
PENOBSCOT INDIAN NATION



Project Title:	Nenesetomaqapena: Teacher Professional Development Project
Award Amount:	\$179,307
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	9/30/2005 – 3/31/2007
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 1 job created
- 3 Native American consultants hired
- 10 elders involved
- 80 youth involved
- \$14,105 in revenue generated
- \$5,000 in resources leveraged
- 231 people trained
- 13 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Penobscot Nation spans approximately 148,525 acres of land in Maine. Of this, 4,841 acres consist of 200 islands on the Penobscot River. Tribal headquarters are located on the Penobscot Indian Island Reservation near Old Town, Maine. The Reservation has a total population of 562 with a total tribal enrollment of 2,194. Culturally, the Penobscot are one of several tribes of the Abenaki group and their native language is a dialect of Algonquin. The Tribal economy is supported by tourism, manufacturing, gaming and forestry industries.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Project was to assist local schools to comply with a new statewide law mandating the teaching of Native American history and culture across all grade levels. The Project intended to increase the culturally sensitivity of local teachers in order to engender a climate more knowledgeable about native culture in Maine.

The first objective sought to prepare educational leaders to teach Penobscot lessons in school. To complete the objective, staff recruited, trained and provided curriculum planning support for sixteen lead teachers/curriculum coordinators drawn from six regions of Maine. Staff conducted one-day stereotyping and diversity workshops in each of the regions with 195 teachers in attendance. Lead teachers also participated in workshops to clarify the new state law, explain the core principles of the Tribe's "Design for Understanding" curriculum, and to receive professional development training.

The second objective aimed to prepare schools to integrate newly-created Penobscot lessons into their curriculum. Each lead teacher developed a plan to

integrate the new curriculum into existing kindergarten to 8th grade curricula and conducted field tests for each unit in schools across Maine. The new Penobscot units accurately present essential aspects of tribal history and culture.

To ensure Project success, staff needed to work closely with area schools.

Unfortunately, the Project's original timeline did not correlate with the school calendar year, causing delays with pilot testing activities. Staff also encountered challenges coordinating the sixteen teachers that worked on this Project. To overcome these challenges, Project staff developed administrative policies and utilized tribal administrative support to help track contractual employees. Staff also utilized the summer months, when schools were not in session, to finalize lessons for the curriculum kit and conduct a one-week Summer Institute to orient teachers in the curriculum. To further assist the Project, ANA granted a six-month extension.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

The development of the Penobscot Curriculum Kit and the training and orientation of teachers in Penobscot history has had a positive impact on the Penobscot community and the State of Maine. The Project generated over \$14,000 in revenue from the sale of curriculum kits and is continuing to receive orders.

Native students learned more about tribal history, and non-native students became culturally aware of tribal history in Maine. The curriculum has also had environmental education benefits by teaching the youth how to care for the environment through lesson plans contained in each kit. The development of the curriculum kits helped reduce Maine's costs because the state can purchase them without having to expend resources to develop the curriculum.

The curriculum kit may also impact the teaching of native culture in other states. Kerry Doyle, a participating 3rd – 5th grade teacher explained the curriculum kit is practical, easy to use and works well alongside existing curricula. Before this Project, very few resources existed pertaining to Maine's Native American history and culture. Lynn Lowell, a Library Media Specialist, expressed gratitude at having these resources available for her students. By developing the kits, teachers and librarians have expanded cultural awareness.

Through the Project, the Penobscot Nation facilitated the instruction of native history and culture in Maine's schools. The Tribe also created a replicable model to demonstrate the incorporation of more Native American history and culture into curricula in schools across the country.