Native American / Native Hawaiian Museum Services

Sample Application MN-255670-OMS-24

Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan, Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways

Amount awarded by IMLS: $156,430
Amount of cost share: $0

The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan's Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways will digitize Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School decimal files located at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in Chicago, Illinois to increase accessibility to these historical documents. Project staff will conduct multiple trips to the NARA facility to digitize the records related to the Mount Pleasant Indian Boarding School and the Great Lakes Indian Agency. The digital files will be cross-referenced with the Tribe's existing boarding school student database, the accompanying metadata will be updated, and the records will be added to the Ziibiwing repository for community use. This project will result in increased access to these records for Tribal members, descendants of those who attended the school, and the public, helping to increase awareness and provide a deeper understanding of what happened in this boarding school.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion
- Digital Product Plan
- Performance Measurement Plan

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.

Project Justification

Which program objective(s) of the Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program will your project address?

The program objective of the Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program in which the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan (SCIT) Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School (MIIBS) Records will support is Objective 3. Objective 3, support the management and care of Indigenous collections and their associated documentation, dovetails with SCIT's work in the digitization of records from MIIBS that are held at the National Archives at Chicago, specifically the Decimal Files housed there. To date, the Decimal Files have not been documented outside of the originals at NARA and contain information regarding the MIIBS School specifically and Native American tribes in the Great Lakes area broadly.

How will your project strengthen your Tribes Museum services?

In 1892, at the National Conference of Charities and Correction held in Denver, Colorado, Captain R.H. Pratt delivered a speech that became central to development of the Indian Boarding School Era, in which the following was said: *"A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one, and that high sanction of his destruction has been an enormous factor in promoting Indian massacres. In a sense, I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian that is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man."*[1] With this mindset as the guiding force of United States (U.S.) government policy, then, a total of 367 Indian Boarding Schools were opened around the country. These schools were developed to assimilate Indian children into white America through the process of cultural genocide, as stated in the introduction on the opening webpage for the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS), and many of the American Indian children who were forced to attend these schools never returned home and have yet to be accounted for by the U.S. Government.[2]

In 1892, one of the Indian boarding schools built by the U.S. Government was the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School (MIIBS), located a few miles from Isabella County, Michigan, Reservation of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan (SCIT). The school was in operation from 1893-1934, with thousands of children from multiple Tribes across the U.S. attending. Due to the rules in place by Federal agencies, records of students who attended the school could not be accessed from anywhere between 75 to 100 years after their attendance at the school and have finally become available and are being obtained, processed, recorded, and digitized through the Andrew Mellon Foundation grant to National Native American Boarding School Coalition (NABS) and funding provided by the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center (GLITEC). However, in order to fully understand what was being done to the American Indian children whose files have been obtained, other files are needed that are currently housed at National Archives Records Administration (NARA) at Chicago.

The project will strengthen the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinaabe Culture and Lifeways Museum services through digitization of documents from the Boarding School Era that have not been available in any format except original paper copies at NARA until now. The digitization of the documents will allow access for research and provide community members and members of other Tribes who had children at the school to finally, in some cases after 100 years, know what was occurring within the school and the Native American community. These 64 boxes of decimal files will create a repository of Boarding School and Great Lakes Indian Agency knowledge to become accessible and will be one of the largest

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[1] Retrieved from https://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/sites/default/files/docs-resources/CIS-Resources_1892-PrattSpeech.pdf. June 26, 2023.
[2] Retrieved from https://boardingschoolhealing.org/education/us-indian-boarding-school-history/. June 26, 2023.

digitized collections that exists outside of the National Archives itself. The 64 boxes of materials, with an average of 800 pages of information per box, will be digitized and launched for use by the Tribal community and the public at large at the Ziibiwing Center.

Postcard Courtesy of Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University

What need, problem, or challenge will your project address, and how was it identified? Describe how you will use demographic information, economic circumstances, condition assessments, and other relevant data from reliable sources to define the need, problem, or challenge and develop the scope for the project.

