Choctaw Career and Technical Education Program

NARRATIVE

Overview of the Project

The Choctaw Career and Technical Education Program has operated continuously on the Choctaw Reservation since 1981.

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI), federally recognized since 1945, is a self-governing tribe of 11,034 enrolled members. About 9,700 live on or near the 35,000-acre Choctaw Indian Reservation in rural, east central Mississippi. MBCI is comprised of eight (8) federally recognized communities which are scattered over ten (10) rural Mississippi counties and are situated 10-to-80 miles apart. Fifty percent of Choctaws are below age 25. MBCI requires a 50% blood quantum for Tribal enrollment and has 52% fluent Choctaw speakers. Approximately 2,200 Choctaw students are enrolled in Choctaw schools in grades PreK-12th.

The Choctaw tribal government is headed by an elected Tribal Chief and an elected 17-member Tribal Council. The Tribal Council convenes quarterly for regular call meetings and for special call meetings when set by the Chief. Tribal government services are funded by federal discretionary and formula grants from various federal agencies: a PL 100-297 Tribally Controlled Schools grant; various BIA PL 93-638 and Indian Health Service contracts; and limited Tribal business revenue.

On the Choctaw Indian Reservation, the poverty rate is 35.6% among Choctaw families in Mississippi (Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). The median household income is $32,742. Alcohol abuse has been identified as a root cause of many social problems within families. Socioeconomic factors contributing to family problems include but are
a) multigenerational family households; b) financial hardship; c) substandard housing; d) 20% unemployment rate; and e) rural isolation.

Educational attainment levels of tribal members roughly parallel state and national averages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Attainment by Cohort</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population 25 years and over</td>
<td>4074</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 9th grade</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th to 12th grade, no diploma</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate (includes equivalency)</td>
<td>1167</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, no degree</td>
<td>1030</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or professional degree</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent high school graduate or higher</td>
<td>72.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent bachelor's degree or higher</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific objectives of the Choctaw Career and Technical Education Program (CTEP) are:
1) to increase the number of tribal students attaining technical education leading to high paying jobs on the reservation; 2) to prepare high school students for post-secondary study leading to jobs in science, technology, and engineering fields; 3) to upgrade computer skills of current tribal employees or those adults desiring jobs which require up to date computer skills.

The Choctaw Career and Technical Education Program will support 20 students annually pursuing technical courses leading to a Career Certificate (30 credit hours), a Technical
Certificate (45 credit hours) or an Associate of Applied Science Degree (60 or 61 credit hours) at nearby community colleges. Jobs in the area have been identified for successful students.

The Choctaw CTEP will also provide training for 10 high school students annually in the High School Technology Program. Topics will include Microsoft Office as well as computer programming. Two credit hours will be earned toward graduation.

Training will be provided for 20 adults annually toward an Administrative Office Certificate. This training will keep current employees’ computer skills up to date.

**Choctaw Native American Career and Technology Education Program**

**Competitive Preference Priority (5 points)**

The Choctaw Native American Career and Technology Education Program is promoting STEM with an emphasis on computer science in two ways in this application.

Ten high school students per year will be enrolled in the Business and Computer Technology course which is taught at the computer lab at the Manpower Training Center in Pearl River community. Students who complete this two-semester course will receive 2 credits which are applied toward a diploma from Choctaw Central High School. Students enrolled in the Business and Computer Technology course will acquire an educational foundation in technical and soft skills needed to succeed in 2-year or 4-year colleges or at institutions offering vocational and technical training.

Current employees at reservation organizations will be enrolled in three courses at the Manpower Training Center designed to increase or update skills related to information technology. The courses to be offered are Keyboarding, Administrative Assistant I and Administrative Assistant II. Adults need continuing education to remain proficient with
computer programs and information technology equipment found in today’s office
environment.

The goal is to provide training leading to an Administrative Office Certificate after
completing the training designed in coordination with East Central Community College.

(a) Need for the Project (10)

The Economy in the Choctaw Reservation Area

Like many rural communities in the U.S., the economy in the counties around the
Choctaw Reservation 25 years ago was based on manufacturing. People could graduate from
high school and get a job in one of the local factories. These factories employed a large number
of what were called "semi-skilled" workers. This meant that if a person could read, do basic
math, and had a strong back, then he/she could get a job which paid a living wage. Examples of
these factories in the reservation area were the sewing, automotive parts manufacturing, furniture
manufacturing, food processing and wood products.

The economy on the Choctaw Reservation was similar to that in the counties surrounding
the reservation. In 1978 the first automotive parts manufacturing plant opened on the Reservation
in the Pearl River Community. By 1990 there were automotive component plants in four
Choctaw communities employing over 2000 people. Almost any tribal member could get a job in
one of these plants and earn a modest but steady income. Times were good and everyone
assumed times would get even better.

Then something called "outsourcing" began to occur. Companies all over the U.S.
began to close factories and move production out of the U.S. to countries where wages were
lower. Mississippi, a state where 30 percent of workers were employed in manufacturing, was
especially affected. First, all of the sewing factories moved overseas. The tribal members employed off the reservation in these factories lost their jobs. Many had been employed in the factories over twenty years.

