

## **Organizational Profile**

The College of Menominee Nation (CMN) Mission Statement was revised and approved by the Board in 2017 and reads as follows:

As a Land Grant institution of higher education chartered by the Menominee People, the College of Menominee Nation infuses learning with American Indian culture and prepares students for leadership, careers, and advanced studies in a multicultural world. The College commits to research and promotion, perpetuation, and nurturance of American Indian language and scholarship.

Menominee leaders asked Dr. Verna Fowler to create a College on the reservation to serve the community and strengthen its infrastructure. In January 1993, CMN began offering classes. Soon after, in March 1993, CMN chartered the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin. In 1994, CMN began classes on its current site in Keshena. At the request of the neighboring Oneida nation, CMN started to offer a few professional development courses nearby in the city of Green Bay. Today, CMN is an accredited Land Grant institution offering five Bachelor's Degrees, various Associate degrees, and several technical diplomas. The College serves about 600 students each semester from the Menominee Nation, neighboring tribal nations, and surrounding communities. Over eighty percent of CMN students are American Indian, from tribes including Brotherton, Cherokee, Chippewa, Crow, Ho-Chunk, Lac Courtes Oreilles Ojibwa, Menominee, Mohican, Navajo, Oneida, Potawatomi, and Stockbridge-Munsee.

The Library is on the CMN campus, now called the S. Verna Fowler Academic Library/ Menominee Public Library. In December 2012, the Menominee Tribal/County Public Library was relocated and combined with CMN's academic library. It provides books and services to the entire Menominee community. Computers with Microsoft Office products and the Internet are available for CMN students and community members. Approximately 2650 patrons have library cards. Current library resources include three full-time staff, a three-story facility, and over 36,000 items in the library collection.

When the library became a public library as well, the director applied for IMLS enhancement grants to increase the programming and services for the community. Previous grants focused on early literacy, building maker space opportunities, building on the maker ideals, offering Artist in Residence programming with local artists, and most recently, developing children's books and incorporating Menominee language to help facilitate language learning and familiarity. With the support of IMLS funding from both the Basic Grant and the Enhancement grant the library had been able to build the public library.

The Reservation is approximately 45 miles northwest of Green Bay, Wisconsin, and shares nearly coterminous geopolitical boundaries with Menominee County. The area is very rural and heavily forested. The residents are mostly Native Americans.

### **Community Description**

The S. Verna Fowler Academic Library/Menominee Public Library serves the College of Menominee Nation (CMN) and the Menominee reservation, county, and community. The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin reservation is approximately 45 miles northwest of Green Bay, Wisconsin. The area is very rural and heavily forested.

The Menominee people survived a period of termination that began in 1953 by the U.S. Government and were later affected by the Indian Boarding Schools; the Menominee Tribe is still greatly affected by the trauma of the past. Currently, the Menominee people face an opioid crisis that has taken the lives of many of the community's young people. According to the Green Bay Press Gazette in its February 16, 2024 article, *Opioid deaths among tribal nations are 3 times the stat rate. Can anything ease the epidemic?* "Opioid overdoses in Menominee County are more than 11 times the state rate and more than 18 times the northeastern region's rate, according to ambulance data from the Wisconsin Department of Health Service. In December alone, the rate of ambulance runs in Menominee County was 21 times that of the state and more than 27 times the northeastern region. Opioid overdose deaths in Menominee County are nearly four times the state rate."

The opioid crisis has hit the Menominee people especially hard due to "generational trauma, and, with it, the erosion of tribal knowledge, contribute to the psychic pain that makes quick relief that much more sought after. Those deeply rooted pains loom over the basic needs with which many tribal members of Wisconsin struggle" (Green Bay Press Gazette). These traumatic historical scars have left a lasting impression on the Menominee people that, due to higher fentanyl percentages in recreational drugs and high opioid usage, have created a vicious cycle of drug overdoses, imprisonment, and generational trauma.

In the same article, Menominee Chairwoman Gena Kakkak mentions that she "wants to see more services geared toward mental health as [young people] grow up with these traumas." The Tribe and community have begun work to infuse more mental health services throughout the area. The hope is to support the community and reverse the drug epidemic that has affected the people.

### **Project Justification**

The project's goals and objectives will allow the Library to improve educational programs related to topics on mental health and wellness. These topics are current conversations of interest in the community as the Menominee Tribe faces high numbers of drug use and overdosing. A recent community needs survey reiterated that the community, both on and off the reservation,

believes that drug use is a very important issue in the community and needs to be addressed immediately. With the objectives in place for this project, the Library plans to be a voice of positivity and a safe space for community members to utilize to heal from past trauma, promote mental health, and work toward wellness.

