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Ms Hampton:

This is our official letter of interest in the NASA@MyLibrary State Library Cohort 2 grant.

Located in the capital city of Pierre, the South Dakota State Library (SDSL) within the Department of Education serves all libraries in the state, particularly the public and school libraries.

As of 2018, SDSL provides service to 111 public library administrative entities, 30 branches, and four bookmobiles. With fewer than one million residents within the state, nearly two-thirds of South Dakota's public libraries (63%) serve communities of fewer than 2,500 people. The State Library also serves 378 school libraries. This includes 149 libraries in public school districts, 43 non-public school systems, 20 tribal and one in the School for the Blind. The Braille and Talking Book program serves over 2,000 visually impaired South Dakotans, ages 2 to over 100. Summer reading programs are very successful across the state with 93% of our public libraries participating, many collaborating with their local school systems. The Summer Reading program, whether using the national CSLP (Cooperative Summer Library Program) or not, reaching over 98,000 South Dakota students this past summer is up 18% in participation from the previous year. The Braille and Talking Book Library within SDSL also conducts a vigorous summer reading program for the visually impaired using the same national CSLP's theme and resources as do many of the participating libraries in South Dakota.

Eighty-three of the 111 public libraries (75%) serve communities of fewer than 5,000 in population; 69 of those 84 public libraries serve communities of fewer than 2,500. Native American students comprise almost 14% of the total state's student population with the majority Native American populating only 14 schools, many near or on one of our nine reservations. The rural and geographically expansive nature of the state has a significant impact on the ability of library boards to offer programming or purchase resources or new books on a regular basis. Local governments simply cannot afford to pay for exposure of their staff or trustees to new opportunities, trends and technology. Though private schools are not required to report, in the 2017-2018 school year, 40% of

South Dakota students qualified for free or reduced school lunches thus highlighting the extreme poverty within the state. And within SD, there is a range between 100% of a school on 'free and reduced lunches' to zero percentage. However, 112 out of 551 schools reported 40% or more student population on 'free and reduced lunches.' That is 40.21% or 56,452 out of 140,389 of the state's student population.

School library facilities are at an all-time low and many others are in disrepair not adding a new book in many years nor staffed with a certified teacher/librarian. The last NCES report ranked South Dakota fourth from the bottom in librarian-to-student ratio. In the annual SD School Library Survey only 116 out of 468 positions statewide (25%) are currently filled by certified school media endorsed teacher/librarians. One out of five (20%) of all South Dakota schools do not provide a school library facility by any definition while 5% of all South Dakota students (7,031) do not have access to any kind of school library. Nearly 1,000 SD K-12 students residing in isolated, rural communities do not have access to either a school or a public library. Though these are small numbers, this is a significant factor for these particular students in their lack of educational opportunities.

The two NASA science kits and any other kits we would create would be cataloged and checked-out via our ILS system. These kits would be discoverable in our statewide South Dakota *ShareIt* network. We would have training for interested librarians here in Pierre working with the South Dakota Discovery Center which has a current affiliation with the South Dakota Space Grant Consortium and offers space-science related programming. Of note, the SDSL has recently applied and been accepted as an affiliate member of the South Dakota Space Grant Consortium (SDSGC) of which Mr. Thomas Durkin is the deputy director. (See letters attached) We plan to work with the Grant Consortium as well to bring quality science programming and learning events to rural public libraries and schools.

If offered the NASA@MyLibrary grant, the SDSL would offer a full day workshop in a 'train-the-trainer' model for our libraries demonstrating one or more of the kits and also taking the librarians to the Discovery Center to participate in a program. This would give rural librarians an opportunity to become familiar with what the Discovery Center has to offer area public libraries for local programming as well. We would put together a bibliography of current popular fiction and non-fiction titles on space-related topics including Native American and Lakota folk lore concerning the skies and the world around us. Currently in our collection we have a wide range of books we could use from "Star Boy" or "All Our Relatives: Traditional Native American Thoughts about Nature" by Paul Goble (c. 1983 & 2005 respectively) to "Lakota Star Knowledge: Studies in Lakota Stellar Theology" by Ronald Goodman c. 1992/2017 or "Dakota/Lakota Star Map Constellation Guidebook: An Introduction to D(L)akota Star Knowledge" by Annette Sharon Lee and Jim Rock c. 2014. We also have "They Dance in the Sky: Native American Star Myths" by Jean Guard Monroe and Ray A. Williamson, c. 1987 and "The Star People: A Lakota Story" by S.D. Nelson c. 2003. These titles would help to show our librarians how they can incorporate these fiction and non-fiction titles into their own unique programs at their local libraries as part of 2019 Universe of Stories summer reading theme.

And as an incentive to participate in our training, we would purchase multiples of Paul Goble's or others' titles we'd offer to participating public or school libraries. Many of these Native American

resources are listed in the DOE approved South Dakota Oceti Sakowin Content Standards and are highly recommended as literature to integrate into regular courses when teaching content subject matter in the sciences and social sciences to insure a Native perspective.

The South Dakota Braille and Talking Book Library can bring a unique perspective to this year's theme of space and 'Universe of Stories.' We can provide thematically connected materials in accessible formats such as book lists, resources guides, tactile and braille astronomy maps with a goal of making library programs accessible to all.

This is also an opportunity to educate the general public and library staff that might have common misconceptions that differently-abled people are not capable of working in various fields of science such as astronomy. There can be blind astronomers, engineers, explorers, etc. Their physical challenges don't define them or limit what they can do or accomplish.

A legally blind astronomer:

<https://www.space.com/34276-blind-astronomer-observatory-for-everyone.html>

How blind individuals see stars: <http://nautil.us/blog/how-the-blind-see-the-stars>

National Federation of the Blind article about blind astronomers:

<https://nfb.org/Images/nfb/Publications/fr/fr9/fr03co23.htm>

Lastly, we would develop two kits which are user-friendly for the visually impaired. We are currently consulting with the National Library Service for the Blind (NLSB) and with the SD School for the Blind. The latter institution would receive one of the kits to use exclusively in their school's science studies. Likewise, we would develop a program here at the SDSL for visually impaired students not enrolled at the School for the Blind.

As you can see, we are very serious about this grant and would use it to expand our outreach many times over during the 2019 calendar year. Given our state's population, rural setting and pervasive poverty, we hope that you will conclude that we are your most ideal candidate for the Cohort 2 group. We look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,



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C: Mary Stadick-Smith, Interim Secy. of Education

Attachment: Letters