Next, the factories which manufactured automotive components began to go offshore. The Choctaw's first auto wiring harness factory, which the tribe owned, built harnesses for General Motors. GM moved its contracts with the tribe to Mexico in 1988. The tribe replaced the GM business with additional business from Ford. But in the early 1990's Ford began outsourcing its business to Mexico too. Soon the Chrysler and Navistar business also were lost. The tribe tried to replace the lost automotive customers with military contracts. But it found it could not find employees with the technical skills necessary to be competitive in such manufacturing.

The tribe tried for many years to resurrect its manufacturing business. But the reality is that the era of plants employing large numbers of “semi-skilled" workers is over. That work is now done in places such as south Asia, Mexico, and Central America.

1) Career Education and the Choctaw Economic Development Strategy (5 points)

The tribal government has had an Office of Economic Development for over 30 years. This office is charged with developing new job opportunities, monitoring the job market on the reservation, and managing retail and commercial buildings on the reservation. The office also prepares and updates a formal economic plan. The current Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for 2018-2023 is in place. Funding for this Plan is provided by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce. Technical assistance is also provided by EDA. An update to the strategy which considers the effects of COVID is under development and will be presented to the tribal council in April 2021. The Choctaw
CEDS emphasizes training tribal members for jobs which already exist on the reservation which are not usually held by tribal members. Currently 1,863 of the 4,645 persons employed on the reservation are non-tribal members. Most of these jobs are the higher paying jobs in health care, accounting, and education. Training in the Career and Technical Education Program will be provided for jobs such as automotive mechanics, skilled construction craftsmen, nursing at the Choctaw Health Center and the Choctaw Residential Center, information technology technicians, and hotel and resort management.

Also, there is a demand for skilled office workers. The skills needed to be successful in today’s office environment have changed. No longer is enough to be a skilled typist. Today an office worker’s value is also measured by his ability to use spreadsheets and presentation software such as PowerPoint. The ability to use technology such as Zoom for virtual meetings is needed. The fax machine is obsolete. The office worker needs to use scanning technologies and must use Adobe or similar software. To acquire these skills students will attend a local community college to obtain a certificate or associate degree in Office Management. Current tribal employees will be taught these new skills in order to remain productive in their jobs.

(2) Extent of the Need-The Choctaw Reservation Job Market (5 points)

The Choctaw Reservation job market is far different today from 25 years ago. Workers who might now be called "semi-skilled" find employment at the Pearl River Resort. The resort, which opened in 1995, consists of two casinos, three hotels with over 600 rooms, two golf courses, a water park operating in the summer, and several restaurants and fast-food businesses. Most workers are employed in the hotels as maids and maintenance workers, in food service as cooks and servers, and outside in grounds
maintenance. The average wage at the resort is around $13 per hour.

There are opportunities for employment in jobs which pay well at the resort. These jobs are in management, information technology, and accounting. There are also well-paying jobs in maintaining the HVAC systems, electrical and plumbing systems in the casinos and hotels.

A new $50 million health center opened on the reservation in the spring of 2015. The Choctaw Health Center employs around 360 people in jobs related to medicine, dentistry, nursing, and public health. It serves the over 9000 American Indians who live on the reservation or in the immediate area. A reality is that while there are many jobs available to Choctaws at the Choctaw Health Center, tribal members with skills in health care also easily find jobs in hospitals and medical facilities off the reservation too.

Construction is another area where skilled workers are in high demand. Currently the tribe is in the early phases of a project to build 100 new houses on the reservation. A tribal member with skills in carpentry, HVAC, plumbing or electrical can almost always find a job on a reservation project. He or she also can almost always find a job with an off-reservation contractor on an off-reservation project. The key is that the worker must have specific job skills.

Pearl River is the largest Choctaw community and the seat of government. The tribal headquarters, the new health center, the Pearl River Resort, Choctaw Central High School, and most tribal businesses are located here. Pearl River is situated in Neshoba County (population 30,000). Philadelphia is the county seat. When the resort opened in 1995 traffic between Philadelphia and Pearl River increased so much that State Highway 16 which connected the communities was widened to four lanes. About 10 years ago Philadelphia expanded its city limits
on Highway 16 to the boundary with Pearl River. Several large businesses have located along Highway 16 near the reservation. These include a new Ford dealership, Tractor Supply, Lowe's, McDonald's, Kidney Care, several motels, and several convenience stores. These are providing good job opportunities for tribal members. At least one additional auto dealership is considering locating near the new Ford dealership. A person trained in auto mechanics at a local community college always has a choice of employers.

*Demography*

Demographic Data have been accessed from 2015-2019 American Community Survey prepared by the Bureau of the Census. These data, presented in the chart on the following page, relate to the Choctaw population living on or near the Choctaw Reservation in east central Mississippi.

