

TRIBAL EARLY LEARNING INITIATIVE GRANTEE PROFILE

Grantee:	Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Project Period:	<i>September 30, 2015 – September 29, 2017</i>

Tribal Early Learning Initiative (TELI) Collaborative Team:

Name	Title	Email
Sarah Rowland	TELI Coordinator	Sarah.rowland7855@gmail.com
Angela Dancer	Home Visiting Director	angelad@choctawnation.com
Rebecca Hawkins	Sr. Director of Early Childhood Programs	rhawkins@choctawnation.com
Monona Dill	Assistant Director, Childcare Assistance	mdill@choctawnation.com
Amanda Johnson	Head Start Early Childhood Program Director/Manager	amandajohnson@choctawnation.com
Katherine Pruitt	Head Start Early Childhood Program Director/Manager	kpruitt@choctawnation.com

Program Goals and Activities

- Engage a program coordinator to plan, manage and support the two-year initiative.
- Develop an annual and host a shared training for all early learning program staff to provide professional development on a relevant early childhood topic that also provides staff the opportunity to learn about other programs and network.
- Study existing data systems and available integration options in Year One and in Year Two, implement a data sharing strategy across programs to eliminate redundant data entry and provide reliable and consistent information to providers.

Community Context

State	Oklahoma
Rural or Urban Reservation or Non-Reservation	Rural Non-reservation / Oklahoma Tribal Jurisdiction Area
Geographic Area, Characteristics, Demographics	The Choctaw Nation TJA spans more than 11,784 square miles of rugged hills and valleys, an area larger than Delaware, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and the District of Columbia combined. The Choctaw Nation is bordered by Arkansas to the east and Texas to the south. The Choctaw service area has no major metropolitan city; the nearest city is over a 3-hour drive outside the area. This grant serves five of the 10 ½ counties within the TJA: Atoka, Haskell, Latimer, McCurtain, and Pushmataha.



Oklahoma has the largest population of American Indians. The Choctaw Nation serves the second largest tribal area in the lower 48 states. However, the Choctaw Nation serves over twice as many American Indians. The Choctaw Nation is an integrated tribe, meaning it is not reservation-based. The Choctaw Nation offers many services in its communities. However due to the large geographic area, tribal members may need to drive several hours to utilize these services. The overall economy of the Choctaw Nation TJA leaves many of the families facing challenges finding jobs due to a lack of education and the scarcity of employers.

Description of Existing Early Childhood System

The Choctaw Nation has many existing early childhood programs that are culturally sensitive and dedicated to offering support and resources to American Indian families and their children. These programs are backed by the community as well as the Tribal Council.

The Choctaw Nation Head Start program is directed primarily toward economically disadvantaged families with children 3 to 5 years of age. Head Start uses 5 major component areas to serve the needs of the children enrolled as well as their families: (1) education/literacy, (2) health, (3) parent involvement, (4) family services, and (5) nutrition. The Choctaw Nation Head Start program helps children prepare for their formal years of schooling. Child Development Centers are located in Bennington, Stigler, Idabel, Durant, and Coalgate. These centers house a Head Start program and child care.

The Choctaw Nation Childcare Assistance program helps increase the availability, affordability, and quality of child care services. The Nation permits parents to choose from a broad range of child care providers and assists with child care costs. Additional early childhood programs include the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, & Children, and the Children and Family Services.

The Choctaw Nation has partnered with the Administration for Children and Families as one of four tribes to participate in the Tribal Early Learning Initiative, a new initiative to improve the coordination of early learning and development programs. The Choctaw Nation will concentrate efforts with these supplemental funds to improve collaboration across Head Start, Child Care Assistance, and Tribal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visitation program

Key Federal and Technical Assistance (TA) Staff

Name	Title	Phone	Email
Carrie Peake	Tribal Home Visiting Project Officer	202-690-6059	Carrie.peake@acf.hhs.gov
Lisa Blackmon	Child Care Project Officer		Lisa.Blackmon@acf.hhs.gov
Tracie Little	Head Start Project Officer		Tracie.Little@acf.hhs.gov
Kim Bradley	PATH TELI Coordinator	202-857-2988	KBradley@zerotothree.org