TEDNA AI Sovereignty: Building Tribal Capacity Through Convenings

List of Key Staff

Staff Name	Role/Title	Project Role
Quinton Roman Nose	Executive Director	Project Director
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Todd Johnson	External Evaluator	Evaluate Outcomes

Executive Summary *(500 words) Summarize the project, focusing on the intended impact, audience,*

The aiEDU Rural and Indigenous Community Catalyst Program presents a timely opportunity to enhance the leadership of Tribal Education Departments in promoting artificial intelligence literacy. The Tribal Education Departments National Assembly will deliver a focused and achievable initiative that builds Tribal capacity by organizing two strategic convenings designed to support learning, collaborative planning, and resource development for Tribal education department leaders, teachers, and staff working across diverse geographies and school contexts.

TEDNA's AI Sovereignty: Building Tribal Capacity through Convenings will engage participants through two coordinated events. The first convening will take place at the Oklahoma State Tribal Education Partnership (OK STEP) meeting in September 2025 which brings together educators, administrators, and community leaders from across the state, and the second will be held during TEDNA's National Annual Meeting in October 2025 which gathers together a national audience. These events will introduce foundational concepts related to artificial intelligence and its implications for education systems governed by Tribal Nations. They will provide participants with structured opportunities to explore practical applications, generate community-informed insights, and articulate shared goals. Each event will feature presentations from Tribal education consultants, scenario-based discussions, and structured peer collaboration focused on instructional design, governance, community trust, and implementation readiness.

TEDNA will use existing infrastructure and partner networks to maximize engagement within the six-month grant period. Each convening is designed to foster thoughtful dialogue and spark innovation responsive to local rural priorities. Rather than imposing external programming, this initiative promotes informed leadership, strategic decision-making, and community alignment with national efforts to strengthen educational quality, transparency, and professional autonomy while supporting lawful innovation in technology adoption. TEDNA's planning process will ensure that each convening is shaped by local rural context and tribal goals, with time allocated for reflection, priority setting, and feedback loops designed to refine ongoing strategies.

Participants will include administrators, instructional leaders, and community representatives from sovereign and tribally controlled education systems. TEDNA anticipates reaching more than 150 participants from at least 20 Tribal communities, representing a broad range of contexts, capacities, and implementation stages. TEDNA will conduct evaluations and debriefs to measure growth in AI awareness, and each convening will generate

summary reports, visual documentation, and tools for wider use. The initiative will also document three to five actionable strategies to support responsible implementation at the local level, ensuring each strategy is contextually appropriate and scalable.

This project reflects TEDNA's sustained commitment to lawful, community-guided technology integration and reinforces the principle that AI readiness is a crucial expression of educational sovereignty. AI literacy efforts will support and extend Tribal decision-making capacity by building leadership pipelines, promoting academic freedom, and meeting current federal education requirements through evidence-based planning and peer-based reflection.

The project team includes TEDNA's Project Director, coordinator and administrative assistance, supported by AI and education consultants with experience facilitating technology integration in Tribal learning environments. The budget will support staffing, travel, facilitation, and material development. As part of TEDNA's long-term AI Sovereignty strategy, this initiative reinforces Tribal capacity, strengthens intergovernmental cooperation, and prepares communities to lead in the era of emerging technologies, ensuring that Tribal Nations remain at the forefront of ethical, legal, and educational innovation.

Background & Mission Focus (200 words) Organizational background, mission, and focused impact of work.

TEDNA is the only national nonprofit organization focused exclusively on supporting Tribal Education Departments (TEDs), the authorized bodies through which Tribal Nations exercise education sovereignty. Founded in 2003, TEDNA equips Tribal governments with tools, policies, and networks to reclaim control over how education is delivered, measured, and sustained.

TEDNA represents 42 federally recognized Tribal Nations across 22 states. It offers legal and technical assistance, policy development, data system support, and professional learning infrastructure. TEDNA staff include curriculum experts, analysts, and evaluators with experience leading multistate initiatives.

TEDNA's EVOLVE Sovereignty Framework—Engage, Value, Optimize, Lead, Validate, Elevate—guides all efforts:
- Engage: Center Tribal dialogue and shared planning
- Value: Reflect Indigenous priorities in the design
- Optimize: Use evidence to improve systems
- Lead: Strengthen Tribal professional governance
- Validate: Track results to ensure alignment
- Elevate: Share success to inform change

TEDNA's National AI Sovereignty strategy, focused on growth management, affirms AI and technology readiness as a sovereign responsibility. This Catalyst-supported project builds systems, knowledge, and collaboration to position Tribal Education Departments as leaders in AI integration while ensuring that education sovereignty remains the foundation of innovation.