Unemployment was a problem on the Choctaw Reservation even before the COVID Pandemic. The unemployment rate on the Choctaw Reservation according to the 2015-2019 American Community Survey of the Bureau of the Census was 13.6%. A significantly higher percentage of Choctaws were in the labor force than in Mississippi or in the U.S. as a whole. This is because the Choctaw population is younger and fewer Choctaws over the age of 16 are in college or post-secondary schools. This presents a challenge for tribal leaders. Providing opportunities for tribal members in Career and Technical Education is needed to upgrade skills so they will be employable in today's modern economy.
EMPLOYMENT STATUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population 16 years and over</th>
<th>5,389</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In labor force</td>
<td>3,407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian labor force</td>
<td>3,407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>2,943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in labor force</td>
<td>1,982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian labor force</td>
<td>3,407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>(X)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 2015-2019 American Community Survey

The Choctaw Reservation remains poor when compared with Mississippi or with the nation as a whole. Per capita income trails badly because Choctaw families tend to be larger and younger than families in the state and nation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCOME</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Mississippi</th>
<th>Choctaw Reservation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income ($)</td>
<td>65,712</td>
<td>45,792</td>
<td>32,742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Household Income ($)</td>
<td>92,324</td>
<td>65,081</td>
<td>43,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Income ($)</td>
<td>34,103</td>
<td>24,369</td>
<td>11,380</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Most tribal members are employed either at the Pearl River Resort or in tribal government which includes schools and health care. The Table OCCUPATION indicates that 45.2% of tribal members employed on the reservation were in Service occupations. These jobs
typically pay much less than jobs in other occupations. Only 17.9% were employed in Management, business, science, and arts occupations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civilian employed population 16 years and over</td>
<td>2,943</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management, business, science, and arts occupations</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service occupations</td>
<td>1,329</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and office occupations</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production, transportation, and material moving occupations</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDUSTRY</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civilian employed population 16 years and over</td>
<td>2,943</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and warehousing, and utilities</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational services, and health care and social assistance</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services, except public administration</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With respect to INDUSTRY 31.8% were employed in arts, entertainment, and recreation,
and accommodation and food services. Most of these jobs are at the Resort. There were 677 employed in education, health care and social assistance. Most were employed in the tribal school system or at the Choctaw Health Center.

Effect of the Pandemic on the Reservation Labor Market

The pandemic on the Choctaw Reservation was a feature article in the October 8, 2020 edition of the New York Times. The article, ‘A Devastating Blow’: Virus Kills 81 Members of Native American Tribe, documented the hardships. After the April meeting of the tribal council, many of those attending were stricken including [redacted].

The 2020 COVID pandemic has changed the labor market on the reservation. Jobs at the resort, especially in culinary and food service, have changed. Many have disappeared as the signature food offerings at the casinos, the BUFFETS, are not offered now. At some point in a year or two maybe they will recover. In tribal government many jobs which were funded by profits from the casinos have been eliminated because revenues are down. The jobs which remain are those most essential. Perhaps this downsizing of tribal government was inevitable, but the lack of funds made it necessary in 2020.

The COVID pandemic has caused significant job losses on the reservation. On January 1, 2018 there were 6,402 people employed on the Reservation. Of this number, 3,602 were tribal members. On October 18, 2020 there were 4,645 people employed; 2,782 were tribal members. Tribal members lost a net of 820 jobs. Job losses were greatest at the Pearl River Resort. Food service was reduced, concerts were cancelled, occupancy rates at the hotels plummeted, and the water park never opened in the summer. The school year was disrupted as some students went virtual. Recreational activities were curtailed.
The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has been hard on the Choctaw people. As of January 24, 2021, there have been 100 deaths among tribal members living on or near the reservation. 1362 tribal members have tested positive for the virus. Sadly, several more tribal members living out of state have also died and their bodies were returned for burial on the reservation.

After 30 tribal members died in May and 33 tribal members died in June, made the decision to furlough all non-essential tribal employees. The tribal resort with its casinos, hotels, golf courses and water park were closed. In October, the resort opened with limited food service and capacity restrictions in the casinos.

The tribe’s new Choctaw Health Center, which opened in 2015, was a godsend. For the first time there were adequate medical resources available for tribal members.

The major cause of COVID illness and deaths seems to be overcrowding in houses on the reservation. Houses tend to be small. Multigenerational family units are common. Most families simply cannot afford larger houses. Currently there are over 200 families on the Housing Authority’s waiting list for rental houses.

(b) Project Design (40)

(1) Opportunities for Credentials and Employment (20)

The Choctaw Career and Technical Education Program will provide training to three groups:

1. Persons who have completed high school and seek vocational training in areas offered at nearby community colleges.
2. High school students who plan careers in areas such as information technology, engineering and other professions requiring daily use of computers.
3. Adults who are currently employed on the reservation who need additional training in the use of office computers, and adults who are not employed who need to upgrade their computer skills to get a job, or adults who are currently employed but who need additional computer training to get a better job or to keep their current job.

Each person who successfully completes the course of study provided through the Choctaw Career and Technical Education Program will receive credentials recognized by employers in the area.

1. Persons who complete a course of study at a local community college will receive credentials based on the curriculum chosen. The highest credential is the Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) which generally requires two years of study. A Career Certificate requires 30 hours of study. A Technical Certificate requires 45 hours of study. The path chosen depends on the student's ability as well as family and financial situation.

2. High school students who complete the Business and Computer Training Program will receive two credit units for successful completion. The credits apply toward high school graduation.

