

## Sample Application

### Band of Southeast Indians

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#### I. PROJECT TITLE: Re-Purposing a Missionary Church

##### Brief Description of Project:

Missionaries arrived in our small Tribal community in the late 1800's, seeking to eradicate our traditional beliefs and life ways. Their efforts were ultimately unsuccessful, but immense damage was done. The missionaries erected a small stone church that still stands in our community. Centrally located but now deserted, its roof is damaged and its dirt parking lot has washed away, creating an eyesore and a danger to children who play nearby.

The Tribe's proposed Phase 2 project would re-purpose the missionary church built in our community during those turbulent years. We propose to renovate the church building for use as a much-needed community meeting hall. The building would be re-roofed and a new, accessible, asphalt parking lot with proper drainage would be laid. Upon completion of the project, the Tribe will have a community meeting hall that can be utilized for small group meetings. The renovated building will be beautiful, and the safety hazard to children will be eliminated. The new parking lot will make it safe for Elders to park.

This project is consistent with our Tribe's Strategic Plan, which was approved by our Tribal Council in 2001. Phase 1 funds were used to conduct a Community Visioning Process, which culminated in the recommendation to re-purpose the church. The Tribal Council unanimously approved the recommendation to repurpose the church on December 1, 2015.

The Phase 1 Grant also allowed the Tribe to hire a structural engineer to assess the church structure. The engineer's report stated that the church is structurally sound, but that the poor condition of the roof is causing deterioration of the interior. The engineer's report recommends that the roof be replaced as soon as possible.

The \$50,000 CRF grant, if awarded, would fund the new roof and a new asphalt parking lot. The Tribal Council has set aside \$50,000 in matching funds to renovate the interior of the building. The Tribe is ready to undertake the project. Funding from the CRF and the Tribe would complete the project. The project is sustainable because once renovations are complete, the building will be placed on the Tribe's regular building maintenance schedule.

## II. STATEMENT OF NEED OR OPPORTUNITY:

Our Tribe, originally from Kentucky, was forcibly removed to Indian Territory in the 1830s. We have persevered and survived many hardships and currently have a membership of 452. Most of our members live in or near our small Tribal community. The Missionary Church, an important, though controversial landmark, is centrally located next to our Tribal Administration Building and is a visible community focal point.

Section VII of our Tribe's Strategic Plan states: The Tribal Historic Preservation Department will seek to preserve our heritage, including language, sacred and cultural sites, significant structures, and life ways. Once a lovely rock building, the Missionary Church's sagging roof is leaking, and it has become a community eyesore. Children play in the building, creating a dangerous situation. The condition of the roof has begun to degrade the interior of the structure. If nothing is done, it will have to be torn down. The original dirt parking area has been damaged by water runoff and is crumbling away. Tribal members have mixed feelings about the church. Some would like to see it torn down. Others have good memories of it and would like to see it restored.

Section XII of the Strategic Plan states that it shall be a Tribal priority to provide space and opportunities for Tribal members to meet for social purposes and to practice our culture. The Missionary Church, a centerpiece of our community, is one of the few 1850-era buildings left standing in our area. Located in our Tribal complex, the building is easily accessible to Tribal members. Our Tribe is very short of meeting space, so groups have difficulty finding a place to meet. Our Elders group currently meets in the THPO office on Thursday nights, but the THPO needs the room for meetings and also needs more space for additional filing cabinets. Our language class meets in the housing office trailer, but there isn't enough room for a blackboard, and the class is often displaced at the last minute by other groups. Our women's sewing circle and other small community gatherings have been meeting in individual homes, but group members would like to have a central location to meet. If funded, the Missionary Church building will be renamed the Community Life Center.

Due to the dangerous condition of the building and in an effort to resolve the issue of what to do with it, our Tribal Council appointed a Missionary Church Committee. Several community meetings have been held. The Committee heard all of the concerns and submitted a written report to the Tribal Council. The report recommended that the Missionary Church be repaired and re-purposed as a community meeting hall. The Tribal Council considered and voted on the recommendations in the report, and decided to support them. Instead of tearing down the building, we would like to make use of it.

Our Tribe is working very hard on economic development opportunities for our Tribal members but the need is great. Our Tribe does not have a budget surplus, and must direct available funds to areas of greatest need, such as health care, education, and job readiness for Tribal members. The creation of the Community Life Center will not be possible without the support of the CRF.

