Introduction

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO or Nation) is a sovereign-land based, federally recognized Native American tribe located in the southeastern corner of Oklahoma. The Nation encompasses approximately 10.5 counties in one of the most rural areas in the region. The Choctaw Nation’s Tribal Service Area (TSA) includes the following counties: Atoka, Bryan, Choctaw, Coal, Haskell, Hughes, Latimer, LeFlore, McCurtain, Pittsburg, and Pushmataha. Together, these counties make up 10,922 square miles, which is similar in size to the state of Maryland. The TSA is home to 48,113 Choctaw tribal members\(^1\), which accounts for almost 30% of the population in some communities. Unfortunately, southeastern Oklahoma also has some of the poorest counties in the state with very sparse populations and an absence of major metropolitan areas.

With the CNO being set within such a rural area, it is easy to see where poverty, lack of educational opportunities, post-secondary educational attainment, and geographic factors can be a hindrance to some of our tribal members as they evaluate career goals. Since 2007, Choctaw Nation Career Development has noticed that many of our adult tribal members have been interested in pursuing a career in healthcare, however due to unforeseen circumstances, many do not follow-through to completion. The proposed project will expand upon the services provided by the current NACTEP program, *Choctaw: STEM*, by continuing to assist our adult population, but also including additional endeavors to build a health career pipeline to provide exposure to Choctaw high school tribal members in two specific areas within the TSA. *Choctaw: HEROES* plans to focus on the Poteau, OK and Talihina, OK areas, where the populations are 8,834 and

These areas are also home to a relatively high ratio of Native American populations with Poteau reporting approximately 705 and Talihina claiming 272. The determining factor for choosing both of these locations was their proximity to Choctaw Nation healthcare resources, with Poteau being the center for the prescription medication refill facility and Talihina home to the state-of-the-art Choctaw Nation Hospital. With both of these locations having such an active role in the Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority (CNHSA), and in turn benefitting our tribal members throughout the Nation, it was the logical choice to initiate Choctaw: HEROES in the heart of the CNO’s healthcare realm. By expanding project services, one of the goals of Choctaw: HEROES is to increase the number of Choctaw tribal members in the healthcare field within the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation.

A. Need for Project

1. The Extent to Which the Proposed Project Involves, Coordinates With, or Encourages Tribal Economic Development Plans

Of the many challenges faced by Choctaws within the Nation are those that come from poverty-stricken households. The annual median household income of those within LeFlore county (home to Poteau and Talihina) compared to the rest of the state of Oklahoma is significant; with the county averaging $40,677 while Oklahoma as a whole averages $52,919. Childhood poverty, although something that can be overcome, can have lasting effects on a


young person’s self-confidence and future life goals. According to Dr. Eric Jensen, of the Society for Neuroscience: “The human brain ‘downloads’ the environment indiscriminately in an attempt to understand and absorb the surrounding world, whether that world is positive or negative. When children gain a sense of mastery of their environments, they are more likely to develop feelings of self-worth, confidence, and independence, which play heavily into the formation of children’s personalities and ultimately predict their success and happiness in relationships and in life in general. Economic hardship makes it more difficult for caregivers to create the trusting environments that build children’s secure attachments." Assisting tribal members throughout the Nation with housing, food distribution, and rental assistance is just one of the myriad ways that we combat poverty in the TSA.

A lack of post-secondary education is another wall that faces Choctaws on their way to gaining success. Financial barriers, a lack of familial support, or even the self-confidence to try and achieve more for themselves can keep someone from pursuing higher education. Students in the Poteau and Talihina areas have higher educational attainment numbers by population than those across the rest of the state (population of the state of Oklahoma is approximately 4 million), especially in terms of those who enter post-secondary education (See Figure 1). But with a more manageable student/teacher ratio in the smaller classrooms of rural Oklahoma, the numbers of students who are gifted the individual attention of a teacher or school counselor

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should be reflected in higher numbers of students pursuing post-secondary education. *Choctaw: HEROES* is dedicated to changing the trend in the Choctaw Nation service area and making it possible for Choctaws to achieve their dreams and secure a promising future.

Due to the rurality of the Choctaw Nation, towns like Poteau and Talihina face challenges with longer daily commutes to work and commercial centers and a wider spread between population centers. Both of these towns reside along the eastern borders of the Ouachita National Forest, where the landscape is heavily forested with rocky terrain and large hills. Although their geographic location makes for a bucolic view from either town, it also makes it difficult for commercial enterprises to flourish, for internet reception to be stable, and for travel within the area to be expedient. There are numerous untapped resources within the Choctaw Nation TSA. Partnerships with local area schools and career technology campuses will illustrate to Choctaw

(Figure 1)

Educational Attainment in Poteau and Talihina as Compared to the State of Oklahoma, in Percentages by Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Poteau (8834)</th>
<th>Talihina (992)</th>
<th>Oklahoma (4 million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 9th Grade</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th - 12th Grade, No Diploma</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate or Equivalency</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College, No Degree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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tribal members that there are vast career opportunities to be had within the Nation and that the skills they learn via the Choctaw: HEROES program can carry them toward a successful future.

2. **Extent of the Need Evidenced by Local Labor Market Demand or Occupational Trends**

Data, Tribal Economic Plans, or Recommendations from Accrediting Agencies

One of the goals of the Choctaw Nation is to instill Native American pride in its tribal members and encourage them to build a successful life within the 10.5 county area. With STEM-based careers gaining in popularity across the United States and jobs within that sector producing higher wages and more long-term employability, the CNO looks to encourage our Choctaws to enter those fields and fulfill the need for STEM-based careers, especially those within the healthcare system. Among the most critically needed occupations within the state of Oklahoma, out of the top 40 listed for 2020-2022, six of them are within the healthcare industry\(^7\) with registered nurses and medical assistants in the top 15. The median annual income for a registered nurse in Oklahoma is $63,648, while the annual earnings for an Oklahoma-based medical assistant (CNA, LPN, or CMA) range from $25,126 to $42,078, dependent upon the type of certification. With a median non-family (single) income of $23,275 in Poteau and $15,962 in Talihina\(^8\), participating in the Choctaw: HEROES program would give participants the ability to gain healthcare career exposure and training, which could result in an income increase of 43% more on average, upon completion of high school and/or a post-secondary education program.