3. Adults who complete the Adult Business and Computer Technology Program will receive a certificate of completion from East Central Community College. The program is designed with the assistance of the East Central Community College Workforce Development staff.

The Training Components proposed for the next five years are in areas that will provide persons with the skills necessary for high paying jobs in the area.
Community College Level Training.

1. Training is proposed for two levels of Nursing. East Central Community College and Meridian Community College offer two-year programs leading to an associate degree in nursing which allows the successful student to become a registered nurse (RN) upon passing the state exam. Both community colleges offer a one-year program which allow the student to become a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). Persons with either degree easily find jobs in the area at the Choctaw Health Center, the Choctaw Residential Center (a nursing home located in Pearl River), with local off-reservation clinics and hospitals, and with home health and hospice organizations in the area. Most tribal members who complete the program find employment with the Choctaw Health Center. For many years there has been an effort to employ as many tribal member nurses there as possible because they are more likely to speak the Choctaw language and are familiar with Choctaw customs.

2. Training in Culinary Arts Technology and Hotel and Restaurant Management Technology is offered at East Central Community College. The Pearl River Resort is the largest employer on the reservation with three hotels, two casinos, two golf courses and a water park (open in the summer). Within the resort there are restaurants which range from fine dining (Phillip M's) to fast food. In addition to the resort restaurants, the Choctaw Tribal School system has cafeterias in schools in six communities. Of course, good job opportunities abound in nearby off reservation restaurants and hotels too.

3. Training will be offered through the community colleges in Automotive Technology. Auto dealerships in the area are always looking for trained mechanics. Letters of support have been obtained from the owners of the local Ford, GM and Chrysler dealerships.
They rely on the local community colleges for qualified employees.

The tribal government has operated a public transit system since the early 1980's. Five years ago it built a new transit maintenance building to repair and maintain the fleet of tribal automobiles, school buses, and various trucks and machines which it owns. The Choctaw Tribal Maintenance Center is always looking for trained mechanics. Tribal members completing the Automotive Technology program at a community college can find immediate employment with the tribe.

Nissan has an assembly plant near Canton, Mississippi. Persons who complete training in Automotive Technology at the community college often find employment with Nissan. Production technicians at Nissan-Canton currently earn $12-$24 per hour.

4. Instruction in Carpentry is be offered through the community college. There is always a demand for trained carpenters in the reservation area. The tribe started its own construction company in 1969 to build HUD houses. Over the years the company has built almost 1000 houses and millions of dollars’ worth of schools, hospitals, and commercial buildings both on and off the reservation. Tribal members trained as carpenters (or in other construction trades) are always in demand and usually find job with the tribe's company. However, these tribal members also easily find employment with off reservation companies too.

5. Training will also be provided through the community colleges in office occupations. Administrative Office Technology is offered through the community colleges. Today there are many jobs in offices on the reservation. These jobs are in the tribal government office, the resort and in various businesses now on the reservation. Trained
office workers are also in demand in nearby off reservation business and government offices.

**Administrative Office Management Certificate**

The East Central Community College Workforce Development Division works with communities and employers in its region to tailor courses specific to their needs. The Workforce Development Division has worked with tribal educators to develop a program specific to the needs of employers on the Choctaw Reservation and in nearby communities.

The **Adult Business & Computer Technology Program** is designed as a series of three areas of computer training in which the students to become proficient in computer usage. Each attendee completes 45 hours of instructions in each of the three classes. The attendees first complete Keyboarding. Next, they advance to Administrative Assistant I where there is introduction to Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Access, and PowerPoint will be taught. Those in the third level receive training in advanced applications of the Microsoft Suite.

The Adult Business & Computer Technology is designed to increase the employment retention and earnings of the adult employees. Adults who are underemployed or who have been unable to find jobs may benefit from attending these classes. Additionally, employees who want to upgrade their computer skills also benefit. Persons who complete the three classes will receive an Administrative Office Management Certificate from East Central Community College.
High School Business and Computer Technology

The High School Technology Program is taught as a 2-hour daily program which involves first learning the keyboard. The course is taught at the tribe’s Manpower Center. As the students become competent in using the keyboard, additional skills are added to the program. Every day the students complete speed drills to increase/reinforce their skills. The program increases their computer skills by instruction in Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Access, Microsoft PowerPoint, and Microsoft Publisher. The program also includes Employment Skills and Financial Management. The students apply what they have learned in the Microsoft programs to complete the Employment Skills and Financial Management activities. The students who successfully complete this course are awarded 2-unit hours which count toward high school graduation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Components</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community College-Associate in Applied Science</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Associate Degree Nursing</td>
<td>1 (new)</td>
<td>1 (cont.)</td>
<td>1 (new)</td>
<td>1 (cont.)</td>
<td>1 (new)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Automotive Technology</td>
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<td>1 (cont.)</td>
<td>1 (new)</td>
<td>1 (cont.)</td>
<td>1 (new)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community College-Twelve-Month Certificate</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Licensed Practical Nursing</td>
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<td>2 (new)</td>
<td>2 (new)</td>
<td>2 (new)</td>
<td>2 (new)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel &amp; Restaurant Mgt. Tech.</td>
<td>1 (new)</td>
<td>1 (new)</td>
<td>1 (new)</td>
<td>1 (new)</td>
<td>1 (new)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automotive Technology Certificate</td>
<td>2 (new)</td>
<td>2 (new)</td>
<td>2 (new)</td>
<td>2 (new)</td>
<td>2 (new)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction Trades-Carpentry</td>
<td>1 (new)</td>
<td>1 (new)</td>
<td>1 (new)</td>
<td>1 (new)</td>
<td>1 (new)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Business &amp; Office Technology:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Assistant</td>
<td>7 (new)</td>
<td>7 (new)</td>
<td>7 (new)</td>
<td>7 (new)</td>
<td>7 (new)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**High School Business & Computer Technology**