According to Nikita Gupta’s UCLA GRIT Coaching Program paper in 2019, The Wheel of Wellness uses eight interdependent dimensions that the Library will use to split the two-year project into quarterly topics.



*Wheel of Wellness, Gupta, 2019*

This project will also enhance the preservation and revitalization of Native American cultures and languages by using traditional crafts and connecting them with mental health. When connected to the traditions and culture of the community, mental wellness is more easily obtained through the connectivity of the past to the present and into the future.

### **Project Work Plan**

The Project Director will manage the project throughout the entire period, guiding and organizing the library staff with the programs and activities associated with the project. The

project will be split amongst the eight quarters that comprise the two years of the project's time period. In each quarter, the activities will be laid out similarly. This will create an ongoing expectation of library services and activities and provide events for community members to attend regularly. Due to the project's main focus, spreading mental health wellness and awareness, regularly scheduled programs and activities will promote the consistency and normalcy of mental health and positivity that this project intends to share. Listed below is the project's work plan.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Activities/Methods</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Offer Workshops/ Lunch and Learn Events	Workshops or Lunch and Learn events happen four times a year, quarterly	Identify the topic within the current quarter's overall theme (i.e., Financial well-being)	quarterly
		Identify teachers on the topic	quarterly
		Purchase supplies as needed	ongoing
		Create flyers to advertise	ongoing
		Use Social Media to advertise	ongoing
		Register patrons to participate in the event if required	Before each event
		Host event	quarterly
		Pre and Post survey	Beginning and end of each event
		Library staff participate in events to help facilitate and gain knowledge on the topic	quarterly
Act of Kindness (AoK)	Teach participants how to create an AoK and share it with the community	Identify a new AoK for each quarter	quarterly
		Create a space within the library for participants to learn and create AoK	quarterly
		Purchase supplies	ongoing
		Create flyers to advertise	monthly
		Use Social Media to advertise	monthly

		Utilize Social Media to help track community participation in activities	quarterly
		Encourage participants to place AoK around the community	quarterly
Create Take and Make Kits	Patrons will take a kit and create at home or library with family to promote creative thinking,	Library staff will develop kits	monthly
		Purchase supplies	ongoing
		Sign-up forms readied at the front desk	monthly
		Create flyers to advertise	monthly
		Patrons come and take kits	monthly
		Utilize Social media to share photos of completed kits sent in by patrons	monthly/as available
Offer kid's programming with mental health awareness	Promotes and teaches younger ages on importance of mental health wellness and having awareness for others	Develop programming that meets the current quarterly theme	monthly
		Purchase supplies	monthly
		Create flyers to advertise	monthly
		Use Social Media to advertise	monthly
		Use sign-up sheets to track participation	monthly
		Pre & Post kids-level surveys	Beginning and end of each event

*Objective One: Offer Workshops/ Lunch and Learn Events*

This objective is to offer at least one workshop or Lunch and Learn event each quarter, eight times in the two-year project time frame. Each Workshop or Lunch and Learn will teach or discuss mental health wellness practices centered on the current quarter's theme. To do this, Library staff will identify topics and teachers that can teach on that topic to the community either through a workshop utilizing traditional crafting or through a Lunch and Learn event, where participants are offered a lunch and the opportunity to learn on a topic with a presentation by a speaker and discussion amongst participants. Previous craft workshops offered at the Library have been highly successful, with full participation and a request for further classes in the future. Lunch and Learns were provided through a different department, and although there was low attendance, those who attended appreciated the opportunity to discuss deep topics. With broader

advertising and inclusion of the other aspects of the project, it is expected that the Lunch and Learns will be better attended.

*Objective Two: Act of Kindness (AoK)*

The second objective is to encourage community members to create a fun and engaging way to promote well-being and positivity in the community at large. Acts of Kindness (AoK) are easy ways to create something small that can spread across the community to spread a touch of kindness and positivity. While the main goal is to encourage participants to share the positivity throughout the community, this objective would also help to bring people to the Library.

*Objective Three: Create Take and Make Kits*

During the COVID shutdown, the Library started offering kits to help provide programming similar activities to families to do at home due to the safety precautions in place at the time. Although those protocols are no longer in effect, the patrons have continued to enjoy taking home kits to do with their little ones or do themselves. Many families in the area care for grandchildren or split time with the kids between households and having a kit they can do together on their time has been rewarding for the adults. This promotes well-being within the family and gives time together to talk, which promotes mental wellness and better communication, fostering a better environment and well-being.

*Objective Four: Offer kid's programming with mental health awareness*

The Workshops or Lunch and Learns are promoted to older audiences; however, mental wellness is for all ages. With this in mind, the Library will provide programming for younger ages to promote mental health and wellbeing. Younger ages can influence their caregivers to attend programs and will share what they learn. These programs will guide younger ages to being aware of mental wellbeing and health from an early age, which may influence them throughout their years.