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B. Quality of Project Design

1. Extent to Which the Proposed Project Activities Will Create Opportunities for Students to Receive Post-Secondary Credential; Become Employed in High-Skill, High-Wage, and In-Demand Industry Sectors; or Both

The Choctaw Nation believes strongly that education is an integral part of the solution to alleviate poverty and bolster self-confidence in our Choctaw tribal members. *Choctaw: HEROES* proposes a program that will directly address the need to increase educational attainment among Choctaw, which will then result in participants earning post-secondary certifications, to become employed or continue their education in the healthcare industry. Not only will a career in the healthcare field give Choctaws the opportunity to be financially secure and successful, but it also gives them numerous opportunities for advancement. *Choctaw: HEROES* proposes the development of a health career pipeline which will help guide both high school students and post-secondary students into medical fields where they can build upon their interests and pursue different occupations up a proverbial career ladder, obtaining healthcare field exposure, certifications, licensures, and/or degrees.

Through partnerships with local high schools, career-technology centers, and state colleges; Career Counselors will be able to provide targeted, STEM-based opportunities to Choctaw program participants. These partnerships in turn create unique, multi-faceted access for Choctaw tribal members through their existing programs and internal networks. Research has shown that early outreach can greatly increase a student’s interest and eventual enrollment in a post-secondary educational program. *Choctaw: HEROES* plans to provide numerous opportunities, throughout the school year, for program participants to become exposed to the healthcare field in an immersive and entertaining manner. In keeping with the Department of Education’s Every
Student Succeeds Act and its Oklahoma counterpart: ICAP (Individual Career and Academic Plan), Choctaw: HEROES is proposing a combination of outreach efforts with guest speakers, mentoring programs, and hands-on access to medical facilities, as well as professional-led summer camps where students can earn important certifications. Since its inception in 2017, ICAP has increased concurrent and dual enrollment efforts in high schools as well as connected school administrations directly with business and industry partners across the state of Oklahoma. Working within the parameters of ICAP, high school students will actively participate in a process-driven model that enables students to understand their own strengths, weaknesses, values, and interests. Mirroring the ICAP goals, Choctaw: HEROES also plans to continue their outreach efforts to post-secondary Choctaw members pursuing a CTE practical nursing licensure or Associate’s degree in another health-related field from a qualified education provider. Our reach within the Poteau/Talihina areas will be wide-ranging and well supported by both the Choctaw Nation and local entities.

Beginning in the freshman year, Choctaw: HEROES staff will work in partnership with local high school counselors, CNO High School Student Services, and students to evaluate those who have expressed an interest in the healthcare industry. Choctaw: HEROES’ Career Counselors will then utilize local resources to create a 4-year plan for the student. Each subsequent year of the grant new freshman will enter the health career pipeline where they will find a sense of camaraderie with their fellow learners. Having all of the students, freshman through senior levels, together during Choctaw: HEROES events will allow the students to build relationships centered around their common interests and in turn encourage each other, through their newfound bonds, to join program activities and seek additional post-secondary education. Any Choctaw high school students beyond the freshman classification, who also show an interest in
the healthcare field, will be welcome to enter the health career pipeline and participate in activities tailored to their own personalized timeframe.

In the Fall and Spring semesters at regional high schools under the Choctaw: HEROES program, select campuses or CNO facilities will play host to a guest speaker. Guest speakers will be brought in to expound upon their post-secondary education experience, present scenarios in the daily life of a healthcare worker in the field, and allow students to ask questions to gain additional insight about a healthcare career path. This will give the students a chance to streamline their focus on the type of healthcare career they wish to pursue.

Mentoring, particularly by an adult outside of a student’s family unit and school environment, has proven to be the most beneficial for young people. In an article published by the National Mentoring Resource Center, mentors were able to: “increase the positive relationship students have in their lives, while also having the potential to boost factors that can lead to educational success, such as connectedness to the school environment and peers, improved relationships with teachers and staff, improved feelings of academic competence, and greater access and use of other supports, such as tutoring, credit tracking, counseling, and post-secondary planning.” Choctaw: HEROES proposes to embrace this practice and assign mentors, primarily from the healthcare industry, to our students. Beginning in Year One, we will assign mentors to a small group of freshman students. As they progress through the health career pipeline the mentoring will become more focused and new mentors will be added so that their commitment can be centered on fewer students. The mentors will be encouraged to follow their students over the course of their high school careers and help them to shape their path to the

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future. Mentors will be presented with a mentor packet upon volunteering, which will include a Rocketbook Smart Notebook, blank cards (to keep in touch with students throughout the school year), pens, and a letter of appreciation from the Chief of the Choctaw Nation thanking them for their volunteer service.

In addition to connecting Choctaw: HEROES program participants to local resources and other tools, Career Counselors will provide individualized and ongoing support to Choctaw program participants. Counselors will hold regular conversations with students, conduct progress assessments and satisfaction surveys, and ensure that their post-graduate participants are advised of and connected to Choctaw Nation-based resources and any local opportunities that are available. Choctaw Nation Career Development staff are committed to connecting Choctaw tribal members to any and all support services available, which include financial assistance for academic pursuits, tutoring and supplemental ACT preparation, career readiness programs, and listings of available job opportunities within the Choctaw Nation itself.

Each summer, Choctaw: HEROES plans to host intensive, higher-education-driven summer camps for students who are eligible (age requirements apply) and interested. The following camps will be hosted over the five year project period:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camp Title</th>
<th>Year Offered</th>
<th>Hours Needed for Certification</th>
<th>Cost Per Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPR/Health Awareness Camp</td>
<td>Years 1-5</td>
<td>5 Hours</td>
<td>$100.00 Per Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro. To Phlebotomy Camp</td>
<td>Years 3 and 5</td>
<td>42 Hours</td>
<td>$475.00 Per Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Terminology Camp</td>
<td>Years 2-5</td>
<td>54 Hours</td>
<td>$200.00 Per Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNA Certification Camp</td>
<td>Years 2 and 4</td>
<td>96 Hours</td>
<td>$1,055 Per Student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CPR Certification Camp will be offered during Years 1-5 of the grant each summer in two different locations to a maximum of 60 students from the Choctaw Nation service area. This 8-hour camp will take place over the course of two days, with 4-hour sessions and will include all the necessary elements to complete the 5-hour CPR certification as well as offer the students a chance to meet with mentors and hear from guest speakers. *Choctaw: HEROES* will adhere to the standard 1:6 instructor/student ratio required of the course, which will allow students the individual attention and proper learning environment needed to successfully complete the course. Upon completion, each student will receive their CPR certification which will be valid for the next two years. If a student wishes to update their CPR certification, after the initial two years of validation has passed, *Choctaw: HEROES* will allow students to take the CPR certification course once more to maintain their certification. Most healthcare careers insist upon valid CPR certification as a prerequisite to employment. Offering our Choctaw students this opportunity to gain a valuable certification before they enter the workforce will make them more desirable candidates for open positions and more appealing to the review boards of many colleges and other post-secondary educational entities.