| Business & Computer Tech. I | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 50 |

**Administrative Office Management Certificate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Office Management:</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>100</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Clients</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>250</td>
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(2) Appropriate to the Needs of Choctaw Job Seekers (10)

Description of Courses to Be Offered

The Practical Nursing program prepares the individual to assist in providing general nursing care requiring basic knowledge of the biological, physical, behavioral, psychological, and sociological sciences; and of nursing procedures which do not require the substantial skills, judgment, and knowledge required of a registered nurse. Students who complete the program requirements will be eligible to apply to take the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN). The Practical Nursing program is accredited by the Mississippi Community College Board.

The Associate Degree in Nursing Program is designed to prepare candidates for a career in nursing at the associate degree level. The curriculum includes a balance of general education and nursing courses to support a comprehensive theoretical base for nursing practice. Clinical experiences are concurrent with the theory component during the four semesters. Successful graduates receive an Associate of Applied Science Degree (AAS) and may meet the requirements of the State Board of Nursing to take the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN®). East Central Community College’s Associate Degree Nursing program is accredited by Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) and the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning.

Potential employers are the Choctaw Health Center, the Choctaw Residential Center, Neshoba General Hospital, and the Leake Baptist Medical Center (Carthage).

The Hotel & Restaurant Management curriculum at East Central Community College provides specialized occupational instruction in all phases of hotel and restaurant
management to prepare students for careers as manager/supervisors in the hospitality and tourism industry. The curriculum includes courses on hotel operations, restaurant and catering, hospitality marketing, hospitality supervision and culinary principles. Potential employers are the Pearl River Resort and local hotels near the reservation.

The Administrative Office Technology Program (certificate) is designed to prepare potential students for entry-level training in administrative office procedures, integrated computer applications, business financial systems, communication, and related technologies. Potential employers are the Choctaw Tribal Government, the Neshoba County Courthouse, and the many small businesses in the area.

The Automotive Mechanics Technology curriculum is built around the eight Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certification areas - engine repair, electrical and electronic systems, engine performance, brakes, steering and suspension systems, manual drivetrains and axles, automatic transmissions and transaxles, and heating and air conditioning. The course is an articulated technical program designed to provide advanced and technical skills to students. Baseline competencies, taken from the secondary automotive mechanics curriculum framework, serve as a foundation for the competencies and suggested objectives taught in the courses of the program. Students who do not possess these competencies will be allowed to acquire them during the program. Students who can document mastery of the baseline competencies will receive advanced instruction on these topics. While enrolled in the community college program, students have the opportunity to train with professional level tools and equipment, including the same computer resources and computerized diagnostic tools that many automotive repair businesses use. Full time students can take advantage of the major tool manufacturer's (Snap- On®, Mateo®, and Mac© for example)
discounts on many of their hand tools and tool storage solutions.

Potential employers are Choctaw Transit (Choctaw), Griffis Chrysler, Marshall Ford, and Tolbert GM (all of Philadelphia). There is a shortage of qualified service technicians and graduates of East Central Community College always find immediate jobs.

The Residential Carpentry program is designed to prepare students for entry-level employment. It provides training in the basic and advanced skills needed to have a successful career in the field of residential carpentry. The training in this course is centered on technical knowledge and hands-on experience in all the stages of construction from foundations and framing to finish carpentry and cabinet making. A student who completes the first year will receive a certificate in Basic Residential Carpentry.

Potential employers are IKBI Construction (Choctaw) and Yates Construction (Philadelphia).

High school students who successfully complete the Business and Computer Technology course will be prepared to further their study in programs leading to a four-year degree or at technical schools where a knowledge of computers is required.

Adults who complete the Administrative Office Management curriculum will have the job skills needed for employment in office as well as in off reservation settings.

(3) Linkages with Other Workforce Programs (5)

Training will be offered on the reservation at the Manpower Building for tribal employees and other adults who need to acquire or upgrade their computer skills, for students from Choctaw Central High School (for students to learn computer skills), and at community colleges serving the Choctaw Reservation area.
The tribe participates in Native American programs funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Both the tribe's Department of Employment and Training director) and the Career and Technical Education Program director) are under the tribe’s Workforce Development Department which is directed by is the tribe's representative on the Twin Districts Local Workforce Development Area’s board which encompasses 24 counties in southeast Mississippi. The tribe's Department of Employment and Training works closely with local WIN centers in Philadelphia, Newton, Carthage, and Meridian. These are managed by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security. The Manpower Office on the Reservation has been designated by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security as a WIN center.

