



Resources & Training Committee

Building Practical Tools, Skills, and Pathways for Tribal Library Workers (2026)

PURPOSE

The Resources & Workforce Development Committee strengthens tribal libraries by developing and advancing practical tools, programs, and pathways that support the people doing the work.

The committee focuses on real-world workforce needs including training, credentialing, mentorship, and professional growth, especially for tribal library staff who may not have access to formal degree programs or traditional library pipelines.

Its work is intended to expand opportunity, reduce isolation, and build long-term capacity across tribal libraries of all sizes.

HOW THIS COMMITTEE SUPPORTS TLC AND ATALM

The committee advances TLC and ATALM priorities by:

- Creating usable workforce development tools
- Supporting non-degreed and early-career library staff
- Expanding access to training, credentials, and peer learning
- Strengthening leadership pipelines within tribal libraries
- Helping tribal libraries articulate and plan for staffing needs

KEY AREAS OF FOCUS (2026)

1. Professional Development & Training

- Webinars and short learning sessions on current, high-need topics
- Skill-based learning focused on what staff are doing *now*
- Content that works for single-staff and small libraries

2. Credentialing & Pathways

- Exploring or piloting credentialing options for non-degreed library staff or strengthening ATALM's existing certificate program
- Recognizing skills, experience, and community-based knowledge

- Creating steppingstones toward leadership and advancement

3. Mentorship & Peer Support

- Developing a tribal library mentorship network
- Connecting early-career staff with experienced practitioners
- Reducing isolation through structured peer relationships

4. Practical Tools & Resources

- Toolkits, templates, and guides libraries can adapt immediately
- Resources useful to:
 - Library staff
 - Tribal administrators
 - Partners and funders

5. Community Among Practitioners

- Supporting shared learning and mutual support
- Helping library workers see themselves as part of a national professional community

EXPECTED 2026 OUTPUTS

By the end of 2026, the committee should produce **multiple tangible tools**, such as:

- A series of webinars or learning sessions on priority workforce topics
- Progress toward a credentialing or recognition program for non-degreed tribal library staff
- A tribal library mentorship network (pilot or launch phase)
- Practical workforce resources that support:
 - Onboarding
 - Skill-building
 - Leadership development
- Content and guidance that directly informs workforce-related sections of the Tribal Library Master Plan

2026 RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIMELINE

- **January 21** – Convene first direction-setting session
- **February** – Identify:
 - Priority workforce needs and gaps
 - Topics for initial webinars or training sessions
- **March** – Define:
 - Scope and structure of credentialing or recognition pathways
 - Framework for a mentorship network
- **April–May** –
 - Launch or schedule initial webinars
 - Begin development of credentialing and mentorship pilots

- **June–August** –
 - Continue delivery of training and peer learning
 - Refine tools based on participant feedback
- **September (ATALM2026)** –
 - Facilitate workforce-focused conversations or sessions
- **October** –
 - Assess what is working
 - Recommend expansion, refinement, or next-phase development

JANUARY 20 DISCUSSION POINTS

1. WHAT TRAINING OR RESOURCES DO TRIBAL LIBRARY WORKERS NEED HELP WITH RIGHT NOW?

Focus on immediate, practical needs.

Output

✓ A short list of priority topics for webinars, training, or tools

2. WHAT WOULD A USEFUL MENTORSHIP NETWORK LOOK LIKE?

Focus on structure and how this may fit within the [Native Emerging Professionals Network](#).

Output

✓ Core features of a mentorship network (who, how, cadence)

3. SUGGEST A COMMITTEE LEAD

Identify leadership to coordinate and drive the work forward.

Output

✓ At least one named person willing to be considered as Committee Lead (or a short list)

RESOURCES & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE LEAD JOB DESCRIPTION

PURPOSE

Provide leadership to drive practical workforce initiatives that support tribal library staff through training, credentialing, mentorship, and shared learning.

This role focuses on coordination, momentum, and follow-through.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Convene and guide committee work
- Help prioritize workforce initiatives
- Support development and rollout of:
 - Webinars and training sessions
 - Credentialing or recognition pathways
 - Mentorship networks
- Coordinate with ATALM staff on scheduling, delivery, and communications
- Help assess impact and recommend next steps

TIME COMMITMENT

- Moderate, with activity spread across the year
- Expected:
 - 2–3 planning meetings early in the year
 - Periodic check-ins during program delivery
 - Engagement during ATALM2026
 - One post-year assessment and planning conversation

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

This committee succeeds when tribal library workers gain real skills, real recognition, and real connection to one another.

