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**CHEROKEE NATION**<sup>®</sup>  
P.O. Box 948 • Tahlequah, OK 74465-0948  
918-453-5000 • www.cherokee.org

Office of the Principal Chief

**Chuck Hoskin Jr.**  
*Principal Chief*  
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**Bryan Warner**  
*Deputy Principal Chief*  
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January 28, 2025

Study on Senior Nutrition Sites

### Executive Summary

This cover letter memorializes the 2023 conducted study, authored by Deputy Secretary of State Taralee Montgomery, exploring the critical aspects of Senior Nutrition Sites operated by the Cherokee Nation's Human Services Department and evaluates the feasibility and benefits of program expansion.

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Chuck Hoskin, Jr., Principal Chief

## 2023 Senior Nutrition Site Review<sup>1</sup>

Through a combined effort a review was done of the Cherokee Nation Senior Nutrition Sites led by Deputy Secretary of State Taralee Montgomery and relevant stakeholders within the Human Services Dept. and the information is detailed below.

Currently there are 14 sites operational. Under this new review it is proposed to provide **9 part-time sites** (two or three days per week) and **5 full-time sites** (M-F) with an additional **2 new full-time sites** for a **total of 16 Senior Nutrition Sites**. This review also includes;

- 1) consolidation of resources for efficiency and fiscal responsibility
- 2) expanded access to meals via van services and meal delivery
- 3) increased wages for employees
- 4) a review of areas with highest concentrations of elders who are underserved.

Simple changes resulting from the review is the 1) a **policy change to dictate an elder being any Cherokee Nation citizen who is 60+ and to dictate the quality or mechanism of food provided.** 2)The development of an activities coordinator to serve at the sites for activities for the participants.

### Increased wages for Cherokee Nation Senior Nutrition Site Employees and budget considerations –

It was reported by Human Services that the total budget (attachment A) for senior nutrition sites is **\$1,098,850** annually through a combined series of funds. After reviewing the budget employees who are serving at senior nutrition sites should be raised from \$13/hr to \$15/hr remaining consistent with the standard indicated in the Executive Order of employee wages.

Activities coordinators should be implemented but this can be absorbed into other duties in Human Services. Coordinators should be actively engaged with CNB National Treasurers, CCO and other internal groups to provide classes and outreach to elders. Activity coordinators should operate much the same as cooks with shared sites.

### Review of Policies and Procedures –

Cherokee Nation Human Services should amend current policies to include two mandates.

- 1) an elder should be considered any Cherokee Nation citizen age 60+
- 2) Cherokee Nation Human Services should consult with Public Health and Cherokee Nation Health Services to review the menu and dietary guidelines for elder nutrition sites, including a mandate of cooked food vs. frozen or reheated meals.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from original study written by Deputy Secretary of State Taralee Montgomery, dated November 21,2023 and submitted to the Principal Chief on that date.

Expansion and review of operational sites –

1. Current operational sites broken down by location and district include –

<b>District #1</b> Wisdom Keepers Dry Creek Caney/Tailholt
<b>District #2</b> Greasy Oaks Kenwood
<b>District #3</b> Evening Shade Belfonte Marble City Tsa-La-Gi Porum
<b>District #4</b> Nowata Spavinaw
<b>District #5</b> Foyil

2. A review of Cherokee Nation citizens, elders age 60+, indicated the need for expansion in three communities where the number of elders exceeded 1000.

**Tulsa, Oklahoma – 3718** elders located in Tulsa proper, with two known external partners in that area.

**Tahlequah, Oklahoma -1926** elders are located in or near Tahlequah proper. Currently Cherokee Nation and HACN operate one site at Wisdom Keepers near downtown Tahlequah. It is the belief of this review that the existing site cannot accommodate the full need and a site should exist in a more rural area near Tahlequah or in a more general location in Tahlequah.

Additionally, there are three sites listed below with high concentrations of elders who would qualify but, have other resources in the area *OR* do not have viable resources to produce CN Senior Nutrition Sites currently.

*Muskogee, Oklahoma* – 1385 Cherokee Nation citizens age 65+ are located in rural communities surrounding Muskogee including communities like Braggs, Gore and Ft. Gibson and Summit. All of which have locally operated nutrition sites in their communities.

*Stilwell, Oklahoma* – 1029 Cherokee Nation citizens age 65+ are located in or near Stilwell proper. Currently Cherokee Nation operates a site in Greasy and two external sites are operated in Stilwell and Westville.

