

**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
FOR THE HUMANITIES**

SAMPLE APPLICATION NARRATIVE



Humanities Initiatives at Tribal Colleges and Universities
Institution: White Earth Tribal and Community College



NATIONAL
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FOR THE
HUMANITIES

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National Endowment for the Humanities

Division of Education Programs

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

This sample of the narrative portion from a grant is provided as an example of a funded proposal. It will give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. It is not intended to serve as a model. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with staff members in the NEH Division of Education Programs well before a grant deadline. This sample proposal does not include a budget, letters of commitment, or resumes.

Project Title: *To Sanction, To Give Authority, To Bring to Life: Gi bugadin-a-maa goom*

Institution: White Earth Tribal and Community College

Project Director: Nyleta Belgarde

Grant Program: Humanities Initiatives for Faculty at Tribal Colleges and Universities

Gi bugadin-a-maa goom Project

Ojibwe meaning “To sanction, to give authority, to bring to life”

Intellectual Rationale

This project will involve four partnering institutions (*White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC), Itasca Community College (ICC), the University of Minnesota, Duluth (UMD), and the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) – specifically the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology [see Appendix 1 for catalog websites]*) who are committed to developing a unique digital resource to support the preservation and revitalization of the Ojibwe language of the Anishinaabeg people of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and the southern area of Ontario, Canada. This consortium will combine state-of-the-art technology with traditional Anishinaabeg ways of knowing to create a digital archive of stories and artifacts from the community.

White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC), the lead institution and fiscal agent for this project, is located in the city of Mahanomen, on the White Earth Reservation in northern Minnesota. This reservation has 19,500 enrolled members, with over 6,000 people living on the reservation today. In 1899 the United States government mandated that all Anishinaabeg bands in the Great Lakes region be placed on this remote reservation. This distinct piece of history makes White Earth an important location in the Tribe’s collective memory. The rich historical legacy of White Earth has been remarkably well preserved in the reservation’s extensive archives and vibrant oral tradition.

WETCC is dedicated to educational excellence through the provision of a culturally relevant curriculum, in partnership with students, staff, community and industry. Through its mission, WETCC seeks to improve the educational success of the reservation’s high school and college students in ways that will be culturally relevant.

Founded in 1997, WETCC’s vision statement is “*We are carrying into the future the way that we were given.*” The commitment of the college to cultural preservation, language revitalization, student recruitment and retention, and community service makes it centrally important to the overall development

of White Earth's population. However, the faculty and staff of WETCC face tremendous challenges in a community where the per capita income is the lowest in the state of Minnesota and the unemployment rate is 24.8%.

This project proposes the establishment of a critical language and literacy resource to support Ojibwe language preservation and revitalization. The Ojibwe language is quickly disappearing as fluent language speakers pass away. WETCC's students, faculty and staff along with the academic leadership of the partnering institutions are in a position to access artifacts and develop a lasting legacy for generations to come. Ojibwe faculty and other experts from partnering institutions will have the opportunity to build strong ties as they learn from one another and apply their new knowledge towards the development of a shared language and culture digital resource. This resource will be developed according to Anishinaabeg customs and values. **This digital archive, which will be known as “*Gashkibidaagen Gikendaasowin*” (Ojibwe for *Knowledge Bundle*)**, will be utilized for curriculum development, language outreach programming, immersion camps, language quiz bowls and much more. This grant project will result in the first phase of 1) creating digital videos of Ojibwe artifacts, documents and language in a richly detailed historical context, to be used in teaching and learning; 2) training in digital technology and archiving for college students and tribal staff; and 3) providing curatorial expertise towards the eventual development of a tribal museum on the White Earth reservation.

Content and Design

Content: The “*Gi bugadin-a-maa goom*” Project will provide the framework for an institutional partnership committed to developing a digital archive of Ojibwe artifacts and documents over the next several years. This project will be the first phase of a larger digital archive, and will be devoted to sanctioning the Ojibwe's right to recount their own history by recognizing the authority of tribal elders to bring the language and culture to life.

The overarching goal of the ongoing project is to create digital materials and an archive that will weave the art of storytelling together with the linguistic expertise of Native language carriers and available historical documents. In addition to having students study the language from dictionaries, text

books, and histories, faculty and their students will learn directly from elders, pipe carriers, and sanctioned experts accessible through the living digital artifacts, rich in original oral-based language. To learn the meaning of *Gi bugandin-a-maa goom*, for example, digital video will situate the phrase within the context of a powwow with an Ojibwe elder explaining the meaning of the beads woven into his clothing, the significance of the drum circle in relation to Ojibwe teachings about living in harmony with nature, and the centrality of the culture to daily life (see DVD prototype sent under separate cover).

