

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Project Purpose

The lack of participation in policy-making and the ability to access services at the Tribe is the problem that the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe proposes to address with this project. The Tribe is the largest reservation in the State of Nevada with three tribal communities that range in distance from 20 to 40 miles apart (Map – Appendix A, page 1). The geographic and social conditions on the Reservation have led to lack of participation in the Tribe's policy and decision making process and well as reducing the amount of people have to access services. Approximately 90% of the tribal programs operate in Nixon which is about 20-25 miles from the other two communities.

The communities of Wadsworth and Sutcliffe are impacted the most by this location of tribal program in Nixon. These two communities comprise nearly 75%-80% of the resident population on the Reservation. Additionally nearly 38% of residents on the Tribe are classified as poverty status and lack the financial and transportation resources to effectively access and participation in tribal programs and the governmental process (1990 U.S. Census – Appendix A, page 2). Based upon the 1990 U.S. Census report which is included in Appendix A over 12% of households lack any form of transportation which translates into over 150 residents who do not have transportation. Coupled with this is that the Tribe estimates that nearly 50% of the household that do have reliable transportation method or the household cannot afford fuel costs to make anything more than 1-2 trips a month to the tribal headquarters in Nixon.

A final problem that Tribe faces toward greater participation and access by its members into the governmental process and program services is that lack of infrastructure on the Reservation. The communities of Nixon and Sutcliffe are between 98%-99% capacity for telecommunications, while Wadsworth is at appx. 75% capacity. Traditional methods to expand community access through phone and fax service are greatly diminished due to the lack of telecommunications infrastructure on the Reservation and there are no immediate plans within the next five years to expand services. The entities that provide services on the Reservation have indicated that should there be a large increase in potential customers that they will consider expansion and enhancements in the area but this cannot be started for at least five more years.

Based upon these social and geographic conditions on the Reservation and the lack of traditional community access methods, the Tribe has developed a project that would promote the ability of members to participate in their tribal government and to access the many services provided by the Tribe through a broadband wireless network system.

This system will allow the Tribe and all of its programs (departments) to create a central location for members who reside both on and off the reservation to access a variety of services including securing job applications, scholarship information, language information, enrollment information, etc., as well as providing members and residents with a greater opportunity to participate in policy-making and the tribe's governmental process by allowing access to meeting minutes, real-time interaction between officials

and members, on-line live remotes of Council meetings, and downloadable meeting agenda and policies.

The proposed project will provide members with access to services that in the past have been limited to those individuals who physically go to the tribal offices in Nixon. To this extent the Tribe sets forth the following outcomes for the project:

- 50% increase in the number of public comments to proposed policies and legislative measures. To be based upon the number of comment received in the 12 months prior to the startup of the network system;
- 25% increase in the number of members accessing higher education and vocational school opportunities, including scholarship applications and school information. Based upon client requests incurred in the 6-12 months prior to the system startup;
- A 50% completion rate of incorporating tribal applications and forms into the system for member access within 12-18 months of the grant start date. Based upon number of applications and forms vs. number incorporated into the system by the project's 12th and 18th months;
- Community access sites in each of the three communities where members who lack computer/internet access to utilize the system. Based upon the number of successful sites established and their usage rates measured on a quarterly basis.

The community to be served by this project will be the members and residents of the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation. The general characteristics of the Reservation are, based upon the 1990 U.S. Census Report (Appendix A, page 2), as well as the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs Labor Force Report (Appendix A, page 14):

- Race: 69% - Native Americans; 30% - White; 1% - all others
- Poverty Status: 38% of individuals; 34% of households
- Average Monthly Mortgage: \$122.00; Average Monthly Rent: \$265.00
- Per Capita Income: \$7,434.00
- Unemployment Rate (Native Americans): 28%

Innovation

The proposed project is an innovative approach for the Reservation and for Tribes in the State of Nevada. The project, though, is an enhancement of methods used to promote community awareness and access. This project will provide members with the community access that other systems have utilized, but will also incorporate interactive methods to promote access and awareness between the Tribe and members on an actual basis by using live and interactive webcasts during Council meetings and during important tribal committee hearings on proposed legislative methods. This method will promote and allow members of the Tribe who both reside on the Reservation and those who live off the Reservation (appx. 50%) to finally have input into the decisions that affect their lives and their families. This is will represent a joint effort between the Tribe and SNCAT, project partner, who have experience in this area with the Reno and Sparks City Councils and the Washoe County Board of Commissioners.

The Tribe has taken the position that while providing access to information is valuable and greatly need on the Tribe, as well as most other Tribes in the country, that the

ability to participate in the tribe's governmental process is also critical. The project will provide comprehensive coverage of this goal by allowing both access to information and the ability to make comments and inputs on the changes while they are being considered and discussed at hearings and meetings.