Medical Terminology Camp will prepare approximately 20 students in Years Two through Five to enter any field within the healthcare industry, as Medical Terminology is commonly listed as a required course in post-secondary healthcare education. This camp will combine a hybrid of learning platforms: both virtual and in-person. It will test the self-starter capacity of each student and provide them with a true test of their interest in the healthcare industry. The intense 54-hour course will culminate in a certification test held with the oversight of a professional instructor.
The CNA (certified nursing assistant) Camp will involve a strong and dedicated commitment from each student. Only 10 students each will be accepted for Years Two and Four and the camp itself will take place over multiple days throughout the summer in order to fulfill the 96-hour requirement for certification. In order to complete the CNA certification, students must be at least 16 years of age, which will narrow the gap of available students. However, adhering to the 1:10 instructor/student ratio recommended for the program will allow for more individualized attention and for the students to ensure that they fully understand the material. Testing for the certification will take place at one of the Kiamichi Technology Center campuses and upon successful completion of the course, these select students will be amply prepared to enter the workforce.

The Introduction to Phlebotomy Camp will have fewer students admitted each summer than the other camps, as this specialized course has an age requirement of at least 18 to complete the final certification test. The course will be broken up over a period of multiple days in the summer to accommodate for study-time, work schedules (those of the students [if applicable] and the instructors), and availability of medical lab facilities. All Choctaw: HEROES summer camps will be hosted at Choctaw Nation facilities or Kiamichi Technology campuses, dependent on the supplies and environment needed to complete each course.

As an additional resource, the Choctaw Nation Hospital in Talihina hosts an annual Hospital Day, where students from around the Choctaw Nation can get hands-on experience and learn what it is like to be in a hospital setting. Each department within the hospital is given a booth and assigns a representative who will explain the positions offered within their department while focusing on educational requirements for positions, what a typical work day is like, pay scale, and what the next step for high school students would be if they are interested in entering the
healthcare field. Although Hospital Day was not held in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is anticipated that this event will be reinstated for the fall of 2021 and Choctaw: HEROES will secure an invitation through its partnership with Choctaw Nation Career Development. This event will provide valuable insight to our students and give them a chance to explore the myriad career fields available within the healthcare industry.

Choctaw: HEROES will also collaborate with Choctaw Nation Career Development to identify adult tribal members that reside within the TSA, who have an interest in the healthcare profession, and are able to enroll in a CTE program from an approved educational partner. The goal of Choctaw: HEROES will be to recruit and enroll approximately 20 post-secondary students per year pursuing healthcare related CTE training that will result in a certification, industry-recognized credential, and/or an Associate’s degree offered by Kiamichi Technology Center (KTC), Carl Albert State College (CASC), Murray State College (MSC) Eastern Oklahoma State College (EOSC), and/or Paris Junior College (PJC). Prior to program entry, post-secondary participants will complete an intake sheet to evaluate career goals, financial need, level of education required, potential barriers to completion, academic skills and/or deficiencies, and their level of commitment. Due to the competitive nature and academic requirements, Choctaw: HEROES will be responsible for coordinating a nurse prep orientation each year to improve the likelihood of receiving acceptance to a nursing school program. Orientation will include information on the application process and tips on how to complete and gather required documentation, locating financial resources for unexpected expenses, and academic preparation for entrance exams.

After acceptance into a program, participants will attend a Nurse Boot Camp to help them prepare for the arduous nature of the program. Due to the rigor of the CTE training programs
offered by our educational partners, Choctaw: HEROES understands the importance of collaboration with program instructors and maintaining contact with program participants to evaluate individual needs. Therefore, participants will be assigned a Career Counselor who will provide one-on-one guidance, academic monitoring in the form of monthly grades checks and remediation, referrals to supportive services, and program specific test preparation.

KTC has 10 campuses across the southeastern portion of the state, with most of them located within the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation. KTC’s Poteau location offers the following certifications: Certified Medication Aide, Certified Nurse’s Aide, Clinical Medical Assistant, Emergency Medical Technician, Biomedical Science, and Practical Nursing. Carl Albert State College is located in Poteau and offers a Physical Therapy Aide certification as well as two-year programs in Allied Health, Biological Sciences, and Nursing. Murray State College offers Associate’s degree programs in Nursing, Occupational Therapy Assistant, and Physical Therapy Assistant. Eastern Oklahoma State College is located in Wilburton, Oklahoma and offers an Associate’s degree in either Respiratory Therapy (McAlester satellite campus only) or Practical Nursing, with an accelerated track available for students who enter the RN program and already possess an LPN certification. Paris Junior College is located in Paris, Texas, just across the state line from the Nation and they offer the following certificates and/or Associate’s degrees: Emergency Medical Technician, Licensed Practical Nurse, Certified Nursing Aide, Radiology Technician, Registered Nurse, and Surgical Technology. All of the previously listed certifications and degrees require a specified length of study time, while some have age restrictions and requirements that you are employed as a CNA for at least 6 months before application to certain programs. Choctaw: HEROES adult participants have the opportunity to
complete a certification or Associate’s degree program at any of the above institutions with supplies, test preparation, and certification fees covered by Choctaw: HEROES.

