

ABSTRACT

Project Title: **CULTURE Project**
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The **C**ultivating an **U**nderstanding of **L**iteracy and **T**raditional ways Using **R**eading and **E**ducation (CULTURE) project will provide a much needed, culturally pertinent learning experience to all ages of the Bishop Paiute Tribe's (BPT) community. The BPT, a federally recognized Tribe, will collaborate with the Owens Valley Career Development Center (OVCDC) and the Tuniwa Nobi (*Teaching House*) Family Literacy (TWN) program. The CULTURE program will bring enhanced services to the Nüümüu Adümuiniü Nobi (*Indian Reading House*) and Tütüwapi Nobi (*Children's Library*), supported in part by the Native American Library Services Basic Grant. Funds from this proposal will support the CULTURE program expanding the existing library collections with culturally appropriate and relevant literature while bringing a librarian to lead and support an interactive, community learning experience. The CULTURE program will schedule family activities that bring community children and elders together to learn the cultural history while providing growth in literacy skills. This innovative approach to learning while bringing literacy gains to underserved BPT community members is a component of the CULTURE program that blends with the OVCDC's social service programs funded under TANF. The objective of the CULTURE program is to bring the importance of literacy, family unity, culture and educational growth to provide a greater opportunity to achieve economic growth. The CULTURE program will present an optimum opportunity to seek and discover BPT history, language and culture while developing an interest and understanding of why acquiring knowledge will build a pathway towards self-sustainability and positive, generational outcomes.

The CULTURE program will present a curriculum embracing the "Circle of Seasons" (winter, spring, summer and fall) over two twelve-month periods evolving around the seasons. Teaching, retaining and preserving the traditional seasonal activities and life-ways of the indigenous people of the Owens Valley will include oral teachings, books, literacy activities and using the Paiute/Shoshone language whenever possible. Examples of such activities to be presented are storytelling, Native American film festival, adult and family book clubs, children's and adult's Native authors program, traditional Native games, willow basket making, family reading challenge, Tazinobi (*star*) gazing/discovery and unearthing natural foods such as traditional pine nut gathering and harvesting. The goal with these presentations and services is to bring the underserved families together in a comfortable community atmosphere to discover and learn collectively; to appreciate the Tribal members as a community and expand on the need to expose the Native community to learning in a stress free environment; to develop skills to enhance parent's ability to be their child's first and most important teacher and a role-model for the children. The outcome is to double the awareness of the values of learning through culturally relevant methodology and implement the process as a family and community. Quantifiable data will be recorded to provide support of the successes achieved and lead to suggestive changes to improve the CULTURE program. Program monitoring for behavior, with continual assessments of CULTURE programs staff, its partners and its participants will be made continuously. Adjustments will be made accordingly to focus on increased participation, with evaluations and feedback from the participants to better serve their needs, such as books and resources that are not "in-house", that would interest them and promote the "buy-in" necessary to achieve the appropriate results. The CULTURE program will work with the OVCDC's TANF program to provide a crucial element of support to those most in need. The CULTURE program will create an opportunity to advance Native family's literacy skills while learning who they are and instilling confidence that they can achieve.

Statement of Need

The Bishop Paiute Tribe (BPT) is requesting a second cycle of IMLS Enhancement grant funding to continue and to build upon the success of the **Cultivating an Understanding of Literacy and Traditional ways Using Reading and Education (CULTURE)** project. The Bishop Paiute are descendants of the "Nuumu," the original people of the Owens Valley. In 1912, the U.S. Government reserved over 67,000 acres of lands in the Owens Valley for the Native Americans of this area. However, in 1932, President Hoover revoked this promise and placed the lands in watershed protection status for the City of Los Angeles. In 1936, Los Angeles wanted the remaining lands, so the federal government traded these lands for the 875 acres that now comprise the Bishop Paiute Reservation located at the base of the Eastern Sierra Nevada Mountains in northern Inyo County outside the city of Bishop, CA. The BPT is the fifth largest California Tribe (2,034 Tribal members) and has one of the smallest Tribal land bases.