As educational outreach and programming for Native students grow, the partnering institutions' need for resources that will ensure access to a greater number of appropriate and meaningful language and culture artifacts is becoming critical. Part of the solution is to make the Ojibwe language and culture more relevant and accessible to students and educators. By situating the language within a richly detailed historical context and digitizing that context, a library of living learning artifacts will be available to supplement and enrich the existing curriculum and the language and culture will be better preserved for future generations. In this way, Ojibwe students in American Indian Studies programs will learn about core tribal values, and how they can teach this to their children and grandchildren. (Statistics from Anton Treuer's *Living Our language: Ojibwe Tales and Oral Histories* - "most MN Ojibwe communities today have [Native language] fluency rates of ten percent or less, with the vast majority of speakers being 45 or more years of age")

As an illustration of how this archive will be applied within a specific curriculum, consider how the Ojibwe Language Quiz Bowl, an extra-curricular high school event developed by Itasca Community College staff, will employ this resource. Each year, teams of Anishinaabeg students from high schools across northern Minnesota participate in an academic competition regarding Ojibwe language and culture. This program has proven to be a successful strategy in motivating high school students to recapture their Ojibwe language. Survey returns from students who have participated in the Quiz Bowl over the past five years, indicate that the experience has increased their desire to stay in school, graduate, and move on to advanced degrees (See Appendix 2 – Quiz Bowl Survey Results). Because materials needed to expand

the Quiz Bowl are limited, the digital archive will provide a wealth of materials to support and extend these successful language activities.

In addition to applications to area curricula, the grant will also provide potential job training opportunities in digital skills and technology for students in the form of internships. In the long term, economic opportunities on the reservation itself (e.g., jobs related to tagging documents using XML) will be generated.

Design: Each partner brings specific assets and needs to this project (as indicated in the table below), with the common goal of coming together to “bring to life” and preserve the culture, language and traditions of the Anishinaabeg people. The four partnering institutions will design and develop the first phase of a larger digital archive for these shared purposes.

Institution	Assets	Needs
WETCC	Tribal College Native Faculty Members Membership on the White Earth Museum Board	Access to educational programming Need for curatorial expertise
Faculty Consultants	Language Experts and Native Speakers Language Immersion Camp Models	Digital teaching and learning resources
ICC	Ojibwa Language Quiz Bowl Model Two year transfer program in American Indian Studies Successful language model for high school to college recruitment	Materials/resources Expansion and strengthening of the curricular literacy ladder Digital teaching and learning resources
UMD	Successful 4-year program in American Indian Studies Expertise in faculty and staff	Recruitment of students into its programs Strong program ladder of literacy and linguistic skills
Penn	Museum expertise Access to linguists, anthropologists and historians Assistance in providing a national advisory council	Interest in the repatriation of Indian artifacts Outreach programs Digital images of artifacts

The following chart and timeline outline the activities for the grant period. The digital project will focus on the digitizing of both cultural artifacts and historical documents.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE - 2007
Convene Advisory Council: (See Appendix 3-Advisory Council Members) This advisory council will guide the faculty as it begins to develop a digital archive.	January – February
Faculty Development/Discussion: Faculty from the institution will participate in readings, research and discussion, and will develop a unique category system for the collection of Ojibwe artifacts.	January – December
Cultivate a council of “permission givers” to determine artifacts, documents, and maps than can be used to create the digital archives	March - April
Develop approach for and process model for archive: A series of meetings with the identified faculty to determine the archive content - where resources are stored, what can be accessed, and how the information will be categorized.	January - June
Establish digital video schedule: Set up video and production schedule	March
Start production of artifact digitizing process	March - December
Purchase small equipment/software to create archival materials	March
Digitize historical documents/maps at White Earth; provide technical and curatorial expertise; train students and others on software, in tagging practices	May - August
Start production of digitized historical document/map	July – November
Launch Phase 1 - utilize and pilot archive for quiz bowls and for college curricular purposes	September - December
Evaluation: Conduct surveys, prepare reports, gather project evaluation; demonstrate digital product at appropriate workshop/conference	October - December
Dissemination: Present information at conference; report to college and tribal leadership.	December

Initial faculty focused discussions around a list of readings (Appendix 4 - Bibliography) will result in an acceptable and effective framework and process for developing the digital formats. Faculty and staff will be issued readings in advance and come together in retreat to discuss and formulate the process. The discussion will include what possible artifacts (historical documentation, museum artifacts, and cultural activities) might be included, and how they might be appropriately organized according to Ojibwe cultural traditions. The advisory council will guide the project participants throughout the course of the grant period, providing consultation and feedback on the digital products and process. Tribal elders will be invited to participate in an advisory capacity. These individuals will assist in endorsing the public use of any questionable artifact, will assist in providing history, knowledge, and context to the artifact’s

“story” and will be asked to provide feedback to the group on its product. These elders will be suggested by faculty and staff involved in the project.