2. **Extent to Which the Proposed Project Will Successfully Address the Needs of the Target Population or Other Identified Needs**

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the last year, our world has seen a dramatic shift in the job market and the day-to-day measure of how business is conducted. The youth of our country have faced unparalleled challenges in the last year, both in their own education and in everyday life. Confronted with a fluctuating job market, that may take years to recover, Choctaw: HEROES has seen the need within rural areas for well-trained workers in highly-skilled positions who can adapt and succeed. With the development of telehealth and app-based medical care, a growing need is on the rise for people familiar with the technology who can still provide the service and care needed on the frontlines during a pandemic and beyond. Dr. Susan Turney, a medical doctor and CEO for Marshfield Health in rural Wisconsin said this of the future of medicine: “I think the genie is out of the bottle on telehealth, hopefully that is a good thing in terms of people getting familiar with receiving care in this way, more providers embracing it, and legislation moving forward that helps digitally connect rural America and makes reimbursement for telehealth services standard in the long run.” The connection between medicine and modern technology is getting stronger and to be able to bring Choctaws to the forefront of that would be invaluable for the Nation and all Choctaws within the TSA.

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2021 Native American Career and Technical Education Program
Choctaw: HEROES (Health Education in Rural Oklahoma for Employment Success)

With so many people learning to cope in the new normal we find ourselves in, having a fellow Choctaw guide them through the ever-changing landscape of healthcare would give so much comfort and reassurance, especially to our elders. Many people around the world have watched our “healthcare heroes” battle a pandemic with grace, dignity, and at times, humor. For many tribal members who wish to enter the healthcare industry, the daily inspiration they see on the frontlines can only enhance their desire to help and serve others. That desire to serve is reflected in the Choctaw Nation’s vision statement: Living out the Chahta spirit of faith, family, and culture.

Addressing the needs of the Nation and our tribal members has always been of paramount interest to the CNO and with an already firm footing in the healthcare field: one hospital, numerous clinics, and a prescription drug refill facility; the Nation is committed to using the resources at hand to make a difference. Having the opportunity to funnel younger Choctaw tribal members into the existing CNHSA system would help fulfill employment needs within the Nation. Choctaw: HEROES plans to provide students with the tools and education necessary to have a successful future at an earlier stage in life. Growth trends have indicated that STEM-based careers, especially those in the health care industry are expected to increase over the next several years, according to the Bureau of Labor & Statistics: “Employment in healthcare occupations is projected to grow 15 percent from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations, adding about 2.4 million new jobs. Healthcare occupations are projected to add more jobs than any of the other occupational groups. The median annual wage for healthcare practitioners and technical occupations was $68,190 in May 2019, which was higher than the
median annual wage for all occupations in the economy of $39,810\textsuperscript{11}.” Being able to provide highly-trained workers to fill gaps in the rural healthcare industry will not only feed into the future job market, but give our Choctaws the opportunity to have successful careers in their hometowns.

3. **Extent to Which the Proposed Project Will be Coordinated with Similar or Related Efforts, and With Community, State, or Federal Resources**

   The Kiamichi Technology Center will be our primary partner as they have campuses across the Choctaw Nation service area. Their connection with the Nation, namely with Career Development, has been strong for many years. They have shared with the Nation their vision to establish an LPN pilot program that could begin as early as a student’s junior year in high school. The student would divide their time between healthcare courses at KTC and standard courses at their local high school. This course of study would continue from their junior year through their senior year. After graduation, the student need only attend full-time classes at KTC for the summer and fall to be a licensed nurse after successfully passing the final exams. This type of fast-tracked program could be very desirable for many students wishing to enter the healthcare industry. Similar models have been effective in other states and KTC is anxious to see if there is a vested interest in the Choctaw Nation region. KTC’s partnership with Choctaw: HEROES will serve not only as a launching pad for interest in their fast-track LPN program, but it will also give Choctaw students the chance to blaze a trail for post-secondary education within the Nation.

4. **Extent to Which the Training or Professional Development Services to be Provided are of Sufficient Quality, Intensity, and Duration to Lead to Improvements in Practice Among the Recipients of Those Services**

With the layers of assistance and guidance that the Choctaw Nation Career Development Department will provide for *Choctaw: HEROES*, as well as the high standard upheld by KTC in their educational courses, we have confidence that there is no other active program on the scale of our proposed project. By investing the time and effort to ensure that our participants are earning the degrees and certifications required in the healthcare field, we anticipate that the program will instill self-confidence in our Choctaw students. As the Choctaw Nation is the largest employer in southeastern Oklahoma, it creates a strong base for economic revitalization by working with other partners and local entities. Like-minded partners like KTC and other local post-secondary educational institutions share the Nation’s drive to improve workforce training for skilled trades and professional careers, with a focus on providing nationally recognized STEM-based credentials and degrees. By Year Five we hope that the program’s reputation will create a clear road map for future participants to improve their skills, gain invaluable training, fulfill educational needs, and increase their opportunity for future occupational and financial success.

**C. Adequacy of Resources**

1. **Adequacy of Support, Including Facilities, Supplies, and Other Resources from the Applicant Organization, Tribal Entity, or Entities to be Served**

The Choctaw Nation has upheld a stellar reputation of providing critical services to tribal members and other Native Americans living in the TSA by offering low-income housing options, higher education financial services, food distribution, discounted healthcare, and numerous other
social services. Both tribal members and the general public are aware of the impact that the Choctaw Nation can and does provide in southeastern Oklahoma. Choctaw Nation Career Development has consecutively been awarded the NACTEP grant since 2007 and has shown that our focus and dedication to Choctaw tribal members is unwavering and focused on the future. Past NACTEP grants focused entirely on adult learners, the newly proposed project will shift focus towards preparing our Choctaw high school students for the future with our health career pipeline. We will also institute Memorandums of Understanding with our post-secondary partners to ensure their full collaboration with Choctaw: HEROES (See Other Attachments). As both KTC and CASC have been our partners on many previous projects, their familiarity with the high standards of the Choctaw Nation will not cause any issues and will strengthen the bonds currently shared. Our project has been designed to expend grant monies that directly fund activities that will have a lasting impact on the lives of our Choctaw learners. With the track record of success that Career Development has enjoyed over many years, acquiring tribal funds to sustain the program beyond the grant period should be a simple matter of showing the impact on the communities we propose to serve.