### **III. PLAN OF ACTION:**

A Missionary Church Committee was appointed by the Tribal Council in May, 2015. The Committee consists of the THPO (a Tribal employee), two Elders, three Tribal members at large (one of whom is a licensed architect), and one youth member. The THPO chairs the Committee. One of the Elder committee members operated a small construction business before he retired. The Missionary Church Committee has been hard at work for nine months working on the project. The Committee meets weekly.

The Committee has designed and conducted a Community Visioning process to gather input on the community's hopes and vision for the Missionary Church building. The Community Visioning process is described in detail later in this application in Part V – Readiness.

The Missionary Church Committee is also handling the bidding process for the project. With input and direction from the Tribe's Business Office, the Committee has solicited and reviewed bids for both the new roof and the parking lot for the facility and has chosen the lowest qualified bidders. The Committee will continue to meet until the project is complete. The THPO, the Committee member who is an architect, and the member who formerly owned a construction business will oversee the project. Additional detail on the bidding process and the vendors selected is provided in Part V of this application.

In early 2016, the Committee will begin work with the architect to draw plans for the renovation of the interior of the church. The architect has agreed to donate her time and the architectural plans to the Tribe. The plans will include electrical and plumbing, including sewer. The architect will ensure that the building, entrances, and access from the parking lot will be accessible. The plans will be completed by April, 2016. Once the architectural plans are approved by the Tribal Council, with the assistance of the Tribal Business Office, the Committee will initiate a third bidding process for contractors to bid on the interior renovations as specified in the architectural plans. The Committee will review the interior construction bids and make a recommendation to the Tribal Council. A contractor will be selected by August 1, 2016.

If the Tribe is awarded this Phase 2 grant, we are ready to begin re-roofing the Missionary Church immediately. As soon as the roof is complete, the new parking lot will be begun. When the parking lot is completed, the interior construction will begin. We plan to hold a Grand Opening Celebration for the new Community Life Center in January 2017. The entire Tribe will be invited.

## TIMELINE

Project Start Date: June 2016  
Project Completion Date: January 2017

June 2016	Begin roofing repairs
July 2016	Begin paving the parking lot upon completion of the roof
August 2016	Begin interior renovations of building (to be funded by the Tribe)
January 2017	Grand Opening Celebration

## KEY STAFF

Key members of the Missionary Church Committee (including the THPO, a practicing architect, and a retired construction business owner) will oversee the project. The Committee will continue to meet until the project's completion. Upon completion of the project, the Tribe's Building Maintenance Department will assume responsibility the maintenance of the project.

## IV. OUTCOMES:

1. During the Community Visioning meetings, the Committee became aware that there are strong community feelings about the Missionary Church. Some Tribal members feel it should be torn down. Others attended a church school that was formerly attached to the building many years ago and have good memories of the church. The committee sought a middle ground, and found it in an Elder's suggestion that the building be re-purposed as a community meeting or gathering place for small groups of Tribal members. Therefore our number one outcome for this project is:

- Healing of old wounds surrounding the Missionary Church by re-purposing the church for a consensus community purpose sanctioned and supported by the Tribal Council.

2. The fact that Elders in walkers have trouble accessing and have difficulty negotiating the stairs in some of our older Tribal buildings inspired our second outcome:

- To create a new, handicapped-accessible place for Elders to gather with safe parking.

3. Community meeting space is at a premium on our reservation. The need for meeting space has been recognized for years, and this long-standing need is reflected in our Tribe's 2001 Strategic Plan. The re-purposing of the Missionary Church will allow for a third outcome:

- Much-needed community meeting space will become available.

4. Children playing around and inside the decrepit Missionary Church have created an urgent safety hazard. The fourth outcome we hope to achieve is:

- Addressing urgent safety concerns related to the Missionary Church building.

5. Our reservation is surrounded by stunning natural beauty. A key value of our Tribe is environmental conservation and protection of our precious historic and cultural resources. With this world view comes a commitment to re-use and re-purpose structures whenever possible. Our THPO office's mission is to conserve and protect sacred, cultural, and historic resources that matter to our Tribe. These beliefs underlie our fifth goal, which is a hope and vision for the entire project:

- The Missionary Church will be a source of beauty, an appropriate and environmentally sound use of an existing structure, and a reminder of our Tribe's difficult history that has not only been survived, but been transcended.