For ages before, the people had lived in harmony with the land. All their needs – food, clothing, housing, medicine, arts – were satisfied through seasonal hunting and gathering around which their whole culture was based. The 1932 land removal was a traumatic personal and cultural experience which the people still carry deep inside. It did irreparable harm to the Owens Valley Native Americans and the Paiute Tribe, dramatically reducing their ability to sustain their economy, culture, traditions, and social structure. The CULTURE program, funded by a 2015 IMLS Enhancement grant, has become an important community resource, contributing to the social and cultural healing and recovery of the BPT. While expanding literacy and education through unique resources and activities based on past traditions and history, the program has led to stronger self-identity and self-knowledge of participants. This sense of pride builds healthier people, more likely to succeed socially and economically.

Today, the BPT is governed by a 5-member Tribal Council. The Tribe provides many community services through their Indian Education Center, Elders Program, Head Start and Owens Valley Paiute-Shoshone Cultural Center. An array of partners includes the Toiyabe Indian Health Project, providing medical and dental services and the Owens Valley Career Development Center (OVCDC) which oversees and administers TANF-related programs.

According to the most recent Tribal census, of approximately 519 households on the Reservation, about 91% were Native American, and close to 36% of all households had children under 18 years old. Of these, almost half had only a single parent or guardian, 76% of which had a female head of household. The median age was 30, and the median household income was \$22,362, with an unemployment rate of nearly 30%. Based on 2009 Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Poverty Guidelines 34% of households were below the poverty rate, with 81% below the HUD Low Income Guideline. The following chart compares State and County statistics to that of the Bishop Paiute Community:

State of CA	Inyo County	Bishop Paiute Reservation
<i>Population</i> 38,332,521	955,272	1,651
<i>Median Household Income</i> \$61,400	\$45,741	\$22,362
<i>Families below Poverty Level</i> 15.3%	24.8%	34.0%
<i>Household w/Public Assistance</i> 4.1%	23.8%	30.8%

<i>Unemployment Rate</i> ⁵	7.4%	10.1%	28.1%	
<i>HS Diploma/GED</i> ⁶	25yrs+ age	81.0%	72.8%	35.9%
4 Source: US Census Public Assistance Receipt in 2012				
5 Source: State of California EDD Report 400C August 2014				
6 Source: US Census Explorer 2012 ACS				

The Tuniwa Nobi Family Literacy (TWN) & Library Services (*Native American Library, Parenting Resource Library and the Children’s Library*) is a collaborative effort started in 1996 by the Bishop Paiute Tribe and the OVCDL to provide resources to increase the literacy skills of family members in the community. The unique and innovative component of the CULTURE program is that BPT residents can learn skills to become stewards of their culture and heritage, and simultaneously achieve educational goals through participating in the CULTURE seasonal activities. This enhancement increases their ability to become productive members of the community. The IMLS goal of creating a Nation of Learners is modeled through the libraries’ services which impact academic achievement and literacy levels of the BPT community. All Tribal members are eligible for a free library card.

Their proposed partners, Owens Valley Paiute/Shoshone Cultural Center, Bishop Indian Head Start and the Bishop Paiute Elders Program, offer a strong support network of community programs for the CULTURE program and assure relevance to the needs of the community. The partnership will grow awareness of the importance of cultural life-ways, literacy and education in achieving success. The Libraries serve as gathering places where families can learn and share together, inspire ideas and practice lifelong learning skills. Enrichment of tribal life is provided via materials to better understand our heritage while supporting cultural ways of life.

The *Native American Library* is housed next to the OVCDL’s TWN center, which also houses a small *Parenting Education Resource Library*. The *Children’s Library* shares space with the TWN center. The libraries are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM and are currently managed by two part time staff, a librarian and an assistant, that were funded through the IMLS Enhancement grant. Prior to this, there was no regular staff. By continuing to fund the Librarian position through this proposal, will provide a consistent and continual staff member that will have duties that will include but are not limited to carding, checking books in and out, inventory updates, purchasing books, dusting and cleaning the library, planning library activities and assisting BPT residents as needed in support of the library services provided.