On a local level the tribe supports the Community Development Partnership (CDP). This is the local "Chamber of Commerce." The tribe has two employees who sit on the CDP Board of Directors. The Board is composed of local business leaders, the mayor of Philadelphia, and county supervisors. The CDP sponsors local job fairs and addresses specific labor force issues in the area. Recently it convened a meeting of local auto dealers and educators from vocational schools in the surrounding area to discuss the critical need for mechanics. The CDP also manages the Neshoba Business Enterprise Center (NBEC), a small business incubator. A representative from the tribe's Economic Development Office is a member of the NBEC Board of Directors.

(4) Professional Development Services (5)

In order to keep current with new development in Technical and Career Education, professional staff need to have opportunities for continuing education. Such opportunities typically take the form of enrollment in courses at nearby colleges and universities, attendance at
workshops and meetings at which ideas can be exchanged, access to on-line courses and access
to periodicals and websites which provide information about Career and Technical Education.

In order to meet this need, the following avenues will be used:

1. Tribal staff may participate in seminars and meetings offered through the
   Twin Districts Local Workforce Development Area. Program staff will meet
   regularly with the staff of the East Central Community College Workforce
   Development Team at access the new materials, training and other resources
   which are available through the community college system.

2. Program staff will meet with Workforce Development staff at Meridian
   Community College to find out what training is offered there and what
   resources are available. Meridian Community College can serve the Choctaw
   Reservation. Its programs are similar to ECCC's.

3. Program staff will travel to Meridian to meet with faculty of the Mississippi
   State University's Department of Instructional Systems and Workforce
   Development. There may be opportunity for staff to take for credit courses
   toward a degree or attend training offered through the department.

4. Staff will be encouraged to attend the annual Mississippi Adult Education
   Conference. This meeting is held each summer, usually in Jackson. There is
   no conference fee. This will provide an opportunity for staff to exchange ideas
   with others working in adult and career education in the state.
(c) Adequacy of Resources (15)

(1) Support and Facilities (2)

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians has operated a Career and Technical Education Program since 1981. A Manpower Training Center was built during the 1980's specifically for training adults. Over the years the types of training offered there changed depending on the needs of reservation employers and the needs of tribal members. Today there are four classrooms.

There are offices for program directors. There is a small library. Computer technology changed over the years. Today the classrooms are equipped with up-to-date hardware and software. Wi-Fi is available in the building. The building is maintained by the tribe's custodial staff. There is adequate parking around the building. It is quite sufficient for the proposed NACTEP project.

The High School Technology Program is also conducted at the Manpower Building. Students are transported to the Manpower Building from Choctaw Central High School about one mile west. The primary provider of off reservation instruction is East Central Community College. East Central's main campus in Decatur, MS. Decatur is about 25 miles south of Pearl River Community but only about 5 miles east of the Conehatta Indian Community. East Central also has classroom space on the reservation at Pearl River in the industrial park. Classes are conducted there when there is sufficient demand. East Central's enrollment in 2018 was 2275 students.

East Central Community College has a modern campus. Its mission is to prepare students for employment in vocational and technical fields as well as to prepare students to attend a 4-year college or university.
Meridian Community College, located in Meridian, Mississippi, has also provided training for students. Many Choctaws have received bachelors' and masters’ degrees from the Meridian Branch of Mississippi State University, which is located on the same campus as Meridian Community College. Meridian has historically provided a way for older non-traditional students to complete their education.

(2) **Budget (5)**

This budget plans for 20 slots annually for students seeking associate degrees, 45-hour technical certificate or 30-hour career certificate at local community colleges. The budget also will provide classroom training for 10 high school students (2 semesters, 2 hours per day). In conjunction with East Central Community College Workforce Development Team, 3 courses have been designed for adults currently employed or seeking skills which will assist them in getting a job. A certificate of completion signed jointly by East Central faculty and the Choctaw Career and Technical Education staff is awarded.

The tribe built the Manpower Building in 1981 explicitly for the use of programs such as NACTEP. No rent to programs is charged.

(3) **Commitment (3)**

CTE agreements from East Central Community College, Meridian Community College, Holmes Community College, Pearl River Community College, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College and Northwest Community College are presented in the Optional Attachments of the SF424.

Letters of support from local employers are presented in the Optional Attachments of the SF424. Letters are from the Choctaw Health Center and Neshoba General Hospital, three local
auto dealerships and Choctaw Transit, and the Pearl River Resort.

(4) Instructors (5)

The Choctaw Career and Technical Education Program (NACTEP) employs as the Business and Technical Education instructor has bachelor and master's degrees in Business Education and an Educational Specialist degree in Technology Education, all from Mississippi State University. She has over 30 years teaching experience in the high school classroom and has been employed at Choctaw since 2001.

Teaching staff at East Central Community College (and other Mississippi community colleges) work under the auspices of the Mississippi Community College Board. Technical staff are chosen for their knowledge and skill in specific areas which they instruct. The president of each community college is responsible for maintaining qualified staff. The staff are subject to reviews to make sure they are providing the instruction needed.