The lack of accessibility to MIIBS records has been a problem for 100 years. Until now, the records from the school had been sealed due to national government rules that would not allow people to view them for anywhere from 75 to 100 years. Due to these rules, Tribes have been unable to fully form a picture of what was occurring within the Great Lakes Agency and the 12 Native American tribes within the borders of Michigan, all of whom had children attending MIIBS.

Additionally, the cost of having NARA scan records is cost-prohibitive for Tribal members and members of other tribes. At .80 cents a page for NARA scanning services, and an average of 800 pages per box in the files, an average total of $640.00 per box would be needed in order for Native Americans to access the information within them. With a poverty rate of 18.9% and a median income that is 2/3 the amount of the United States ($48,840.00 vs. $69,021.00)[3], Isabella County residents, including SCIT reservation community members, do not have the funds to pay for these important historical documents. However, digitization of records through sending a trained and experienced Tribal team to NARA to obtain the documents and bring them back to the museum in digital form will open accessibility to Tribal members, their descendants, members of other Native American tribes and their descendants, and the non-native population at large. The project is measurable through the count of boxes obtained, as well as digitized

[3] Retrieved from http://www. https://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US26073-isabella-county-mi/ on November 2, 2023.

pages per topic heading in order to make them easy to use for community members. Through the matching of BIA codes to a file number list obtained from NARA, some of the topics in which the decimal files cover include MIIBS student list by county, MIIBS quarterly reports with student names from the years 1917 through 1933, MIIBS hospital weekly censuses with monthly listing of reasons for hospital admission, gas and oil leases, grazing land leases, and many other areas that SCIT will not know the full meaning of until the files are obtained. However, the information in the files will be invaluable when determining the policies and actions being taken at MIIBS during the periods of the school's operation, 1893-1934, and what happened to students when the school closed. For example, from looking at one oil and gas lease obtained from NARA, it was noted that the Superintendent of MIIBS was signing oil leases on behalf of Native American children who had been made wards of the school. This and other information will be quantified as part of the measurements for the project.

Who is the target group for your project and how have they been involved in the planning?

The primary target group for SCIT's MIIBS project are Native Americans who are SCIT tribal members, their descendants, members of other Tribes and their descendants, and non-native persons who are researching the Boarding School Era of federal Indian policy. To date, SCIT has identified the names of approximately 6,000 children who attended the school or were placed in the custody of the Michigan Children's Aid Society through the Great Lakes Indian Agency. SCIT has also identified the Indian Nation of most of these children, with approximately 25 Native American nations with children within this system to date, including Ojibwe, Pottawattamie, Ottawa, Sioux, Oneida, Menominee, Seneca, Mohawk, Abenaki, and Aleut Alaskan Native children found. The nations and tribes from which these children came, and in many cases did not return, are the primary target group of the project. However, researchers of any ethnicity will be allowed to access records obtained. Additionally, SCIT has been able to research and find approximately 525 school and school-related deaths and has identified 9 additional schools, 3 orphanages, 7 Tuberculosis sanatoriums, and 10 asylums and reformatories that children were being sent to from the school, many of whom did not return to the school or their families. SCIT knows that information regarding these other institutions is within the decimal files at NARA and feels the digitization of these documents will greatly assist the Native American community in finally ascertaining what happened to missing children from this era.

Decimal Files: The NARA description of the Decimal Files is a series consisting of incoming and outgoing correspondence of MIIBS and Agency and its successor, the Tomah Indian Industrial Boarding School, located in Wisconsin, where many of the students were sent when MIIBS closed in 1934. There are 64 boxes (28 linear feet) in this series, and these records will be the cornerstone of discovering not only what was happening to children in a larger context, but also how policies were being applied to students and their families.

Planning to obtain records has been conducted by the Administration Department of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan, as well as the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Committee, which consists of Tribal community members, Native language staff, Ziibiwing Center staff, SCIT's Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), Central Michigan University, and Mid-Michigan College.