The TWN center is located on Tribal land near the OVCDL’s TANF support “campus” which makes for an optimum “one-stop” for the BPT residents. Currently the *Native American Library* has approximately 1,500 books and 70 videos/DVDs relating to or created by Native Americans, including fiction, nonfiction, biographies, and poetry covering historical, tribal, environmental, food/nutrition, and “how to” topics. There is a mounted flat screen TV, a cd/cassette player, and a computer with internet access. The *Native American Library* offers literacy-based activities utilizing many of the books and media in the library. Programs include Adult and Family Book Clubs, Cultural Awareness workshops, Adult Reading Activities, Reading Challenges and Family Literacy activities. The *Parenting Education Resource Library* – housed in the same building, offers community members the opportunity to learn more about parenting and building skills to bond and raise their children in a positive manner. The *Children’s Library* has approximately 900 children’s books, on a vast variety of topics for Native children by Native

authors and age-appropriate from infant to teens. The *Children's Library* includes a large colorful rug, round sitting pillows, a toddler bench, a children's table and chairs, a flat screen TV with DVD player and a cd player. There are approximately 25 DVD's and cd's. The *Children's Library* provides an Afterschool Learning Circle for children aged kindergarten to grade 3; literacy and reading programs to support of the Bishop Indian Head Start participants; and provides the OVDCDC Childcare Center children a book reading, puppet show or oral story each Friday. Children can visit the library with their parents, adult family members or guardians and can check out two books for a two- week period.

The purpose of the second phase of the CULTURE program will be to build on success and continue addressing the issues of literacy and education levels that exist for the majority of the low-income population of the BPT. Activities and services will continue to be implemented following the Seasonal chart, with emphasis on family members mentoring others in the family. Services will be offered to new families and to other generations within the current families.

Project Design

The goals of the Second Phase of the CULTURE program will be:

- 1) To offer cultural activities in a structured seasonal pattern, coinciding with the traditional life-ways of the Paiute/Shoshone People, thus retaining and preserving a living culture.
- 2) To raise self-esteem and self-identity by intertwining cultural life-way teachings with the already existing literacy activities and educational programs to become self-sufficient by gaining employment, job advancement, or new careers.
- 3) To help our families understand that our cultural ways are just as important as western education, and to show our families that they can braid together tradition and new knowledge, to make stronger, more confident individuals, thus affecting all aspects of their lives – for themselves, their families and our community

These goals will be achieved through objectives of further training and professional development, inclusion and further development of partnerships, targeting services to the underserved, and enhancing existing services.

The CULTURE program uses a traditional seasonal approach to structure delivery of the curriculum. The "Circle of Seasons" activity schedule (**Attachment A**) is a year round program that provides families, children and elders of the BPT, literacy and learning activities associated with the past seasonal history of the Bishop Paiutes. The CULTURE program will follow concepts from the Kenan Model, a family literacy model based on Adult Education, Parenting Education, Children's Education and Parent and Child Interactive activities. The Kenan model was designed to teach undereducated parents together with their 3- or 4-year-old children. Children participated in a comprehensive preschool program while adults studied in various academic and vocational areas. During Parent and Child Together (PACT) time, parents and children worked and played together. The Parent Time (PT) component allowed parents to meet as a group to address significant problems. The First Phase of the IMLS Enhancement CULTURE program created a strong partnership with other tribal agencies and contributed to

assisting families with diverse backgrounds and special needs. The second phase will continue adding to that knowledge base.

OVCDL will play a key role in the CULTURE program because many low-income BPT residents are their clients, and the CULTURE program's target population is the underserved in the BPT community. The CULTURE program will blend multiple services from the OVCDL's TANF program including the OVCDL Language program into creating a unique experience unavailable elsewhere. By braiding the personnel and services of the OVCDL TANF program, BPT, and the BPT partners, the CULTURE program will have a vast amount of culturally relevant support to create and provide this innovative approach to learning and exploring culture while an important "by-product" of the CULTURE program is realized – *knowledge leads to confidence and self-worth; that leads to personal capacity; that leads to economic growth.*

The BPT will work closely with the OVCDL's Tuniwa Nobi Family Literacy Program (TWN), under the direction of life-long BPT resident Ms. Dolly Manuelito, to incorporate the CULTURE program into the TWN's offerings at the Numb Adümüinü Nobi (*Indian Reading House*) and Tütüwapi Nobi (*Children's Library*) libraries (**Attachment B**).