**Project Results**

With this project, the Library believes that the community's mental health and wellness will be in a better place as the project goes on and into the future. Encouraging community involvement in positivity and mental health will encourage others to further the chain of kindness. With a project this vast and involved, the Library's patron use should also increase, which will further encourage lifelong learning, community involvement, crafting, opportunity exploration, and more.

Drug use and overdoses are the crisis in the community that is spurring further conversations about mental health and wellness. With this project focusing on these topics, teaching the community, and spreading positivity past the doors of the Library, the goal is to impact the community and decrease the reliance on chemical substances for emotional support. The

workshops, lunch and learns, and kids' programming will focus on addressing and discussing heavy topics that will encourage participants to think critically about these topics. The Acts of Kindness will spread positivity throughout the community beyond the reach of the Library itself. At the same time, the kits will promote internal wellness within families.

This project's target audience ranges from adults to younger ages. The Menominee community at large is the overall target for this project. Current Library users and new patrons will be advertised to promote upcoming events. This should increase the Library's patron count and encourage event participation.

Past the project time frame, the sustainability of mental wellness will be easier to maintain after the initial spark from the project. The library plans to continue to support mental health and wellness through later programming and continued support for those seeking help. Through the project, supplies and books will be purchased to support future research into the topic. Throughout the project, the surveys will help guide future programming based on the participants' interests and needs.



Schedule of Completion

Activity	Year One											
	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
24 Q4 Planning	█											
24 Q4 Workshop	█	█	█									
24 Q4 Act of Kindness	█	█	█									
Kids Programming	█	█	█									
24 Q4 Kit Set 1	█	█	█									
24 Q4 Kit Set 2	█	█	█									
24 Q4 Kit Set 3	█	█	█									
24 Q4 Evaluation	█	█	█									
25 Q1 Planning												
25 Q1 Workshop				█	█	█						
25 Q1 Act of Kindness				█	█	█						
Kids Programming				█	█	█						
25 Q1 Kit Set 1				█	█	█						
25 Q1 Kit Set 2				█	█	█						
25 Q1 Kit Set 3				█	█	█						
25 Q1 Evaluation				█	█	█						
25 Q2 Planning												
25 Q2 Workshop							█	█	█			
25 Q2 Act of Kindness							█	█	█			
Kids Programming							█	█	█			
25 Q2 Kit Set 1							█	█	█			
25 Q2 Kit Set 2							█	█	█			
25 Q2 Kit Set 3							█	█	█			
25 Q2 Evaluation							█	█	█			
25 Q3 Planning												
25 Q3 Workshop										█	█	█
25 Q3 Act of Kindness										█	█	█
Kids Programming										█	█	█
25 Q3 Kit Set 1										█	█	█
25 Q3 Kit Set 2										█	█	█
25 Q3 Kit Set 3										█	█	█
25 Q3 Evaluation										█	█	█
25 Q4 Planning												█

Schedule of Completion

Activity	Year Two											
	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
25 Q4 Workshop	█	█	█									
25 Q4 Act of Kindness	█	█	█									
Kids Programming	█	█	█									
25 Q4 Kit Set 1		█	█									
25 Q4 Kit Set 2	█	█	█									
25 Q4 Kit Set 3		█	█									
25 Q4 Evaluation		█	█									
26 Q1 Planning		█	█									
26 Q1 Workshop		█	█	█	█	█						
26 Q1 Act of Kindness		█	█	█	█	█						
Kids Programming		█	█	█	█	█						
26 Q1 Kit Set 1		█	█	█	█	█						
26 Q1 Kit Set 2		█	█	█	█	█						
26 Q1 Kit Set 3		█	█	█	█	█						
26 Q1 Evaluation		█	█	█	█	█						
26 Q2 Planning		█	█			█						
26 Q2 Workshop		█	█			█	█	█	█			
26 Q2 Act of Kindness		█	█			█	█	█	█			
Kids Programming		█	█			█	█	█	█			
26 Q2 Kit Set 1		█	█			█	█	█	█			
26 Q2 Kit Set 2		█	█			█	█	█	█			
26 Q2 Kit Set 3		█	█			█	█	█	█			
26 Q2 Evaluation		█	█			█	█	█	█			
26 Q3 Planning		█	█						█			
26 Q3 Workshop		█	█						█	█	█	█
26 Q3 Act of Kindness		█	█						█	█	█	█
Kids Programming		█	█						█	█	█	█
26 Q3 Kit Set 1		█	█						█	█	█	█
26 Q3 Kit Set 2		█	█						█	█	█	█
26 Q3 Kit Set 3		█	█						█	█	█	█
26 Q3 Evaluation		█	█						█	█	█	█
Gathering and compiling data		█	█						█	█	█	█