The University of Pennsylvania (Penn) will play a central role in providing curator expertise as well as consultation on historical documents and artifacts. Once artifacts are selected, a schedule will be established. Over the course of the summer months within the granting period, Penn will provide support in the form of summer interns and technicians who will provide training on “tagging” and digitizing of historical documents. Penn will assist White Earth, in partnership with their museum board, in developing the research and organizing their historic documents. Some of these documents will be selected for the initial digital processing. In the fall of the grant period, the initial digital archive will be launched with a minimum of 20 digitalized language and/or cultural “events”.

Institutional Context (See Appendix 5 – Letters of Commitment; Appendix 7 for WETCC Institutional Profile; and Appendix 12 for Other Institutional Profiles)

The three partnering Minnesota colleges serve the top third of the state of Minnesota where the largest population of the Anishinaabeg people live. Six of the seven Ojibwe reservations in Minnesota are located in the top third of the state (see Appendix 6 – Map of the Reservations). These institutions attract a growing percentage of Anishinaabeg high school graduates coming from the northern Minnesota reservation areas as well as non-reservation communities. Each of the colleges and organizations in the consortium will play a vital role in developing a digital archive (language, culture and history artifacts) to be utilized by all partners for the purpose of strengthening their communities, and informing best practices in the teaching and learning of the Ojibwe language and culture.

1. **White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC)**. While WETCC is a relatively new tribally controlled community college, it nevertheless possesses a wealth of valuable cultural materials including more than two thousand historical documents and artifacts, none of which are currently on display or used in the classroom. The president of the college is a currently a candidate for the White Earth Museum Board, and will act as a liaison for accessing historical documents and

artifacts. White Earth's long-term goal is to establish a museum and create a digital video archive of its artifacts.

2. **Itasca Community College (ICC)**, located in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, attracts increasing numbers of Native American students from its neighboring reservations of Red Lake, Boise Fort, Leech Lake, and Cass Lake. ICC has grown an American Indian Studies transfer program that articulates with the University of Minnesota, Duluth's four-year bachelor's degree in American Indian Studies. Both institutions have made significant investments in establishing credentialed Native American staff; creating endowed chairs for their American Indian Studies programs, and strengthening the linguistic and literacy pathway within their respective Ojibwe curricula. ICC hosts the Ojibwe Language Quiz Bowl project and has strong ties with the six area K-12 school districts to provide Ojibwe language instruction in high schools through the Itasca Area School Collaborative (IASC). Recently, ICC received a \$500,000 donation from the Shakopee Sioux Tribe to extend the language quiz bowl into the Mille Lacs Tribal Area.
3. **University of Minnesota, Duluth, Minnesota (UMD)**, brings its faculty and staff expertise. UMD is known for its strong Ojibwe speaking faculty, its programs in Native American Studies and Education, and its expertise in digital technology. UMD's programs are based on the Anishinaabeg tradition of closing the circle, by working to help the younger generation graduate from high school, earn college degrees, and to return to the reservation to serve the next generation. Several students completing their studies at UMD have returned to reservations to teach in the k-12 system.
4. **The University of Pennsylvania (Penn)**, specifically the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, brings the needed expertise in preservation processes through its museum personnel. This museum has made a commitment to assist in digitizing historical documents, providing curatorial consultation towards White Earth's long-term goal to establish a museum, and creating a digital video archive relaying the significance of Ojibwe artifacts. The museum also houses an Ethnographic Ojibwe Collection (See Appendix 8)

Staff and Participants – (See Appendix 9 - Resumes of Grant Participants)

1. *Dr. Robert (Sonny) Peacock, President, WETCC – Candidate for White Earth Museum Board*

Dr. Peacock has both academic and tribal credentials, including vast experience on the business and education front to improve Native American communities through education and economic development of the region. Dr. Peacock is an enrolled member of Fond du Lac Reservation.

2. *Andrew Favorite, Faculty, WETCC and former Tribal Historian*

Mr. Favorite, an enrolled member of the White Earth Reservation, offers his expertise as long-standing White Earth historian, his storytelling abilities, his teaching expertise and his involvement in developing positive rights of passage for American Indian youth to the project.