The CULTURE program will address some of the lasting effects of the losses experienced by the BPT. The overall design of the CULTURE program is to build knowledge through community history and culture while its positive "side effects" will be a greater literacy level to enhance the opportunities to grow economically. It is a belief that a compassionately managed program, with support mentors in place, can have an array of positive effects on one's life. The CULTURE program is designed to provide the support, the mentors, and the management to bring about a successful outcome for all those who participate. The CULTURE program will be a component of reducing the social and economic "gap" of the underserved in the BPT community.

Impact

The CULTURE program is designed to address knowledge gaps in history, culture and community. Based on tradition-oriented seasonal activities, this novel approach is designed to remove the anxiety of learning and literacy that many have due to the lack of confidence or self-esteem. The audience will be all ages, from infants to elders.

The short term gains derived from the CULTURE program's assessments and goal monitoring are described in detail in the paragraph below. Many adults in the BPT community did not have access to culturally relevant materials and programs to build their knowledge on who they are and why they should be proud of their history. Not knowing has created a "culture gap" due to the lack of knowledge to pass to their children. The CULTURE program, with its family orientated curriculum and participation, is designed to bring some of the lost knowledge to the parents while instilling it in their children, with the hope that a continual and growing base of "teachers" evolve from the program.

The goal is to offer all BPT community members educational, historical and meaningful resources that focus on the Paiute/Shoshone culture of the Owens Valley while instilling literacy and educational skills into the participants. The concept of using the four seasons of the year as guidance to the type of literacy/cultural activities offered in accordance to the life-ways of the ancestors during that seasonal period, along with blending the Native language into the programs

provides an effective means of providing an “all-inclusive” learning session. The short term goals or expected outcomes of the CULTURE program are:

- A 25% increase of library books and materials available to the community
- Improved cataloging of books/materials and check-out process
- A 30% growth in library cards issued
- 25 new library members will contribute titles of books and materials they would like to see
- 20 Families will participate in the library/literacy-based cultural programs designed around the Seasonal Activities Calendar
- Parents and children will participate in a minimum of five family program activities
- 50 adults and children will report that they have checked out books on a regular basis (from one of the libraries) and report on knowledge of the local Native culture gained
- Adults will show a 20% growth/increase in literacy skills through the use of the Family Literacy assessment - PEP (Parent Education Profile) assessment

It can also be assumed that a single parent family will have more financial instability than that of a two parent family. The statistics are evidence of the need for services. The BPT elders play a significant role in the CULTURE program and support from the Bishop Paiute Tribal Elders Program is prominent in the overall CULTURE program platform. Pride of origin and self-respect will be gained and confidence will grow. Family bonding will occur with a central message that the whole BPT community is family. These are the key short term outcomes that are the focus of the CULTURE program with the long term outcomes measured in closing the social and economic gaps illustrated earlier.

The focused approach taken by the CULTURE program is based upon the belief that parents are the children’s first teacher and that in order for the parent to become a quality, well informed teacher they must have the skills to provide support. The CULTURE program addresses the needs of the parents to obtain the cognitive skills necessary to teach and provide their children with age appropriate support. The CULTURE program supports the philosophy of families learning together to raise educational levels, increase self-esteem and build confidence to achieve economic independence.

Communication Plan

The Second Phase of the CULTURE program will outreach to all members, and all groups, of the BPT and community through the Tribal newsletter, the Tribal website, announcements at Tribal Council meetings, at Head Start, at the Elders program, and through the TANF program. Several evaluation methods will monitor the infusion of the CULTURE program into the family literacy program and the partners’ programs. Preparing TWN staff for services and activities developed will be essential with Ms. Manuelito providing the structured environment, leadership and knowledge to prepare efficiently and comprehensively. Some of the procedural steps taken during the CULTURE program are:

- Throughout the program year, staff will survey collaborating agencies and families to develop a list of recommendations of literature, approaches and methodology.