2. Extent to Which the Budget is Adequate and Costs are Reasonable in Relation to the Objectives of the Proposed Project

Counselor salaries will start at $67,438 and $65,000 annually, plus a standard merit bonus of $644 each, totaling $133,726 in Year One. The Choctaw Nation’s Human Resource policy is to provide a merit-based annual salary increase of up to 3.75% for all eligible employees. Potential increases of 3.75% are reflected in the budget for Years Two through Five. Year Two shows the base salaries of $69,967 and $67,438 plus the $644 each merit bonus, totaling $138,693. Year Three shows the base salaries of $72,591 and $69,967 plus the $644 each merit
bonus, totaling $143,846. Year Four shows the base salaries of $75,313 and $72,591 plus the $644 each merit bonus, totaling $149,192. Year Five shows the base salaries of $78,137 and $75,313 plus the $644 each merit bonus, totaling $154,738. Total personnel costs for the five-year project period are estimated to be $720,195.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Category/Item</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>60 Month Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Personnel - Name/Position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Counselor (1.0 FTE x 60 months)</td>
<td>$67,438</td>
<td>$69,967</td>
<td>$72,591</td>
<td>$75,313</td>
<td>$78,137</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Counselor (1.0 FTE x 60 months)</td>
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<td>$67,438</td>
<td>$69,967</td>
<td>$72,591</td>
<td>$75,313</td>
<td>$350,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Merit Bonus (2 FTE's x $644 each)</td>
<td>$1,288</td>
<td>$1,288</td>
<td>$1,288</td>
<td>$1,288</td>
<td>$1,288</td>
<td>$6,440</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total for Personnel</strong></td>
<td>$133,726</td>
<td>$138,693</td>
<td>$143,846</td>
<td>$149,192</td>
<td>$154,738</td>
<td>$720,195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To enhance the staff’s ability to provide effective services to participants, both Career Counselors will attend the following conferences: AISES National Conference, the Oklahoma Summit for Career Technology, and one other conference for professional development. The amount budgeted for each includes mileage, lodging, per diem, airfare, transportation costs including ground transportation, and miscellaneous costs (including registrations) based on Choctaw Nation written travel policies and GSA. These trainings will allow staff networking opportunities with other professional staff who work with Native Americans as well as providing necessary program updates and professional development opportunities.

Educational/Training supplies for the program include educational material for each counselor to use - $2,250 x 2 = $4,500; general supplies for eight scheduled speaking and/or presentation events - $500 x 8 = $4,000; and educational supplies for mentors - $100 x 5 = $500
in Year One, $100 \times 10 = 1,000 in Year Two through Five. Office supplies include printer paper, printer toner, binders, file folders, desk organization tools, etc. These are calculated at $2,000 \times 2 = 4,000 each year. Also included in Year One is the purchase of phones and computer systems for each Counselor: Cell phones - $200 \times 2 = 400 and Computer System - $1,174 \times 2 = 2,348. Year Three also has computer replacement/upgrade costs of $1,174 \times 2 = 2,348. All supply costs have been estimated according to Choctaw Nation Procurement Policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Category/Item</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>60 Month Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>E. Supplies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational/Training: Educational Materials for Counselors - $2,250 x 2 = $4,500; Supplies for Speaking/Presentation events - $500 x 8 = $4,000; Educational Supplies for Mentors - Year One - $100 x 5 = $500, Year Two thru Five - $100 x 10 = $1,000 each year.</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
<td>$9,500</td>
<td>$9,500</td>
<td>$9,500</td>
<td>$9,500</td>
<td>$47,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Supplies: Office supplies include basic office necessities for both Career Counselors - $2,000 x 2 = $4,000 in each year. Year one also includes costs for cell phones - $200 x 2 = $400 and computer setup - $1,174 x 2 = $2,348. Year three includes replacement/upgrade of computers - $1,174 x 2 = $2,348.</td>
<td>$6,748</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$6,348</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$25,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for Supplies:</strong></td>
<td>$15,748</td>
<td>$13,500</td>
<td>$15,848</td>
<td>$13,500</td>
<td>$13,500</td>
<td>$72,096</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The project requires intensive evaluation for federal requirements and for the Nation, who is looking to determine what activities truly assist the targeted Choctaw tribal members. The outside Evaluator is responsible for maintaining a common data platform and monitoring system that provides the Project Director and staff with up-to-date information for reporting the project's performance measures and GPRA's to both the Choctaw Nation and Department of Education, to guide the staff through quality improvement for performance management as they develop a strong, evidence-based project. In addition, the Evaluator reviews, verifies, and analyzes all data collected and works with the staff in completing each required report, i.e. Semi-Annual and Year End Reports.

The majority of the contractual expenses will be for developing the health career pipeline for secondary students. These expenses will be for various healthcare training camps that will result in career awareness, industry recognized certifications, and/or completion certificates. The details of these are as follows: There will be two CPR/Health Awareness Training camps held each year, one at each site (Poteau and Talihina). These events will consist of speakers and presentations covering health care fields along with CPR training and certification. Each course will be open to 30 students, serving 60 students total per year. The projected cost includes course fees, speaker/presentation fees, food and fuel vouchers resulting in a per student cost of $100.00.

One Medical Terminology Camp will be provided each year in Years Two through Five. This event will result in a Medical Terminology credit via the health career pipeline that will be recognized at any and all partner institutions. The camp will be open to 20 students each year and the projected cost includes the course fee, food, and fuel vouchers resulting in a per student cost of $200.00.
There will be two CNA Certification Camps held, one in Year Two and the other in Year Four. This camp will include the CNA certification, upon successful completion the training will be open to a maximum of 20 students both years. Cost of the training includes the course and certification fees, medical PPE supplies, food, and fuel vouchers resulting in a per student cost of $1,055.00. An Introduction to Phlebotomy Camp will be held, one each in Years Three and Five, with each being available for up to 20 students. The projected costs include course fees, food, and fuel vouchers resulting in a per student cost of $475.00. After the completion of the CNA camp, students will have the option to pursue two additional certification courses: CMA (certified mediation aide) and HHA (home health aide). Each course will be offered in Year Five and open to 10 students. The projected cost of these courses will include course fees, medical PPE supplies, and any additional testing or certification fees which will result in a per student cost of approximately $700.00 dependent on the chosen course.