3. *Nyleta Belgarde, Academic Director, WETCC – Principal Investigator*

Ms. Belgarde has provided strong academic leadership to WETCC since 2004. An accomplished Ojibwe speaker, Ms. Belgarde's experience in educational and language programming, her management skills and her network within the Ojibwe community will provide the project with the necessary direction.

4. *Dan Jones, Faculty, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College and the University of Minnesota- Duluth, Director of Language Immersion Camps, Ojibwe Language Expert*

Mr. Jones, an enrolled member of the First Nations Reservation in Ontario, offers expertise in language programming, over 30 years of language teaching at area colleges and universities, and represents the voice of a First Nations Ojibwe people of Ontario, Canada.

5. *Dr. Barbara McDonald, Dean of Academic Affairs, ICC – Co Principal Investigator*

Dr. McDonald brings her administrative expertise in program development, as well as her successful experience as PI on federal and foundation grants. Dr. McDonald will assist in coordinating meetings, serve as liaison to the University of Pennsylvania, and provide direction on completing grant outcomes.

6. *Larry Aitken, Ojibwe Faculty/Endowed Chair-ICC, and Language Expert*

Mr. Aitken is an elder from the Cass Lake band of Ojibwe, a member of Leech Lake Reservation, and a sacred pipe carrier. Larry has worked as a tribal historian, was President of Leech Lake Tribal College

for ten years, served on the faculty at UMD, and for sixteen years, was a translator for Jim Jackson, one of the most distinguished Ojibwe medicine men of the late twentieth century. Larry is now the lead faculty of the American Indian Studies Program at ICC. Mr. Aitken will serve on the advisory board.

7. Harold Annette, Director of Multicultural Studies – ICC, Quiz Bowl Developer

Mr. Annette assists students of color at ICC, primarily Native American students. Harold was responsible for establishing the Ojibwe Language Quiz Bowl competition for Ojibwe high school students in 1991.

Mr. Annette is a recognized American Indian drum group lead singer, teaches Native American Art, and is the advisor of ICC's Native American student association. Mr. Annette is an enrolled member of the White Earth Reservation. Harold will be the Quiz Bowl resource person.

8. David Aubid, Faculty, UMD, Native Language Speaker (See Appendix 10 for news article)

Mr. Aubid (American Indian name "Niib") is an Ojibwe language instructor at UMD. He is a renowned storyteller and uses narrative stories to teach the language. His storytelling will become part of the digital archive library.

9. Dr. Timothy Powell, Senior Researcher, University of Pennsylvania Museum

Dr. Powell will provide academic leadership and digital archive guidance throughout the grant period.

His previous work at the University of Georgia overseeing the establishment a Cherokee Nation digital archive which houses over 2,000 artifacts will give this project its needed expertise.

10. David McDonald, Video Producer, DMcD Productions, Inc., Grand Rapids, MN

Mr. McDonald will be the lead videographer. Mr. McDonald's vast experience in digital video production and successful projects with the Anishinaabeg people, make him the logical choice for overseeing the project's production of digitized Ojibwe language and artifacts. (Appendix 11 –Contractor Narrative)

Evaluation

Evaluation of the Project will use the following qualitative and quantitative processes:

1. **A national advisory council** representing Anishinaabeg people and other experts in the field will participate in discussions that will guide and assess the merits of the Project. The council will offer

strategies for the future direction of the project beyond the grant cycle as well. Periodic reports and conference calls will keep the council apprised of the progress of the grant. .

2. The Co-PIs will conduct **bi-monthly interviews** with involved tribal members, faculty and consultants about their perceptions of the project in order to determine developmental effectiveness.
3. **Classroom pilots** will be conducted using prepared digital materials in order to assess the effectiveness of the digitized products. Student and faculty, as users of the digital archive, will provide feedback on the effectiveness of the products. A report of the feedback will provide direction for the development of the archive.
4. The Co- PI's of the Project will record **a log of activities and observations** that will be shared with the national advisory board and involved institutions in order to continue to improve the program outcomes and future activities.

Dissemination

The co-PIs will put together a presentation of the project for delivery at state and national conferences, as those opportunities present themselves. Included in the list of opportunities is the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities annual Center for Teaching and Learning conference held each April in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the Collaboration for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning's annual national conference also located in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In addition to these two opportunities, tribal councils and Native American college faculty will be invited to attend a gathering where the digital archive will be demonstrated. From the report of the grant, the co-PIs will attempt to publish an article about the NEH grant outcomes for submission to a tribal college journal.