Instructors in career/technical areas tend to hold Associate degrees in the subject in which they are instructing. They also tend to have considerable work experience in the area they are teaching.

Instructors in Nursing have at least a bachelor's degree in nursing with an RN credential. Most have a master's degree, usually in nursing.

(d) Management Plan (25)

(1) Adequacy of Management Plan to Achieve Objectives (10)

_Program Management Plan (10)_

The tribe already has in place the management system and organizational structure required for
the able administration of this program and its coordination with reservation employers and related training and employment programs, e.g., Workforce Development, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Basic and General Education Diploma, and the Tribal Scholarship Program. All tribal grants and contracts are administered through a departmental system for program management efficiency and effectiveness. The Choctaw Career and Technical Education Program is placed administratively within the Division of Education under the direct supervision of the division director. The division director supervises program directors and helps in program implementation and accountability. Additional technical and related planning assistance is available from Tribal Administration, the Office of Economic Development, and the Office of Planning.

The program director is a full-time program employee with direct line responsibility for all staff employed by the program, for the day-to-day supervision of all program activities, for all budgeting and procurement, for compliance with grantor terms, and for coordinating expenditures for training supported by such programs as Workforce Development and Tribal Scholarships. In addition, the director works with the cooperating community colleges to assure that course content is relevant to employer expectations, that instruction is of high quality, and that support services are readily available. Frequent meetings between program and college staff are held to manage issues of financial accounting, student attendance, student records and reporting, and other management issues. All staff employment and termination actions are the program director's responsibility, with advice and concurrence from the division director and subject to the provisions of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' personnel policies.

The program's administrative structure responds to the tribe's mandate that all training and related support services lead to employment and, concurrently, support for the tribe's economic
development plan. Meetings with the Workforce Development Program, vocational rehabilitation, and adult education staff occur at regular intervals for trainee recruitment, selection, training, counseling, and job placement.

Career and Technical Education program records are held in the program's central files, with participant information maintained by training component. Participant records include those associated with recruitment, selection, training performance, attendance, placement and follow-up. These centralized files assure proper documentation of project progress and reports. Confidential trainee files are kept current and include the following: application for training, grades, progress reports, test scores, counseling session reports, tutorial records, copies of graduation/completion certificates and job placement and follow-up records. The community colleges provide regular reports on participants and expenditures. The data are entered into the program's internal records management system.

Internal monitoring is conducted by the program director in coordination with staff responsible for each component and with the community colleges. All reports are prepared by the director and forwarded through the education director to the Office of the Tribal Chief and to the CFO as appropriate.

All instructional materials and equipment are centrally stored at program headquarters and strict inventory records are maintained. All program equipment is entered into a centralized and automated tribal inventory control system managed by the Tribal Procurement Officer.

Financial Management Plan

The tribe has provided educational, social, health, housing, economic development, research, demonstration, training and planning services for over forty years. All tribal grants, contracts,
and tribal resources are managed under an administrative and fiscal plan which provides for the following:

- administrative chain of command.
- organization chart reflecting lines of supervision.
- standard tribal classification and pay scale for employees.
- departmental system for program efficiency and effectiveness.
- comprehensive program planning system.
- computer system for word processing, accounting, payroll, records management, and inventory for all tribal operations, including those of the hospital and enterprises.
- centralized fiscal accounting system, with annual outside audits conducted in accordance with grantor and contractor guidelines.
- financial policies and procedures.
- centralized personnel system.

The Choctaw Career and Technical Education Program works within the context of this management system.

The financial management system of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians is one which assures (1) adequate accounting and proper internal controls; (2) preparation and maintenance of all required financial records and reports; and (3) the receipt, expenditures and accounting for all grant/contractor/tribal funds in accordance with general and special grant conditions, budget limitations, agency guidelines, and approved plans of operation. The tribe has a history of rigorous accountability in its financial management practices, with its Single Audit - which includes the tribal enterprises - having no questioned costs.
(2) Encouragement of Applications from Underrepresented Groups (5)

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' Division of Education does not discriminate in policies, procedures, employment, admissions, or eligibility for class or program participation on the basis of race or racial heritage, color, national origin, religion, gender, or disability in violation of the law. However, in accordance with federal law, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians adheres to an officially announced policy and practice of extending preferential treatment to qualified Indians in regard to employment.

(3) Time Commitments of Key Staff (5)

Key staff include the project director, tribal mentor, business and technology instructor, administrative assistant and receptionist. One hundred percent (100%) of the time of all of these employees will be devoted to the NACTEP project. The project will contract with an external evaluator for the annual evaluation. The evaluator is expected to spend 10 days preparing the evaluation. At least 6 days will be spent onsite gathering information, conducting interviews and presenting his findings to staff and tribal administrators.

(4) Staff Qualifications (5)

Program director is [REDACTED] holds an A.A. degree in Liberal Arts from East Central Community College and a B.S. in Management from Belhaven College. She has been director of the Career and Technical Education Program since November 2008 (13 years).

Administrative assistant is [REDACTED] received an A.A.S. from East Central Community College in 2004. She has been employed in several positions in the Choctaw Workforce Department since 2003. She is familiar with budgeting and reporting
requirements of NACTEP.