Remediation services will be provided to students that require it, according to evaluation and grade reports. These will be contractual services provided as needed. Event Speakers and/or Presenters will be contracted for each of the educational events/presentations at each site. There will be a minimum of four events projected each year, two at each site. Transportation/Bussing will be provided for student access to some events and camps. This is estimated to cost $1,500 per site, totaling $3,000 each year. Advertising will be used for marketing and promotion of the program. This includes informational flyers and brochures, as well as traditional and social media marketing endeavors. Also included are expenses for student-to-student marketing items. These will consist of branded items such as flash drives, highlighters, hand sanitizers, binders, portfolios, Choctaw Nation resource materials, health career laddering materials, pens, pencils and other miscellaneous items.
### 2021 Native American Career and Technical Education Program
Choctaw: HEROES (Health Education in Rural Oklahoma for Employment Success)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Category/Item</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>60 Month Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>F. Contractual</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluator</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPR/Health Awareness Training Camp: Course fee, speaker fee, food, fuel voucher - $100 x 60 students = $6000.</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Terminology Camp: Course fee, food, fuel voucher - $200 x 20 students = $4,000.</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNA/HHA Training Camp: Course fee, medical supplies, food, fuel voucher - $1,055 x 20 students = $21,100.</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$21,100</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$21,100</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$42,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro. To Phlebotomy Training Camp: Course fee, food, fuel voucher - $475 x 20 students = $9,500.</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$9,500</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$9,500</td>
<td>$19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMA Certification Course: Course fees, medical supplies, food, fuel vouchers - $710 x 10 students = $7,100</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$7,100</td>
<td>$7,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remediation Services</td>
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<td>$8,000</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event Speakers</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
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<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>$22,500</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total for Contractual:</strong></td>
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<td>$71,800</td>
<td>$60,200</td>
<td>$71,800</td>
<td>$67,300</td>
<td>$317,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cellular and mobile internet will be provided for the two Career Counselors for use at the various sites and schools. This cost is projected at $45.83 x 2 counselors x 12 months = $1,100 per year. The adult students will have their certification testing fees paid for through the
program. These fees total $450 for each student with 20 students per year targeted, resulting in $450 \times 20 \text{ students} = $9,000 per year. The supplies necessary for the adult students will also be paid for by the program. These include scrubs, medical PPE, and other miscellaneous medical supplies totaling $250 per student. This results in $250 \times 20 \text{ students} = $5,000 per year. Test preparation for adult students will be paid for by the program each year. The cost of the test preparation supplies and other miscellaneous preparation material is $200 per student. This results in $200 \times 20 \text{ students} = $4,000 per year. The adult students will also receive assistance for tuition, fees, books and other required miscellaneous program expenses. These are estimated to be maximum of $6,000 per student/per training program, resulting in $6,000 \times 20 \text{ students} = $120,000 per year.

The two Career Counselors will be required to travel between schools and various sites for meetings and activities. While there will be tribal vehicles available the majority of the time, the counselors also may be required to use their personal vehicle at times as well. As such, mileage reimbursement has been calculated using the tribal rate of $0.48 per mile with an estimated mileage of 1,823 miles per month. This results in $0.48 \times 1,823 \text{ miles} \times 12 \text{ months} = $10,500 per year, which was rounded down for ease of calculation.
### Budget Category/Item

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>60 Month Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H. Other Costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cellular and Internet Service: $45.83 x 2 x 12 = $1,100/year</td>
<td>$1,100</td>
<td>$1,100</td>
<td>$1,100</td>
<td>$1,100</td>
<td>$1,100</td>
<td>$5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Testing Fees: $450 x 20 = $9,000.</td>
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<td>$9,000</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Supplies: $250 x 20 = $5,000.</td>
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<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Test Prep: $200 x 20 = $4,000.</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition, fees, books for Program ($6,000 x 20 head)</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td>$600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mileage Reimbursement for on-site meetings: $0.48 x 1,823 x 12 = $10,500.</td>
<td>$10,500</td>
<td>$10,500</td>
<td>$10,500</td>
<td>$10,500</td>
<td>$10,500</td>
<td>$52,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for Other Costs:</strong></td>
<td>$149,600</td>
<td>$149,600</td>
<td>$149,600</td>
<td>$149,600</td>
<td>$149,600</td>
<td>$748,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Relevance and Demonstrated Commitment of the Applicant, Education Providers, or Tribal Entities to be Served by the Project

The experienced Choctaw: HEROES staff will constantly work with their partners to identify student and program needs, reduce barriers, and guide all involved to a higher level of secondary and post-secondary educational attainment so that all of our Choctaw learners can truly excel. Our Career Counselors will conduct surveys throughout the project with all program participants in order to gain insight into the programs successes and areas that will require work. The retention of competent staff is vital to the success of the program. Utilizing existing Career Counselors who are already familiar with CNO policies and procedures will allow our two Counselors to start work immediately once the project period begins. Our Counselors will
continuously upgrade their skills by attending state conferences and professional development trainings. Monthly meetings with Career Development staff will also contribute to their knowledge-base, as they will be able to share insights, issues, and updates with like-minded individuals who can provide qualified feedback and assist where needed.

4. **Extent to Which the Project Will Use Instructors Who are Licensed or Certified to Teach in the Field in Which They Will Provide Instruction**

Every effort will be made to acquire quality instructors and mentors from areas within the TSA. This will ensure that the instructors or other contractors will be familiar with the expectations of the Nation in the implementation of *Choctaw: HEROES*. All project activities will be conducted in an environment with safe, handicap accessible spaces with ample room to serve all participants and allow for social distancing, as needed. *Choctaw: HEROES* will devote adequate resources to ensure that Career Counselors will be involved in every step of the student’s progress and maintain constant contact throughout the program. Counselors will be available for students either in-person or virtually to answer any questions or provide any feedback or advice. Should any problems arise, Counselors will seek to intervene as early as possible to resolve any issues and keep the student on track within the health career pipeline.