- Using the Seasonal Activity Calendar as a reference, staff will develop checklists to ensure the implementation of the family activities accordingly.
- Staff will research and stay present with materials that are culturally and age appropriate.
- Staff will be provided training regarding library services: ordering age and culturally appropriate books; carding and numbering; a system to retrieve overdue books; marketing of the CULTURE program such as announcements of activities in the local paper, tribal newsletters, OVDCD newsletters, and flyers in partners and community locations.
- Monthly community partner meetings to collaborate on mutual needs and goals.
- Monitoring effectiveness of the checkout process, forms, and inventory of books and library materials.
- Provide workshops to collaborating agencies pertaining to what the CULTURE program brings to the BPT community and networking with each to share support capabilities.
- Community training on use of technology to more efficiently provide for knowledge attainment.

Patron and BPT community surveys will be used to gather CULTURE program data on age group participation, education levels, employment status, library usage, library card obtainment, reasons for participating/not participating, patron evaluation of services, patron evaluation of personnel providing services, and suggestion box ideas.

The impact of the CULTURE program will be formally measured during the many stages of the program through surveys and assessments such as PEP. Increases in family time, sharing activities, developing skills and using culturally appropriate reading material will be measured by analysis of repeat attendance. Increased visits by family members and community adults to utilize Tuniwa Nobi's Library Services and activities to learn the proper use of literacy materials to help their children increase their academic skills will be monitored. The long-term success will be the future success of participants and the growth of BPT community members who pass the knowledge inter-generationally.

The above outcomes will be measured in a variety of ways from initial assessments, initial data vs annual data, literacy skill achievement (PEP) and other means to monitor the success of the program. The long-term goals are to increase diploma attainment for those 25+ years of age, decrease the unemployment rate by 5%, decrease households with public assistance by 5%, decrease number of families living below the poverty level by 5% and establish median household income gains of 5%. The CULTURE program will assist parents and guardians of the BPT children in developing skills to enhance their ability as the child's first and most important teacher while establishing themselves as a role-model for the children. The CULTURE program will bridge the gap of education via tribal culture that does not exist in a traditional school environment. As noted earlier the CULTURE program will be based on the changing seasons as the time when activities will coordinate their change accordingly. The CULTURE program activity service time-line (**Schedule of completion**) outlines the activities that will be provided to the BPT community families with a full array of cultural related activities (defined in Attachment A) to broaden their learning prospective. The goals and objectives defined earlier will be achieved through the seasonal activities of the CULTURE program.

Collaboration is a vital component to the CULTURE program's success. The partners and their commitments bring a turn-key environment to the CULTURE program and establish a network of BPT leaders with a common goal to provide enhanced educational services. The partners have a built in communication path to the BPT community on what is available to them from each provider. Continuity in services from young to old is a benefit that will be realized and a major contributor to continual educational improvements. The BPT community support structure created from this CULTURE program endeavor is unmeasurable in the value added results. The following is a brief description of the key partners:

□ **Bishop Indian Head Start (BIHS)** – Bishop Indian Head Start serves 48-60 children, 3- to 5-years of age and their families, in all phases of pre-school educational activities. BIHS has a age-appropriate activities to coordinate with the CULTURE program. The BIHS will bring support via their experienced teachers and proven cultural approaches. The BIHS will have field trips to the library(s) and be a main contributor to the CULTURE program support structure.

□ **Owens Valley Paiute/Shoshone Cultural Center and Museum (OVPSCC)** -The TWN Family Literacy Program has collaborated with the OVCCM to implement Cultural Awareness activities which include hand games, basketry, beading and storytelling. The Cultural Center has current plans for creating a resource library which will hold books and information on the Paiute/Shoshone people and will collaborate with the CULTURE program. The OVCCM houses exhibits of the history of the Owens Valley Tribes and a wealth of artifacts and pictures on display presenting the history of the Natives in Owens Valley.

□ **Bishop Tribal Elder Center (BTEC)** – The BTEC, a valuable resource, is a facility where BPT elders meet and receive services to stay active in their community and culture. The BPT elders are an essential component of the CULTURE program, involved in coordinating many intergenerational activities.