Tribal Library Technical Assistance Webinar Series

Year One (Programs & Services That Matter)

Series Goal

Equip tribal libraries with practical, proven program models and service strategies that directly support tribal priorities and elevate libraries as essential community assets.

Audience

- Tribal library staff (including non-degreed)
- Library managers and directors
- Anyone expected to “do programs” with limited staff and resources

Format

- 90 minutes using ATALM’s Zoom
- Practitioner-led
- Case examples + step-by-step guidance
- Every session answers:
“How does this help my community, and how do I explain that to leadership?”

How This Series Directly Advances TLC Goals

- Libraries become service hubs, not passive spaces
- Staff gain confidence delivering high-value programs
- Tribal leadership sees alignment with tribal priorities
- Libraries are positioned as essential, not optional

What the Committee Needs to Decide First

- Which 3 webinars launch first (Use the recommendations below or develop new ones)
- Who are the practitioner presenters
- What useful tools or assignments will support the webinars?

Webinar 1: Libraries as Community Learning Centers

Service Focus: Lifelong learning beyond books

What This Covers

- Adult learning programs that libraries can realistically host
- Workforce readiness support (résumés, applications, online skills)
- Homework help, tutoring, and family learning models

- How libraries complement—not duplicate—education departments

Technical Assistance Provided

- Menu of proven learning programs
- Setup requirements (space, staff time, partners)
- Sample monthly learning calendar
- Language for explaining value to leadership

Why Leadership Cares

✓ Supports education, employment, and family stability

Webinar 2: Supporting Language and Cultural Continuity Through Library Services

Service Focus: Language, culture, and identity

What This Covers

- How libraries support language programs without being the language department
- Hosting conversation circles, recordings, and learning supports
- Working respectfully with elders and language keepers
- Making the library a safe cultural learning space

Technical Assistance Provided

- Service models libraries are already using
- Partner roles vs. library roles
- Simple program structures that scale
- Talking points for cultural leadership

Why Leadership Cares

✓ Directly supports cultural preservation and sovereignty

Webinar 3: Digital Access That Actually Serves the Community

Service Focus: Technology as a service, not an amenity

What This Covers

- Broadband access as a library service
- Supporting online forms, benefits access, and telehealth
- Teaching basic digital skills without becoming IT
- Managing expectations around tech help

Technical Assistance Provided

- Community tech support service models
- Staff boundaries and scripts
- Sample service descriptions
- Metrics leadership understands (use, access, outcomes)

Why Leadership Cares

✓ Reduces barriers to services and improves quality of life

Webinar 4: Libraries as Safe and Useful Spaces

Service Focus: Physical space as community infrastructure

What This Covers

- Using library space for community needs (meetings, youth, elders)
- Balancing safety, access, and respect
- Policies that support community use instead of blocking it
- When and how to say no

Technical Assistance Provided

- Space-use models
- Sample agreements and schedules
- Conflict prevention strategies
- Language for explaining space value

Why Leadership Cares

✓ Maximizes use of tribal facilities and supports community cohesion

Webinar 5: Youth and Family Services That Build Trust

Service Focus: Children, youth, and families

What This Covers

- After-school and summer programs libraries can manage
- Family-based programming
- Partnering with education and youth departments

Technical Assistance Provided

- Program models by age group

- Staffing and partnership approaches
- Sample program plans
- Outcome language leadership responds to

Why Tribal Leadership Cares

✓ Supports youth development and family engagement

Webinar 6: Making the Case: Showing Leadership Why the Library Is Essential

Service Focus: Translating services into value

What This Covers

- Connecting library services to tribal priorities
- Turning activities into outcomes
- Preparing for budget and planning conversations

Technical Assistance Provided

- Service-to-impact translation guide
- Simple reporting templates
- Talking points for leadership meetings
- Examples of successful advocacy

Why Leadership Cares

✓ Helps leaders see return on investment

Tribal Library Mentorship Program

A Practical Mentorship Model

In partnership with the Native Emerging Professionals Network (NEPN)

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Tribal Library Mentorship Program supports tribal librarians at all career stages by pairing them with experienced practitioners who provide practical guidance on programs, services, leadership, and professional navigation within tribal systems.