Who are the ultimate beneficiaries for this project? Is the number or individuals who will benefit from your project in the long term, if reliable and defensible counts are possible. Otherwise describe the characteristics of the beneficiaries you expect to be served eventually by your project.

The ultimate beneficiaries for this project are many. The characteristic beneficiary of the project will be Native American and will have had unresolved questions regarding ancestors who either attended MIIBS or were put into foster care or adoption system by the Great Lakes Indian Agency between the years of 1893 through 1945. The other characteristic beneficiary will be those Native Americans whose families lived within the agency's operating area during those years. In the long term, the information that is digitized from NARA records will benefit the U.S. as a whole, as the story of the United States government policies regarding Native Americans will more fully be told through these documents.

Project Work Plan

What specific activities will you carry out and in what sequence?

Our work plan summarizes several key tasks that we will undertake to bring our vision to fruition. These tasks and grouping of subtasks encompasses three key aspects: Harvesting of documents, Logistics/Preparation for Public Use, and Assessment. These tasks will be used to carry out planning that has taken place for the project, ensure a focus on the key objective of increasing access to MIIBS documents for both Tribal communities and the general public, and will allow us to identify how United States Government policies affected Native American Indian students, families, and their communities. In particular, our tasks encapsulate activities that encompass:

July 1, 2024-August 1, 2024-Task 1: Notice of Award, Processing, and Acceptance of Award-Send Notice of Award to legal review and Tribal Council for acceptance of award by motion, return award with signature of Authorized Representative. Responsible parties for this activity are the Project Coordinator, Office of Grants and Contracts, and Authorized Representative.

August 1, 2024-July 30, 2026-Task 2: Digitize MIIBS files from NARA, specifically Decimal Files of the Great Lakes Indian Agency located at NARA at Chicago. This task will take place through the scheduling of three trips per year for four grants staff with NARA at Chicago, sending a list of boxes that will be scanned for each trip to NARA staff prior to arrival, booking lodging and train to Chicago per GSA rates, obtaining approximately 13 boxes per trip over a 4-day period, and bringing back digitized files. Responsible parties for this task will be the Project Coordinator, Donna Patterson.

August 1, 2024-July 30, 2026-Task 3: Processing of information obtained in files, including cross-referencing with created student data bank. Backup files of original scans will be created, and cross-referencing including the creation of meta-data key terms will be created, and added to the Ziibiwing repository for community use. The responsible party for this task will be Project Coordinator.

July 1, 2024-July 30, 2026-Task 4: Financial and Program Reporting-Financial and programmatic reporting will be completed per grant requirements. The responsible parties for this task will be the Project Coordinator and SCIT Accounting department.

What are the risks to the project and how will you mitigate them?
The risks to the project are time-related. The Project Coordinator will have to process the digitized files in a timely manner for community use within the timeline of the grant funding. Therefore, careful consideration for the obtaining of files will be conducted, and the information will be obtained over a series of trips so the Project Coordinator can complete processing of files from each trip before the next trip takes place.

Loss of digitized files is another risk when moving between Chicago and the SCIT reservation. Therefore, files will be backed up at the end of every day at the NARA site on one exterior drive that belongs to the Tribe, as well as the original scans that are present on each individual staff's computer. Additionally,

when arriving back at lodgings after leaving NARA, another copy of the files will be added to SCIT's internal tribal drive. This third copy of files will be done after leaving NARA as NARA does not have internet in their research room, so Project Coordinator cannot upload into the internal SCIT system through VPN within the NARA building.

Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?