*Bartlesville, Oklahoma* – 962 elders located in Bartlesville proper and surrounding, with one known external partner in that area. We do not recommend engaging in a site in the Bartlesville area because of the relationship that exists between Delaware (the other provider).

### Consistency review –

Moving forward CN Senior Nutrition Sites should operate on either a M,W,F or a T-TH schedule with larger sites ,or sites considered deserts, operating M-F. It should be the goal of the Cherokee Nation Human Services department to have **a senior nutrition site operational full time in the communities with the highest concentrations of Cherokee Nation elders (age 60+, more than 900 elders)**. Additionally, **food should be available full time to elders living in areas that have been identified previously or in the future as “food deserts” by the Cherokee Nation.**

### Review of Existing sites-

Sites that are currently operational should be further reviewed for functionality, including open days. We reviewed the existing sites based on staffing, scheduling, resources and number of eligible elders. Our recommendations are to **combine resources and create a part-time and full-time schedule**. Benefits include, **more stable employment for staff, more fellowship opportunities for elder participants and more reliable resources for elders.**

The current sites require a review and some attention based on their size and/or equipment, as follows;

**Marble City Senior Nutrition**, currently located at 711 N. Main – **it is recommended that this site needs repairs/expansion and should be combined with services available at the new Marble City Community Building.**

**Evening Shade Community Center**, currently located at 453929 E. 995 Rd. – **This site is on the CCO list for FY 2024 Capital improvements.**

**Greasy Community Center**, currently located at 467505 E. 932 Rd. – **This site is in need of substantial repairs and improvements and is not on the CCO list for FY 2024 capital improvements.**

**Oaks Senior Center**, currently located at 324 E. Cherokee BLVD. – **this site is not owned by the Cherokee Nation and it is recommended that space owned by the tribe be allocated for this use in the same community.**

**Nowata Senior Center**, currently located at 1018 Lenape Drive – **this site is small but, owned by Cherokee Nation. Opportunities for expansion should be explored for this site.**

**Kenwood Senior Center**, currently located at 1147 County Road 487, - **this nutrition site should relocate to the new Community Building in Kenwood upon its completion and provide daily van and delivery service to community members.**

### Sites that are recommended to see changes –

Sites that are recommend to see changes to their services are as follows;

**Oaks Senior Nutrition Site** – When this site relocates to the new Oaks Community Building, a **new schedule of Tuesday and Thursday should be instituted with van service and delivery available to Kenwood location on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.** This approach would employ a van driver at the Oaks site on off days (M.W,F) and still provide access to meals.

**Marble City Senior Nutrition Site** – This site is located in a food desert and currently serves M-TH. **This site should be relocated to the new Marble City Community Center and extend its service to be M-F.**

**Spavinaw Senior Nutrition Site** – **This site should be moved** from a M,TU, Wed schedule **to a M,W,F schedule to remain consistent** with needs in the area. The Kenwood site is 20 minutes away and currently feeds M-F and provides van access.

**Foyil Senior Nutrition Site** – is a unique model and **should remain open at least one day per week**, with the current operations occurring on Tuesday or Tuesday/Thursday schedule.

**Implementation of van delivery services of drive-thru sites –**

Cherokee Nation Human Services should complete further review on sites that could utilize delivery services to reach more elders who may be home bound or are not aware of our program.

**Partnerships with Cherokee Nation Community Centers/ CCO –**

It is the opinion of this review that Senior Nutrition sites should pair up with Cherokee Nation Community Centers were applicable. These partnerships should be mutually beneficial for CCO, HACN and Human Services in that Senior Nutrition sites in that the Cherokee Nation space cost pool policy should apply. There are several cases that already exist proving that this partnership is beneficial. For FY 2024 a formal MOA partnership should be in place with community centers who would like to serve as nutrition sites. This will include but is not limited to;

- A formal MOA between the community org, Human Services and CCO
- Guidelines on when the center is required to be open for nutrition purposes.
- Standard financial allocation amounts as prescribed by the Cherokee Nation Elder Nutrition program.

**Partnerships with the Housing Authority of the Cherokee Nation and external entities –**

It is the opinion of this review that CN Senior Nutrition Sites that currently exist inside HACN properties should be improved. These partnerships should include agreements for space, staffing and activities provided to elder participants.