While the NACTEP program will be staffed with current employees experienced in the grant program, the Choctaw Nation desires to hire the highest quality staff to work in Choctaw Nation Career Development so they can truly assist economically and educationally challenged Choctaw Nation students and adult learners. In the event that a position is vacated, it will be advertised for and hiring will follow the Choctaw Nation Human Resources guidelines ensuring equal opportunity for all interested individuals (See Other Attachments). In order to qualify for employment as a Career Counselor, the applicant must possess a Master’s degree in counseling.
or a related field, as well as a valid teacher’s certificate and counseling license from the state of Oklahoma. The NACTEP Counselors will assist secondary and post-secondary Choctaw tribal members interested in pursuing a career in healthcare with a variety of services including: utilizing assessment instruments to help students identify career areas in the health career pipeline they are interested in and best suited for; researching and providing training opportunities to clients, utilizing assessment instruments to determine the academic readiness for potential students to succeed in training programs, making referrals to remedial services for students who need assistance, and assisting students with obtaining financial aid. Once students are admitted to approved healthcare training programs, Counselors will monitor their progress including attendance, grades, and certificate attainment. When students are nearing completion of training programs, Counselors will assist with resume preparation, interview skills, and information about job opportunities.

D. Quality of the Management Plan

1. Adequacy of the Management Plan to Achieve the Objectives of the Proposed Project on Time and Within Budget, Including Clearly Defined Project Objectives, Staff Responsibilities, Timelines, and Milestones

The Choctaw Nation Career Development Department will be working closely with Choctaw: HEROES because of its established relationships with local secondary schools and the regional career and technical schools. Since its inception in 2007, Career Development has retained an unsurpassed commitment to tribal members working towards a certification, licensure, or industry recognized credential. They have assisted more than 10,000 tribal members with career counseling, direct financial assistance for educational expenses, and academic and employment assistance to help members achieve their goals. Under the umbrella of both the
Choctaw Nation and Career Development, Choctaw: HEROES will continue the Nation’s legacy of achievement and support for all tribal members within the territory. Collaboration and open communication will be paramount to successful implementation and administration of the project, as the Nation is dedicated to helping its members find success, it will guarantee that the goals and objectives, listed below, will be accomplished. Choctaw tribal members will have found a way to build a financially stable future for themselves, local employers will experience growth in the pool of qualified applicants, and all of southeastern Oklahoma will reap the benefit of having highly-skilled Choctaw workers in the immediate region.

**Choctaw: HEROES Grant Timeline**

**Overarching Goal** – To increase the number of Choctaw tribal members/students in the STEM field, particularly in the healthcare profession, and/or health career pipeline.

**Primary Objective** – Recruit a minimum of 250 project participants (20 post-secondary; 30 secondary annually) to enroll in health-related STEM occupations, with an emphasis in nursing, that result in project participants completing CTE training and attaining industry-credentials which could lead to employment in in-demand health occupations in one of the following programs of study:

- Practical Nursing, Registered Nursing, Physical Therapy Assistant, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Respiratory Therapy Assistant, Health Careers Certification, and/or Allied Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Industry Guest Speaker/Presenter</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor Program</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Remediation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPR/Health Awareness Camp</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro. to Phlebotomy Camp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNA Certification Camp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Terminology Camp</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2021 Native American Career and Technical Education Program  
Choctaw: HEROES (Health Education in Rural Oklahoma for Employment Success)

| GPRA #1 | The percentage of CTE concentrators who remain enrolled in postsecondary education, are in advanced training, military service, or a service program, or are employed. |
| GPRA #2 | The percentage of CTE concentrators who receive a recognized postsecondary credential. |

**Project-Specific Objective 1:** Ensure CTE healthcare program success of post-secondary Choctaw participants who have been determined to need specific services, referrals, and/or life skills.

**Performance Measure 1.1** Assign 100% of enrolled project participants to a career counselor who will provide guidance and support for the duration of their CTE training.

**Performance Measure 1.2** Project participants will receive additional academic support and/or remediation to assist with CTE program completion. (Target of 85%)

**Performance Measure 1.3** Project participants will receive assistance in locating wrap-around social services while enrolled in CTE program of study. (Target of 85%)

**Performance Measure 1.4** CTE concentrators will complete employability series prior to completion of project participation. (Target of 85%)

**Performance Measure 1.5** CTE concentrators will complete their approved training within the allocated timeframe per program prior to completion of project participation. (Target 80%)

**Performance Measure 1.6** CTE concentrators will complete financial literacy training prior to completion of project participation. (Target 80%)

**Project-Specific Objective 2:** Increase career awareness regarding healthcare professions for secondary Choctaw students enrolled in targeted high schools.

**Performance Measure 2.1** Offer a minimum of two healthcare profession exploration activities per year to secondary Choctaw participants enrolled in targeted high schools.

**Performance Measure 2.2** Number of secondary Choctaw students who completed a minimum of one of the available healthcare profession exploration activities.

**Performance Measure 2.3** Establish a healthcare professional volunteer mentor program to provide career guidance and educational support to secondary Choctaw participants enrolled in targeted high schools. (Target of 5 mentors in Year 1 and 10 mentors in Years 2 - 5)

**Performance Measure 2.4** Offer a minimum of one health camp per year to secondary Choctaw students enrolled in targeted high schools who have expressed an interest in pursuing a healthcare occupation.

**Performance Measure 2.5** Report on number of secondary Choctaw students who enroll in a summer health camp. (specific targets will be based on camp/course being offered)

**Performance Measure 2.6** Number of secondary students enrolled in summer health camp will earn an industry-recognized certificate and/or certificate of completion. (Target 75%)
2. Extent to Which the Applicant Encourages Applications for Employment from Persons who are Members of Groups that have Traditionally been Underrepresented Based on Race, Color, National Origin, Gender, Age, or Disability

*Choctaw: HEROES* plans to retain the services of two seasoned Career Counselors who are already familiar with the proposed project and have proven track records in their previous roles within Choctaw Nation Career Development. Their willingness to work collaboratively with the Choctaw Nation and other partners as well as the drive to always be cultivating new professional relationships will be indispensable to the project. [Name] began her career as a classroom teacher for 13 years before working for the CNO. She earned her Bachelor’s degree in Education from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma and is currently in the final semester of a Master’s program in School Counseling from Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant, Oklahoma. Her current role is Academic Enhancement Instructor for the 2018 NACTEP grant. She has provided assistance and guidance to over 250 tribal members through career exploration, resume preparation, test prep coordination, and academic remediation. Recently, she presented at the National American Indian Science and Engineering Society’s Leadership Summit on behalf of the Choctaw Nation and the 2018 NACTEP program.