Planning, implementation, and managing of the project will take place by Donna Patterson, SCIT's Community Data and Special Projects Coordinator. Donna holds a Bachelor's Degree in Secondary Education, History, and a Master's degree in Administrative Science. Donna has been working for SCIT since 2016 and has completed 13 previous trips to NARA at Chicago to obtain student records from the MIIBS School in the form of 1,600+ student files. Both her and the grants staff completing the project have been trained by NARA on the handling of archival documents and have completed several boxes of student record files in digital form. Additionally, Donna has created the MIIBS student master data bank of students and children for the project over a period of three years, using fragmented list from several sources to form a coherent data bank, through the processing of 1,600+ student files that were digitized and through such programs as Ancestry.com and family search. Donna is also currently completing cross-referencing of student files within the data bank.

What time, financial, personnel, and other sources will you need to carry out the activities?

Based on previous trips to NARA calculations, SCIT will need two years and six trips to NARA at Chicago in order to obtain all the boxes of Decimal Files in digitized form. We will need four personnel for each trip in order to get the full 73 boxes of documents digitized. We will also need one half of Donna Patterson, Project Coordinator's, time to be funded through the grant in order to complete the processing of the files, as the project is time-consuming and meticulous. SCIT has the scanners, computers, and exterior drives to obtain the information and, therefore, is not requesting funds for that purpose. The total funding request is for in travel cost to Chicago and in time cost for the Project Coordinator.

How will you track progress toward achieving your intended results?

Progress toward achieving the intended results of the project will be tracked through the following:

Box count
File count
Topic creation and classification
Cross-Reference completion
Entries of files into Ziibiwing Center repository of digital files
Completion of white paper for Tribal Council with finding from the files
Number of found collections created

Project Results

What are your projects intended results and how will they address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified? Be sure to address this question from the dual perspectives of advancing knowledge and understanding and ensuring that the federal investment made thorough this grant generates benefits to society.

The intended results of the project are numerous. The first of these benefits is that Decimal File records will be made accessible to Native Americans whose ancestors attended the school. This will be the first time that these records will be made available without the high cost that is required if requesting record

scans from NARA, which for many has made knowledge of what was occurring in MIIBS impossible to obtain.

The most important benefit of the project will be the healing of survivors/living descendants of American Indians who attended the school and communities from the deleterious effects of the Boarding School Era. With questions that have gone unanswered for 131 years regarding this era, and being the object of attempted cultural genocide by the U.S. through these policies, the impacts of families and generational trauma caused can begin a long-overdue process of healing. Records will provide a deeper understanding of what was happening in the American Indian Boarding Schools as well as knowing what policies were being followed that resulted in the tragic loss of so many American Indian youth/students. Albeit through death, family separation, institutionalization, or assimilation, impacts of this time period on Indigenous peoples,the acknowledgement of what they were forced to endure, and their losses will have widespread implications for all Americans. Because the files will be classified according to topic and cross-referenced in a data bank, long-term research will be possible through the access to records that this project will provide.

How will the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the target group change as a result of your project?

The knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the target group will change as a result of this project in the following way:Knowledge levels will change due to access being granted to Native American families and others, as, up to this point, many families have not been able to pay for records housed at NARA. Additionally, because there is no finding aid to these files created by NARA, the Native American community will gain knowledge of existing primary documentation of the Boarding School Era through the creation of found collections through cross-referencing a topic.

Behavior and attitudes of Native Americans whose ancestors attended the school will change as access to the records will allow for questions about this era of Indian Policy will be able to be explored and allow for closure on some vital areas of question that have existed, in some cases, for 100 years. For example, the examination of disease outbreak records from weekly hospital census reports will answer questions regarding the prevalence of such diseases as TB and the Spanish Flu, both of which took many children's lives within the school. For many Native American families, knowledge of this sort will allow for closure through understanding of what was happening within the school to occur.

If applicable, how will the care, condition, management, access to, or use of the collections and/or records that are the focus of your project improve?

The access to MIIBS files will improve greatly due to the project. The lodging in Chicago, Illinois, of these records for Indian tribes has created a situation in which the Tribes from the states in which they encompass have no access to them unless they undertake expensive travel or costly copying fees from NARA. The states from which SCIT has gathered student files include Michigan, Wisconsin, New York, and the country of Canada. Because the records are all housed in Chicago, access is very limited for Native American tribes to whom the records pertain. Additionally, with the digitization of the records, Tribes will be able to request electronic records delivery from Ziibiwing Center or can come into the center and access the records in electronic form.