## **V. READINESS:**

The Tribe created a Missionary Church Committee in May 2015 to examine options for the missionary church. After a lengthy community visioning process, the Committee recommended re-purposing the church. The Tribal Council voted to support our recommendation. If we are unable to secure funding to save the building, we will be forced to tear the building down. This grant would enable us to realize our Committee's vision, supported by the community and the Tribal Council.

Our Tribe's Strategic Plan, adopted by our Tribal Council in 2001, states that we will seek more options for Tribal members to meet and gather for community purposes. Our Tribe has a severe shortage of safe and accessible buildings and options for meeting space. The fact that there is an acute and recognized need for meeting space speaks strongly to our Tribe's readiness for this project.

Our Committee used Phase 1 funds to hire a structural engineer to ensure that the building was structurally sound and safe to be used for community gatherings. Additional detail about the engineer's report is found in Part VIII – Phase 1 Project Report.

After the engineer's report stating that the building was structurally sound, the Tribal Council committed, by Resolution 12377, to set aside \$50,000 to fund interior renovations to the building. The Resolution states that the Tribe will complete renovations inside the Missionary Church building if funding can be found to repair the roof and pave the parking lot. Funds to renovate the interior of the building have been set aside in a special account pending whether we are successful in receiving this grant. This also speaks to readiness: if the grant is awarded, the project will actually be completed.

The Committee put the roofing project out for bid and received several bids. The bidding process was guided by our Tribal Business Office. The low bid was for \$40,000. This bidder is a Tribal member who can start work immediately. An additional factor in the selection of the bidder was that the company did a nice job re-roofing the Tribal health building last year. The Tribal Council approved the bid.

Asphalt paving for a safe parking lot for Elders to park outside the building was also put out for bid, and the Committee chose a bid that came in at \$10,000. The asphalt would be laid next summer. The selected bidder was chosen in part because the contractor offered to build raised beds suitable for landscaping around the building. The Tribal Council approved this bid as well.

Tribal members will contribute time and labor on the project. A Committee member who is an architect will draw and donate the plans to renovate the interior of the building as a community meeting space. She, along with the THPO and a Committee Elder who formerly owned a small construction business, will oversee the project. The renovation will include enlarged doorways, an accessible restroom, and an accessible ramp from the parking lot to the building's entrance. Parking spaces close to the building will be designated as accessible parking spaces. The architect will ensure that the interior plans, including entrances and parking lot access are accessible. Two Tribal members who enjoy gardening will plant the grounds around the building with traditional and local plants. Outdoor tables will be placed in the garden. The community will be encouraged to gather there. If interest is there, a space behind the church could be used for a community vegetable garden.

#### **VI. SUSTAINABILITY:**

Combined with the matching funds from the Tribal Council, the \$50,000 CRF grant will complete the project. The roof comes with a 20-year guarantee. Upkeep will be folded into our regular Tribal maintenance portfolio. Community members will tend the garden. A rotating coordinator will be appointed to keep an eye on the property.

#### **VII. BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION: ATTACHED.**

#### **VIII. PHASE 1 GRANT UPDATE:**

Our Tribe used our \$10,000 Phase 1 grant to fund the Missionary Church Committee Visioning Process, which included community gatherings and focus groups and to research the history of the missionary church building. The committee went to the state library to research the written history of the building. We discovered original concept drawings for the church, as well as a contemporary newspaper account of the opening of the church. We were able to obtain copies of these documents and plan to display them in the entry hall of the Community Life Center.

We also held several community meetings to discuss what use (if any) the community wanted for the building. We held an Elders Oral History lunch to consult with the Elders about their memories of how the building was used when it was still used for religious services. After the lunch, two Elders agreed to serve on the Missionary Church Committee.

Phase 1 grant funds were also used to hire a structural engineer to inspect and confirm that the building is safe for repair and future use as a Community Life Center. The engineer's report stated that the building is currently unsafe, but is in good enough condition for a roof replacement followed by interior renovation.

All of the above meetings were completed and resulted in the plan described in this Phase 2 grant. Phase 1 funds have been completely expended.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**Tribal Council Resolution** – Attached  
**Budget Form and Budget Narrative** – Attached  
**Certification Page** – Attached