[Name] started her career with the Choctaw Nation in 2016 with the Human Resources Department as a Talent Development Professional. In her time with Human Resources, [Name] worked with leadership to develop and refine professional skills and competencies. She holds a Bachelor’s in Animal Science and a Master’s in International Agriculture from Oklahoma State University. [Name] has also earned a PMP Certificate (Project Management Professional) and is in the process of finalizing her Global Career Development Facilitator...
credential. She currently works as a Career Counselor for Choctaw Nation Career Development and has since September 2020. She has past success as a grant manager as she planned and executed two USDA grants for the Choctaw Nation, focusing on outreach, education, and connecting producers to critical resources.

Preference in hiring is always given to Native American applicants, especially Choctaw tribal members, via the CNO’s Choctaw Preference and Opportunity for Employment (HR 200). This policy also establishes that the Choctaw Nation does not discriminate based on race, age, color, religion, sex, national origin, gender, veteran status, or disability. As the largest employer in the southeast region of the state of Oklahoma, the Nation makes it a priority to seek out and prepare the best personnel to further the livelihood of families and communities in the area we serve. Once project personnel are hired, they attend a new-hire orientation which outlines the policies and procedures of both the Choctaw Nation and their respective departments. Project personnel attend trainings and conferences, at both the state and national level, should they be deemed instrumental or educational based on their occupation.

3. Extent to Which the Time Commitments of the Project Director and Other Key Personnel are Appropriate and Adequate to Meet the Objectives of the Proposed Project

&

4. Qualifications, Including Relevant Training, Expertise, and Experience of the Project Director, Key Personnel, and Project Consultants

High quality services from third party providers and project personnel will be ensured with the oversight of leadership in the Career Development department. [Name] Director of Career Development will also help oversee the project. [Name] has been with the Nation since 2007 and has worked her way through the tiers of Career Development to become the Director.
She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Education and a Master’s in School Counseling from Southeastern Oklahoma State University. [Name] is nationally certified as a Global Career Development Facilitator and a National Board Certified Teacher. She has assisted in the indirect oversight of numerous grant programs within the past three years since she has become the Director. [Name], who oversees the Teach 2 Reach and Project RISE programs for CNO Career Development, will direct the implementation of Choctaw: HEROES as well. [Name] has been serving in the career and educational fields since 2001. With nearly two decades of experience, [Name] brings years of experience and professional training to the program’s management. In addition to a Standard Teaching Certificate: School Counselor, Psychology/Sociology, [Name] holds a Global Career Development Facilitator license and is a member of the National Career Development Association. Her years of experience and professional relations with local and regional service providers will make for ideal management and oversight. Both [Name] and [Name] will work closely with the evaluator and the Career Counselors to ensure that all performance measures are met and they refer back to the original GPRA outcomes outlined by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education.

As the grant oversight body, the Choctaw Nation operates a Grants Services Department comprised of Grant Development, Grants Accounting, and Post-Award Departments. Grant Development provides training and technical assistance to all project managers during the pre-award stage of an application. Grant accountants provide post-award financial oversight and manage financial reporting. Grants Finance staff also support project managers post-award to monitor compliance to Uniform Guidance, alignment with project objectives, and timely spending of award funds. Additional support is provided by the Post-Award Department in data collection and source documentation retention. Post-Award agents work with project directors to
develop federal progress reports and track activities and progress toward grant goals and objectives.

E. Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. Extent to Which the Proposed Methods of Evaluation are Thorough, Feasible, and Include the Use of Objective Performance Measures that are Clearly Related to the Intended Outcomes of the Project

An outside Evaluator will be utilized, beginning in Year One of the project, to ensure that the measurable objectives are catalogued, that the Counselors remain on task, and the project itself adheres to the federal guidelines. Having the insight of a third party will guarantee that outcomes and timelines that were agreed upon by the Nation and Career Development remain in place and are respected. Over the course of the five-year project period, Counselors will meet with students interested in the healthcare industry to discuss goals, whether they be secondary, career-tech, or college related; then a plan of action can be formulated toward success.

2. Extent to Which the Methods of Evaluation will Provide Performance Feedback and Continuous Improvement Toward Achieving Intended Outcomes

Choctaw: HEROES staff will evaluate post-secondary success based on the number of participants that complete their CTE program in the allotted timeframe, credential attainment, and entry into the healthcare workforce. Staff will provide resources in this endeavor by coordinating test preparation with healthcare professionals, offering employability assistance with interview skills, resume writing, and conducting job searches. In addition, the program will collaborate with [Redacted], Executive Director for Oklahoma Native Assets Coalition (ONAC), Inc. to provide financial literacy assistance to program participants. ONAC offers free training and technical assistance for tribes and Native-led non-profits interested in designing and

Any and all evaluation reports, summaries, or other performance related documentation will be provided to Federal Program officers, CNO Senior Leadership, Career Development staff, and any representatives of our partner schools. This will help facilitate understanding and support for Choctaw: HEROES and will be especially helpful for Kiamichi Technology Center as they plan for their own fast-track LPN program in the future. Tracking a student’s overall commitment to such an intensive and time-consuming program, especially one done concurrently with the responsibility-heavy junior and senior years of high school, will speak to the project’s overarching goal of continuous improvement in the number of Choctaws pursuing post-secondary education opportunities. For KTC to see firsthand the number of students interested in the healthcare field, would be an excellent indicator for the success of future fast-track programs. Having regular reporting available for CNO Senior Leadership and for the Career Development staff will also help in demonstrating the success of the program using performance feedback and provide a framework to the Nation for the future sustainability of the project after the grant period ends.

In all, Choctaw: HEROES’s goal to help Choctaws find success through post-secondary education and establish themselves in financially stable careers in the healthcare industry will not only benefit our tribal members, but will also reflect the Choctaw spirit and strength as the Nation takes its first step toward an unprecedented project. Having such a dedicated team of professionals and partners all working toward a goal of young people finding success within the Nation and giving back to their communities will hopefully inspire others to achieve as well.
Placing the needs and wishes of tribal members at the forefront further shows the pledge to the Choctaw Nation mission: “…a sovereign nation offering opportunities for growth and prosperity.”