□ **Tuniwa Nobi Family Literacy Program (TWN)** – The TWN oversees the library services of the BPT community and is supported by the OVCDC. The Children's library is a checkout library where each participating family has a library card for checkout use. Library books are used daily as part of the Learning Circle's reading sessions where 20+ children attend each Tuesday and Thursday. Children learn book care, book content, reinforce reading skills, increase vocabulary, learn about other tribes and gain knowledge on other tribal cultures.

OVCDC Adult Education Program – The OVCDC's Adult Education Program will provide access and support to adults who wish to continue their quest of knowledge by providing tutoring and sharing of resources to support the BPT resident's obtaining their educational goals.

□ **OVCDC Language and Culture Program** – The OVCDC's Language and Culture program will provide services regarding the local Native language and bring language support activities to the CULTURE program to blend in where and when appropriate.

The partners listed above and the CULTURE program will use the appropriate literacy-based curriculum based on the Kenan Model and offer literacy, library and activities through the four components: Adult Education; Parenting Education; Parent and Child Interactive Activities; and Children's Education. The standards provided under this model are a proven best practice and have been adopted by all CULTURE program partners. The five essential components of the Kenan model are (1) phonemic awareness; (2) phonics; (3) reading fluency and oral skills; (4) vocabulary development and; (5) reading comprehension strategies. The CULTURE program

will improve parent's skills in helping their child learn to be good readers by systematically practicing these five components.

Sustainability

Bishop Paiute Tribe intends to sustain the CULTURE program by strengthening its relationships with existing, successful partners that have served the community for over 20 years. The cost of sustaining the CULTURE program is reduced dramatically after this initial investment in necessary materials. A majority of requested funds is for reusable, non-expendable resources. Additional and up-to-date materials may be obtained through donations from outside agencies and funders, perhaps secured through the Tribal website. The cost of a full-time librarian after this second phase of funding may be met through other funding proposals, partnerships and community support. The CULTURE program fits into many "outcome" components of other federal and state programs that the BPT may be eligible for.

The Annual IMLS Basic Grant awarded to the Bishop Paiute Tribe has provided for books for each library. TWN staff attended the ATALM conferences over the past years, (Arizona in 2016, Washington DC in 2015, and Palm Springs in 2014) and have gained much needed training which increased their knowledge on Native authors, their books, and how to create, manage, a library or museum and implement quality services and activities. They also attended seminars where library basics, such as book repair, budgets, inventories, accountability of a library and community support events were provided. Additional trainings through this grant will enhance staff knowledge and skills to be more effective in services.

The CULTURE program will provide resources and a support system that provides for the discovery of the value of the obtaining knowledge while surrounded by a culturally supported environment. The BPT community will have access to updated, essential materials needed to increase participation in literacy enhancement programs, most importantly for low-income and underserved members of the community. The foremost message of this program is the relationship of literacy to improved quality of life. The long term result is gain in self-sufficiency and improved family formation which reduces the income/education gap between the BPT and non-Indian communities. Native education programs in the Bishop area have limited resources and an inability to address these urgent family literacy needs, with public education non-existent to provide for this cultural need. The purpose of the CULTURE program is to braid all the services of each partner to create a learning environment that meets the multiple literacy needs of the BPT community by providing a culturally relevant setting. This "setting" will provide a comfortable place to grow the skills required to be a productive member of the Bishop Paiute community and society in general.

Because the CULTURE program will have many partners that offer a variety of support programs an all-inclusive approach to resolving the gaps will be in place. The CULTURE program will be a component of the entire spectrum of services designed to improve and enhance the lives of the BPT residents. With support and blending of OVDC TANF programs and the BPT Tribal programs there are basic social services to support and assist BPT residents - *less one*. The "one" is a shortage of materials and support to provide a comprehensive program to bring culture into the learning model and make a measurable impact on the social wellbeing of the Bishop Paiute people. The CULTURE program provided by the Native American Library Services Enhancement Grant will fill the void of this prevalent need.