[Name] is Business & Computer Technology Instructor. [Name] holds a B.S and M.Ed. in Business Education and an Educational Specialist's degree in Technology Education, all from Mississippi State University. [Name] has taught in high schools in the area for over thirty years. She has been employed with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians since 2001.

Tribal mentor is [Name] completed a G.E.D. in 1984. She received a Nursing Assistant Certificate from Rice College in 1984. She earned an A.A. degree in Liberal Arts from East Central Community College in June 2004. She has worked with the Career and Technical Education Program since October 2007 (10+ years). Prior to her current job she worked as a counselor at the Choctaw Health Center in Behavioral Health and as a police officer on the Choctaw Reservation for 7 years.

[Name] is the receptionist and secretary. [Name] received an A.A.S. degree from East Central Community College in 2015. She has worked with the Career and Technical Education Program since 2014.

[Name] is the custodian. Forty per cent of his salary is charged to the Program. Sixty per cent of his salary is paid directly from tribal funds.

Resumes of staff are included in the Optional Attachments of the SF424.

Quality of Project Evaluation (10)

(1) Methods and Performance

An annual evaluation of the Choctaw Career and Technical Education Program has been conducted since inception of the program in 1981. The program has been evaluated by an outside expert in the field of vocational education. Three goals have been set forth.
• **Goal One** - Enrollment in Training

Goal one is the enrollment, through a five-year period, of 250 tribal members in training components for jobs which exist on the reservation and for which there are insufficient numbers of tribal members with the vocational and academic competencies needed to occupy those positions.

• **Goal Two** - 70 Percent Completion

Goal two is the completion of training (either certificate or degree) by a minimum of seventy percent of participants.

• **Goal Three** - 80 Percent Placement

Goal three is the eighty percent placement rate of participants completing career and technical training. Community college graduates will be either placed in jobs commensurate with their skills or will continue college. High School students and adult Administrative Office Management will continue educational pursuits or gain employment.

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 directed that education programs funded by the federal government set quantifiable goals and conduct periodic evaluations to determine whether those goals were being met. The Act further instructed that program managers use those evaluations in planning for future programs. There are two levels of evaluation which should occur:

• 1. Internal evaluations should be conducted by program personnel and tribal administration to assess whether there is participation in the NACTEP programs by tribal members is as proposed in this application, whether participants are completing their study, and whether the program budget is being followed.
• 2. An external evaluation should be conducted, and an annual report prepared. The evaluator should meet with program staff at the beginning of the school year to convey how the evaluation will be conducted, to familiarize himself with the program planned for the coming year, and to instruct the staff about the data which needs to be collected so that the program can be objectively evaluated.

• 3. The Choctaw Project proposes to provide services at both the secondary and post-secondary levels.

The evaluation at the secondary level shall document:

1. An increase in the percentage of CTE students who-
   a. Attain academic proficiency, as demonstrated by meeting academic content standards and student academic achievement standards that meet challenging State-defined academic standards for reading/language arts and mathematics.
   b. Attain career and technical skill proficiencies, including student achievement on technical assessments that are aligned with industry-recognized standards.
   c. Attain a secondary school diploma.
   d. If a credential, certificate, or degree is offered by the State in which the project operates, in conjunction with a secondary school diploma, attain a proficiency credential, certificate, or degree in conjunction with a secondary school diploma; or
   e. Are placed in—
      i. (i) Postsecondary education or advanced training.
      ii. (ii) Military service; or
      iii. (iii) Employment.
The evaluation at the post-secondary level shall document:

1. An increase in the percentage of CTE students who—
   
a. Attain challenging career and technical skill proficiencies, including student achievement on technical assessments that are aligned with industry-recognized standards.

b. Attain an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or a degree.

c. Are retained in postsecondary education or transfer to a baccalaureate degree program.

d. Are placed in— (i) Military service; or (ii) Apprenticeship programs; or

e. Are placed or have been retained in employment, including in high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations or professions.

(2) Performance Feedback (5)

Reporting to ensure continuous feedback to program staff and program partners will be both interactive and summative. The interactive will consist of exchanges between staff involved in program implementation and the evaluator concerning any potential problems. It will include monitoring of students and feedback to staff. A quarterly director's report to the evaluator regarding information needs should promote the use of the data in decision-making. There will be four management reports by staff containing information needed in the evaluation plan. This combination ensures that a steady stream of information is available throughout the program period, thereby allowing time for adjustments to be made as the need arises.
The evaluator and program staff will meet quarterly to discuss the progress of the students, the data which is being collected for use in the final evaluation and any issues which may have come up during the quarter.

Evaluator Expertise

Program evaluation activities for this project will be conducted by [Name Redacted] has served as the external evaluator for the Choctaw Career and Technical Education program since 2014. He has also served as the external evaluator of the Choctaw Vocational Rehabilitation since 2009. He holds a degree in sociology from William Carey College and a master's in education from the University of Southern Mississippi. He has held a series of progressively responsible positions in state government for over 30 years. [Resume Redacted] resume is included in the Attachment containing the staff resumes.