What products will result from your project?

A white paper of findings in the record will be produced for SCIT Tribal Council so that they can learn what has been found in the records. Additionally, children found in the files will be added to the MIIBS data bank, and information that is found for children who are currently on the list will be added to their

database. Found collections through cross-referencing will also be created, including such topics as "runaways" and "school-related deaths."

How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance?

SCIT anticipates that the sheer volume of information in the files will constitute many years' worth of research for both Native American researchers and families, as well as non-natives. The electronic files will be kept in the repository and Ziibiwing Center and back-up files kept in order to ensure access for many generations. The benefits to this project will include the growth of both knowledge and understanding of the federal government's Boarding School Era from many different angles through the use of these digitized primary resources.
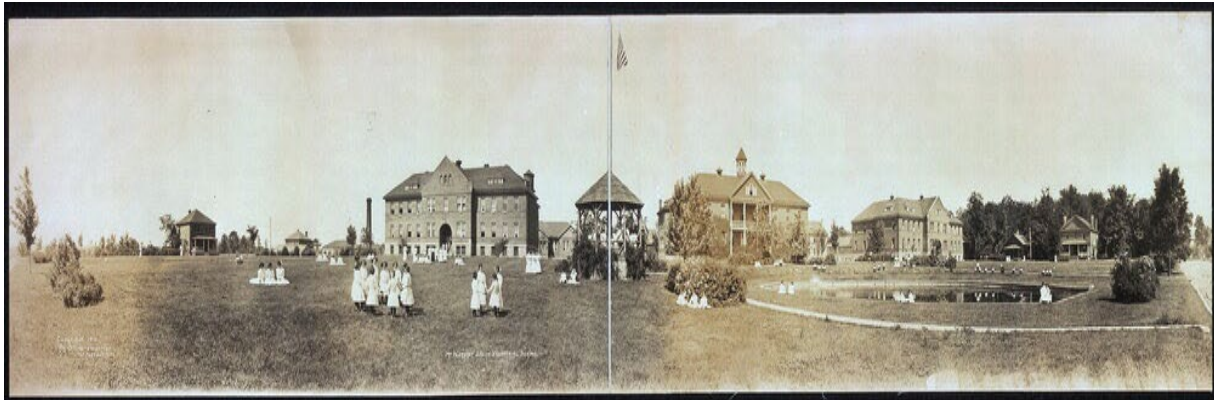
Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School, C. 1910, retrieved from Public Domain

Schedule of Completion-Year One

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Task 1- Notice of Award, Processing, Acceptance of Award	▓											
Task 2- Digitize MIIBS files from NARA		▓			▓				▓			
Task 3- Processing of information and addition to Ziibiwing digital repository	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Task 4- programatic and financial reporting				▓							▓	

Digital Plan

The present collection that Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan will digitize is housed at NARA. While it is open for public access, accessibility is very cost prohibitive; therefore, for the community to access, they either have to travel to Chicago or pay eighty-cents per page, making it virtually inaccessible. Once digitally scanned, the collection will be available through Ziibiwing through their digital archive onsite or in paper form. Headings will remain what was given by NARA, and files will be managed by Ziibiwing following the Federal Agency Digital Guidelines Initiative Standards. Original documents are in very good condition, and as a result, SCIT is able to get high-quality scans of the information. Originals will remain at NARA, and scans will be digitized for use at Ziibiwing.