An additional innovation to this project is the incorporation of a joint educational system between the Tribe and its educational partners in the Reno, NV area (UNR and TMCC). This system will allow the Tribe to work with its members to promote higher educational pursuits by creating interactive classes, networking with the tribe's educational department for scholarships, application assistance, and on-line tutoring for members with the Tribe's education department.

Diffusion Potential

The potential for replication or adaptation of the project is high. Many remote and isolated communities, particularly Native Americans Tribes, can use the project model and process used by the Tribe to create a system similar in nature. The project is based upon the use of a wireless broadband system which for many Tribes and rural communities is a necessity due to insufficient or outdated telecommunications infrastructure or due to that most of these populations are spread out over miles instead of in a urban, neighborhood setting.

Aspects of the project involve working with educational institutions and with television/video production organization that can provide both technical assistance and training into system usage. The major benefits of the project are that after project setup and startup the training and technical assistance with project partners can be completed via on-line sessions. This reduces travel expenses that would be incurred by on-site sessions that would discourage many Tribes and rural communications due to limited financial resources.

Another aspect that will encourage successful replication or adaptation primarily with Native American communities is that the system promotes cultural issues. Many rural and geographical isolated Tribes are particular customs and traditions that can be incorporated into a system to allow flexibility in promoting language skills and preserving Native arts and crafts. The cultural and membership aspects to this project would allow Tribes and its members to continue interaction if when members leave the Reservation for employment or educational pursuits. This method would allow Tribes and small communities to continue a continued feeling of a community even though many times their governmental offices are miles away or they are unable to get to these offices.

Promotion of the project will involve the director spending up to 20% of time towards sharing the project with other Native communities by utilizing the following methods:

- Conferences: Tribal and project personnel will make presentations and hold booths at a number of tribal venues, including annual conferences for the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada, the National Congress of American Indians, Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona, and with meetings held by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Services, and Housing & Urban Development;

- *Publications:* The Tribe will submit articles for publication in many local outlets, as well as tribal-specific entities which include the Reno Gazette Journal (local), Las Vegas Journal (local), Indian County Today (national), and the American Indian Report (national).
- *Online:* The Tribe establish a public website in conjunction with the network system for members/residents which provide links and information regarding the project, replications for other entities, points-of-contact. Additional information can be provided online with the project's partners – UNR and TMCC.
- *Onsite:* Project and Tribal personnel will work with local entities to provide on-site guidance into the project and its benefits, including replication methods. Additional on-site networking will take place with Tribes via the Inter-Tribal Councils of Nevada and Arizona.

Project Feasibility

Technical Approach

The project will operate in each of the three communities with the server located at the tribal headquarters in Nixon. The project will provide for network computers at each of the tribal offices in each of the communities. These systems will accept data from the programs and process them to the wireless unit that will transmit data to the central server. Access to the services and programs can be accessed either their systems at the tribal offices or via the Internet. This will allow users and programs who cannot secure additional telecommunication options to interact and use the system, while people with internet access can also enter and use the system.

The project will establish systems that are compatible with each other in each of the tribal buildings. Prior to the purchase of the system the Tribe will ensure that all of the equipment for the project is compatible with each other. This will include modem, network system, operating systems, and computer system requirements, (RAM, hard drive, processors, etc.). The Tribe will also be coordinating with its partners to ensure that the systems being secured for the network are compatible with the network systems they possess. For UNR and TMCC this will involve working both with the Student Services Offices and their Technology offices to ensure hardware and software systems can be interlinked and that formats used in the system are convertible and compatible.

The proposed project represents the best method to network the tribal departments together for the community's benefit due to that the proposed wireless system will allow the Tribe to provide the services even though the telecommunications infrastructure is at maximum capacity in two of the communities and approach maximum in the other community. The network system with computers for input and access represent the best approach by allowing programs to upload their information immediately without having to provide to the main office and waiting for tribal staff then to upload it. The system also provides community access for those members and residents who do not have internet and computer access.

Maintenance of the system will be handled by tribal staff and with assistance provided from the three project partners. The partners are within 60 miles of the Tribal headquarter and UNR and TMCC both possess technology departments that are willing to work with the Tribe in maintenance and upgrade issues. Due to the partner status with these organizations the Tribe has access not only to maintenance services, but for upgrade assistance that universities normally do in effort to remain competitive in technology issues. The service has been designed to expand for additional tribal programs by adding network-capable computer systems in new tribal buildings. This will allow for the system to expand without have to continually upgrade equipment and purchase additional expansion services.

Applicant Qualifications

The tribe will be securing project personnel to coordinate the project who have extensive experience with telecommunications and networking issues. The Tribe, if the application is approved, will develop formal job descriptions that require at least 4 years educational experience and 4 years demonstrated practical experience in computer, networking, and telecommunications OR 8 years demonstrated experience. This will ensure that any personnel hired to coordinate this project have a demonstrated knowledge to ensure the success of the project and its objectives. Additional technical assistance will be secured from the Tribal Chairman who have over 5 years educational and practical experience in designing and implementing network system, websites, and computer systems. The Chairman has created systems for tribal organizations to promote their organizations and to allow Tribes to access information regarding programs and services.

