enhanced library. All community members, students and parents, and elders, will be invited. We will make flyers to announce the opening, we will publicize in the tribal newsletter and we will publicize on the Nooksack Communications Facebook page as well as calling elders directly in their homes. It will be organized by Charise, her assistant, Keith Lindsey and Donia Edwards. We will ask attendees to sign a guest book to be eligible for the drawings for the fun prizes- such as books, book bags, and perhaps a Kindle if our finances allow. This way we will have a record of attendees and can use this list for sending out notices and invitations about the library and events.

5. Sustainability

Describe how the applicant will continue to support the project, its results, and/or new models that are created beyond the grant period.

The infusion of funding for supplies and equipment will allow us to purchase quality, long-lasting furniture that should not need to be replaced for many years, and it is planned such that it can all be moved to the new location when it becomes available in the next couple of years (no ‘built-ins’). Technology changes at a more rapid pace, but with the latest innovations we should be able to use these tools for years to come as well.

The Library Attendant will be part-time during the two years of the grant cycle, but by the end of that period the library is likely to have been moved to a larger facility, and the Library prioritized financially with the increased and more visible usage. By using Concourse, we can continue to maintain detailed records that reflect patronage through circulation. We will track graduation records through our Education Department and while trends may take some time to become clear, it will eventually give us a long-term indications of improvements in graduation rates concurrent with increased library usage, further justifying hard dollar investment in Library operations. Daily usage at the Library is recorded, including whether the patron is focused on technology, references, the audio materials, and/or reading material.