A central purpose of this program is to intentionally build strong professional networks for tribal librarians through ATALM conferences, so librarians do not attend ATALM in isolation and leave with lasting professional relationships, visibility, and support.

Developed in partnership with the Native Emerging Professionals Network (NEPN), this program adapts NEPN's peer-support model to the specific realities of tribal library work, including single-staff libraries, non-degreed professionals, and high expectations with limited resources. Mentorship is used as a tool for connection, helping librarians prepare for ATALM, navigate the conference effectively, and sustain relationships afterward.

WHO THIS PROGRAM IS FOR

Mentees

Tribal library staff who:

- Are responsible for delivering programs and services
- Want to increase the library's value to the community and tribal leadership
- Need practical advice navigating tribal systems and professional spaces
- May be early-career, non-degreed, newly promoted, or professionally isolated
- Want to build a stronger professional network through ATALM

Mentors

Experienced librarians or allied professionals who:

- Have delivered community-centered library programs or services
- Understand tribal community dynamics and leadership environments
- Are willing to make introductions, share networks, and guide conference participation
- Can share concrete strategies, templates, and lessons learned
- Can commit to consistent, time-bound participation tied to ATALM

HOW THE NEPN PARTNERSHIP WORKS

NEPN contributes:

- Experience supporting emerging professionals

Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums

- Peer-based mentoring practices
- Matching and cohort support models
- Shared learning and cohort infrastructure

The Tribal Library Mentorship Program:

- Adapts NEPN tools to tribal library–specific needs
- Focuses mentorship on programs, services, leadership impact, and conference navigation
- Ensures cultural relevance for tribal library contexts
- Integrates mentorship with TLC priorities and ATALM conferences

This is a customized track for tribal librarians, not a generic NEPN mentorship program.

HOW THE PROGRAM IS ANCHORED TO ATALM CONFERENCES

Mentorship is structured around before, during, and after ATALM, turning conference attendance into long-term professional connection.

Before ATALM

Mentors help mentees:

- Identify sessions, gatherings, and people to connect with
- Set realistic conference goals
- Feel prepared rather than overwhelmed

During ATALM

Mentors:

- Attend at least one session or gathering with mentees
- Make intentional introductions
- Help mentees feel confident participating in conversations
- Ensure mentees are not navigating the conference alone
- Dine together at shared meals (optional)

After ATALM

Mentors support:

- Follow-up with new contacts
- Turning introductions into ongoing relationships
- Identifying next steps for continued engagement

WHAT MENTORSHIP CONVERSATIONS FOCUS ON

To create a year-round program, each mentor–mentee pair works on one or two concrete service goals, while also using those goals as a foundation for professional connection and visibility.

Examples include:

Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums

- Starting or strengthening an e-book program
- Building community partnerships
- Launching or improving a community learning program
- Strengthening digital access or tech help services
- Supporting language or cultural programming
- Improving relationships with tribal leadership
- Clarifying the library's role within tribal departments

The emphasis is on what the mentee needs to do better right now, and who they need to be connected to to do it.

TOOLS PROVIDED TO PARTICIPANTS

Each participant receives:

- Clear orientation and expectations
- Practical guidance for conference navigation and networking
- Structured prompts for mentor–mentee conversations
- Optional peer check-in opportunities
- Simple templates and resources

YEAR ONE PILOT TARGETS

- 10–15 mentor–mentee pairs
- Every mentee attends ATALM with at least one established connection
- At least one improved or launched service per mentee
- Documented examples of services strengthened through mentorship
- Clear evidence of new professional relationships formed
- Lessons learned to refine and scale the program

WHAT THE COMMITTEE NEEDS TO DO FIRST

1. Confirm partnership roles with NEPN
2. Work with ATALM staff to identify and invite mentors and mentees
3. Match mentors to mentees based on commonalities
4. Identify key ATALM moments for mentor–mentee connection
5. Schedule orientation and check-ins tied to the conference cycle

BOTTOM LINE

This mentorship program works because it:

- Is focused on real work and real relationships
- Uses ATALM conferences as a network-building engine
- Respects limited time and capacity
- Builds skills that matter to communities
- Strengthens leadership and connection from within