Goals: *Please indicate what grant type each goal is oriented towards.*

Goal 1: Build AI Awareness and Planning Capacity Through Convenings

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Key Activities:
- Organize a three-hour AI Literacy Summit during the OK STEP Project meeting in September 2025
- Host a three-hour strategic session during TEDNA's National Annual Meeting in October 2025
- Deliver presentations and guided discussions on AI's implications for Tribal education departments and agencies
- Facilitate structured working groups to explore applications of AI in teaching, policy, and program planning
- Produce and distribute a summary of the convening, including participant-generated recommendations and strategies

Expected Outcomes/Metrics:
- Engage at least 150 participants across both convenings
- Reach representatives from a minimum of 20 Tribal communities
- Document three to five implementation-ready instructional or policy recommendations
- Achieve a 30 percent average increase in participant confidence regarding AI in education
- Launch or support three new tribal-local or tribal-state partnerships focused on lawful and responsible AI use

This goal aims to equip Tribal education department leaders, teachers, and staff with a foundational understanding of artificial intelligence and its implications for sovereign education systems. Through two strategically coordinated convenings, TEDNA will create structured environments for learning, policy discussion, and collaborative planning. The sessions are designed to elevate local expertise, generate actionable strategies, and support decision-making aligned with legal requirements and community priorities. These convenings will serve as a national model for how TEDs can lead in the responsible integration of emerging technologies.

Goal 2: Foster Educator-Led Collaboration and Innovation

Key Activities:
- Facilitate the formation of at least three peer learning exchanges among participating educators and leaders.
- Provide targeted follow-up to attendees at the convening to support community-aligned implementation efforts.
- Develop protocols for knowledge-sharing across regions and Tribal departments.
- Compile a collection of community-validated scenarios, models, and AI integration examples to inform local adaptation.

Expected Outcomes/Metrics:
- Initiation of at least three peer learning exchanges among Tribal education leaders
- Identification of five early adopters willing to co-lead follow-on implementation
- Post-convening reflections illustrate increased confidence and preparedness for AI integration
- Generation of best practices tools and materials that reflect tribal feedback and promote continued knowledge transfer

This goal advances peer-driven innovation by supporting educator-led knowledge exchange across regions and Tribal departments. By establishing ongoing professional learning connections, TEDNA will strengthen local implementation capacity and elevate teacher leadership in AI integration. The initiative encourages participants to co-create tools and models rooted in Tribal values and operational realities. These educator networks will serve as early exemplars of how AI can enhance instructional quality while respecting sovereignty and professional autonomy.

Theory of Action

TEDNA believes that increasing Tribal education leaders' understanding of artificial intelligence when combined with peer-driven innovation and community reflection, will build lasting capacity for lawful and sovereign technology integration. By leveraging established convening platforms and aligning activities with the EVOLVE Sovereignty Framework, this initiative will create the necessary conditions for Tribal educators to lead AI integration efforts. Through two targeted convenings, peer learning exchanges, and shared implementation strategies, TEDNA will activate both national momentum and local action, ensuring that AI literacy becomes a practical tool for education sovereignty.

Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
TEDNA leadership, staff, and network	Organize two convenings (OK STEP and TEDNA Annual Meeting)	2 events convened	Increased awareness of AI's relevance in Tribal Education	Improved Tribal capacity to plan and implement AI-related education strategies
Project Director and Coordinator	Facilitate peer learning exchanges	3 peer learning groups launched	Strengthened educator collaboration across Tribal departments	Institutionalization of AI literacy in Tribal education systems
AI consultants and Tribal education experts	Deliver presentations and scenario-based sessions	4 strategic sessions delivered	Greater confidence among participants to discuss and apply AI tools	Tribal leadership advances data-informed, lawful AI integration models
Travel and facilitation budget	Develop and share summary tools and examples	3–5 policy or instructional recommendations compiled	Actionable strategies adopted locally	Sustainable Tribal-local partnerships for AI and emerging tech readiness
Evaluation protocols and surveys	Conduct participant feedback, analysis, and reporting	Final reports and tools shared	Tribally defined models contribute to national discourse	Tribal Nations influence future AI education policies and programs

Project Timeline Table

June 2025	Project launch, planning meetings, and coordination with partners.
July 2025	Convening agendas finalized, consultant engagement confirmed.
August 2025	Recruitment of participants, outreach to Tribal communities.
September 2025	The first convening of the OK STEP Project deploying evaluation tools.
October 2025	The second convening is at the TEDNA National Annual Meeting.
November 2025	Post-event evaluations completed, peer learning exchanges initiated.
December 2025	Final summary reports compiled, dissemination of materials, and impact data analysis.