Budget

The proposed budget meets all of the needs to successfully complete the project. The narrative contains all information regarding cost calculations and designations between federal and matching amounts.

Implementation

Included in Appendix A, Page 15, is a detailed timeline which indicates major project activities, timeframe for completion, and responsible parties.

Privacy

A majority of information to be provided via the network system are not matters of privacy. The system will be providing user an opportunity for community awareness and to provide public input into tribal issues, as well as to secure documents and information regarding tribal programs and services. The only two areas that may involve privacy issues involve applications for tribal membership which by tribal law must be submitted on original paper documents due to that these documents involve complex legal issues and the presence of a signature and notary are required.

Sustainability

The sustainability of the project will be of high priority to the Tribe to ensure continued community access and participation into tribal matters. To this extent the

Tribe has established a continuation plan for the project after its ends. This will involve allocating funds from the Tribal Tax Revenue base to support operations and project personnel. The project partners identified in the application are not expected to change their involvement or commitment to the project. Particularly the educational institutions are committed to maintaining a long-term relationship with the Tribe in regards to this telecommunication technology project.

Community Involvement

Both UNR and TMCC have been working with the Tribe in the development of system to expand telecommunication opportunities for programs and residents. These institutions are both committed to providing training assistance to tribal personnel, maintenance and upgrade assistance for the network, and coordinating in the development of educational components for integration into the network. The Tribe's Education Department has been in contact with partner staff in the development of the application and the assistance that will be able to provide to the Tribe. Additionally the SCNAT program has been working with the Tribe's governmental office and Cultural Center to promote their services. This partner has coordinated with the Tribe in regards to the development and implementation of community access to council meetings and legislative hearings.

The community, which is also the end users, have been working with the Tribe to develop a better method to provide information regarding programs and the activities that the Tribe has been doing. To this extent many of the members have worked with the Tribe in developing the model which will be used to promote communication via web/network broadcasts of meetings/hearings and as well as recommending that the Tribe consider provide a forum for the users to submit public input during the broadcasts. The involvements and support of the community, particularly from Sutcliffe and Wadsworth has been strong in that these two communities will benefit the most from the network. To facilitate and continue community involvement and support for the project the Director will be coordinating hearings in each of the communities to discuss ideas in the final design of the system. Additionally the project staff will be able for Council meetings to answer question and make presentations on a monthly basis, while maintaining an open-door policy for members to visit and ask questions. The overall approach to this project is to maintain community involvement which is a major necessity to the project's success.

Evaluation

The Tribe will be utilizing officials with the Technology Department at Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) to complete an independent evaluation of the project. This will allow for an independent entity to review the program, while ensuring that the evaluator already has knowledge of what the project is about.

The evaluation will be conducted two times over the project. The first will be after implementation of the system to ensure that the project is operating in a method that provides for best use of available technology, while the second evaluation will be done

in the last two months of the project to ensure that the services being provided and offered through the network are sufficient to meeting the outcomes identified in the application, as well as evaluating whether programs and the Tribe are utilizing the system prescribed for in the application.

First Evaluation: The evaluator(s) will work with the project personnel to identify the equipment purchased, the methods by which data is secured, types of data to ensure maximum benefit for users, and the ability of the equipment to interact with other systems, and the accessibility options. This evaluation will involve on-site evaluations of equipment, interviewing both project and tribal staff in equipment selection, interviews with tribal staff into types of data being prepared for network input. This evaluation will present the Tribe with its first review on how the system will operate, as well as providing valuable information regarding how tribal programs are reacting to the service, and any recommendations for information collection improvement. The evaluator will present is report based upon the following format: equipment appropriateness; user ability to work with the system; appropriateness of information for input; willingness of programs to participate with the project staff; and recommendations for equipment and information collection improvement.

Second Evaluation: This evaluation will be the major item in determining the project's success. The evaluator(s) will work with both programs to determine the success in securing community input and the types of information being requested from users. The evaluator(s) will also work with a cross-section of community members to gauge their use of the network, problems associated in using the system, areas of improvement, and area where they would like to see more information provided. There will be three focus groups in each of the communities representing all ages to complete a questionnaire and interview regarding the system. A final interview will be conducted with project staff to determine problems experienced between evaluations, whether recommendations from first evaluation were completed, report on the system's operations, network usage problems (network congestion, lack of sufficient equipment and information, etc.). The evaluator(s) will present a final report will be detail: usage of community members into the system, usage of tribal program into the system, equipment upgrades, problem areas, and recommendations for improvement and enhancement to the system.