The project will be executed by SCIT departments working together to complete the collection, processing and digitization for public use. These records will be treated as communally shared intellectual property. Files and volumes will be scanned at archival levels at a minimum of 600 dpi. Scans will be stored in their raw file forms in order to ensure originals are always kept, and page by page scans will be combined to make full volumes and files as stored at NARA. Backup of files will be completed each night in the dedicated SCIT server, as well as in a backup external drive. Handling of originals that will be scanned at NARA in Chicago will follow the standards of the National Archives in handling of documents. The original documents are in very good condition, and as a result, SCIT is able to get high quality scans of the information. Originals will remain at NARA, and scans will be digitized for use at Ziibiwing.

Software that will be used for the project is Past Perfect Central Management System, a museum software. Scans will be done in PDF format, at minimum of 600 dpi. Image enhancement may be used with snap scan on documents written in pencil that have faded, and is available at NARA. Multiple copies of each scan will be saved as backup, ensuring there are "original" & surrogate copies of all documents. To present digital content for end users, public use computers are available in the research room located at Ziibiwing. Once metadata is completed for record, digital content will be made available for end users on public use computers available in the Research Center at Ziibiwing,

Performance Measure	Data We Will Collect (e.g., counts, costs, weights, volumes, temperatures, percentages, hours, observations, opinions, feelings)	Source of Our Data (e.g., members of the target group, project staff, stakeholders, internal/ external documents, recording devices, databases)	Method We Will Use (e.g., survey, questionnaire, interview, focus group, informal discussion, observation, assessment, document analysis)	Schedule (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, beginning/end)
Effectiveness: The extent to which activities contribute to achieving the intended results	*Example:* At the end of each month, using a report prepared by the registrar, we will compare the cumulative count of rehoused objects against the total number proposed for the project. *Example:* At the end of each project year, our external consultant will present results of the ongoing observation-based evaluation and compare them against our intended project results.			
	At the end of each quarter, using a report prepared by the Project Coordinator, we will do a unduplicated count of number of files obtained from NARA. At the end of each quarter, using a report prepared by the Project Coordinator, we will do an unduplicated count of cross referenced items from files that have been obtained from NARA. At the end of each quarter, using a report prepared by the Project Coordinator, we will do an unduplicated count of headings and categories developed from digitized files from NARA and entered into the digital repository at Ziibiwing Center for public use. At the end of the project year, the Project Coordinator will present results of the findings within the NARA files in the form of a white paper.			
Efficiency: How well resources (e.g., funds, expertise, time) are used and costs are minimized while generating maximum value for the target group	*Example:* Twice per year, we will assess our expenditures for program supplies on a per-person-served basis. *Example:* Each quarter, we will calculate the dollar value of volunteer hours contributed to the project as recorded in our online volunteer management system.			
	Each quarter, a budget review will be conducted with the Project Coordinator, Tribal Administration, the Senior Fiscal Compliance Officer, and the Tribal Accountant to ensure all funds are being expended properly and in a timely manner according to the terms and conditions of the grant, and the work plan.			
	Example: At the beginning, the mid-point, and end of the project, we will administer a satisfaction survey to staff who have participated in the training. *Example:* We will gather opinions about our online services through questionnaires provided to every 20th user.			

Quality: How well the activities meet the requirements and expectations of the target group	At the mid-point and end of the project, Project Coordinator will collect data regarding community use of the files that have been digitized by the project from Ziibiwing Center.
Timeliness: The extent to which each task/activity is completed within the proposed timeframe	***Example:*** *Every six months, our Project Director will assess the fit between our proposed Schedule of Completion and actual activity completion dates.* ***Example:*** *Each quarter, each project partner will submit to our Project Director a templated report showing their progress on meeting project milestones.*
	Every six months, the Project Coordinator will assess the fit between our proposed Schedule of Completion and actual completion dates. Each quarter, the Project Coordinator will submit to the Manger of the Office of Grants and Contracts a templated report showing their progress on meeting project milestones.

Schedule of Completion-Year Two

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Task 1-Not applicable year 2												
Task 2-Digitize MIIBS files from NARA	■				■					■		
Task 3-Processing of information and addition to Ziibiwing repository	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Task 4-Programatic and financial reporting	■		■		■				■			■