Please see the following pages for budget information -

Congregate meals by site:

CONGREGATE MEALS													
FY'23													
	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	TOTAL
<b>District #1</b>													
Wisdom Keepers	388	449	394	375	469								2,075
Dry Creek	0	0	0	115	161								276
Caney/Tailholt	121	127	181	179	157								765
<b>District #2</b>													
Greasy	0	0	0	143	0								143
Oaks	249	233	199	213	185								1,079
Kenwood	402	341	461	422	588								2,214
<b>District #3</b>													
Evening Shade	220	205	272	256	293								1,246
Belfonte	139	127	122	124	140								652
Marble City	474	482	486	451	580								2,473
Tsa-La-Gi	297	281	314	318	414								1,624
Porum	377	377	413	390	326								1,883
<b>District #4</b>													
Nowata	53	15	0	0	0								68
Spavinaw	78	107	96	79	101								461
<b>District #5</b>													
Foyil	74	59	47	43	70								293
	2,872	2,803	2,985	3,108	3,484								15,252

Home delivered meals by site:

FY '23													
	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	TOTAL
<b>District #1</b>													
Wisdom Keepers	0	0	0	0	0								0
Dry Creek	192	216	216	10	24								658
Caney/Tailholt	14	27	29	20	19								109
<b>District #2</b>													
Greasy	244	296	260	32	185								1017
Oaks	23	89	77	90	73								352
Kenwood	131	132	159	155	213								790
<b>District #3</b>													
Evening Shade	146	133	170	162	144								755
Belfonte	55	92	82	74	86								389
Marble City	21	13	4	0	36								74
Tsa-La-Gi	96	109	129	100	136								570
Porum	116	123	122	136	116								613
<b>District #4</b>													
Nowata	10	4	0	0	0								14
Spavinaw	0	0	0	0	0								0
<b>District #5</b>													
Foyil	17	24	3	7	16								67
Totals	1065	1258	1251	786	1048								5408

Budget associated with current sites –

Food: 5-days a week meal site serving 25 participants daily  
 \$2,500 per month =\$25,000  
 \$3,000 November & December =\$6,000 =\$31,000

2-3 days a week meal site serving 25 participants  
 \$1,250 per month =\$12,500 =\$15,500  
 \$1,500 November & December=\$3,000

Existing grocery costs by site:

	April-23	May-23	June-23	Jul-23	August-23	Sep-23	#####	Nov-23	#####	Jan-24	February-24	Mar-24	TOTAL
<b>District #1</b>													
Wisdom Keepers	\$ 2,101.56	\$ 2,421.16	\$ 2,310.97	\$ 1,758.51	\$ 70.15								\$ 8,662.35
Dry Creek	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,457.03	\$ 1,887.60								\$ 3,344.63
Caney/Tailholt	\$ 1,040.00	737.78	\$ 617.76	\$ 1,285.25	\$ 1,300.11								\$ 4,243.12
<b>District #2</b>													
Greasy	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,549.31	\$ -								\$ 1,549.31
Oaks	\$ 1,104.77	\$ 2,163.12	\$ 1,731.62	1830	\$ 1,638.01								\$ 8,467.52
Kenwood	\$ 1,763.78	\$ 3,473.32	\$ 1,963.24	\$ 1,711.43	\$ 2,384.47								\$ 11,296.24
<b>District #3</b>													
Evening Shade	\$ 2,581.99	\$ 1,829.97	\$ 1,163.71	\$ 2,509.82	\$ 992.27								\$ 9,077.76
Belfonte	\$ 1,354.19	\$ 1,526.80	\$ -	\$ 534.37	\$ 2,368.60								\$ 5,783.96
Marble City	\$ 4,315.89	\$ 2,298.59	\$ 1,773.46	\$ 1,985.20	\$ 1,908.21								\$ 12,281.35
Tsa-La-Gi	\$ 1,531.39	\$ 2,813.30	\$ 1,679.21	\$ 1,493.73	\$ 2,012.86								\$ 9,530.49
Porum	\$ 1,975.70	\$ 1,662.41	\$ 2,422.85	\$ 1,711.05	\$ 2,218.90								\$ 9,990.91
<b>District #4</b>													
Nowata	\$ 913.6	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -								\$ 913.6
Spavinaw	\$ 654.44	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -								\$ 654.44
<b>District #5</b>													
Foyil	\$ 396.49	\$ 75.65	\$ 1,203.1	\$ 779.27	\$ 919.0								\$ 1,463.62
	\$ 8,911.56	\$ 18,264.32	\$ 13,783.13	\$ 18,604.97	\$ 16,873.08								\$ 86,437.06

New estimated annual budget per site:

Full time sites (7): Groceries \$31,000- \$35,000 per year; staffing \$245k per year; NEW rent \$300/month by site \$25,200 = \$305,200 operation cost per year for all 7 full time sites

Part time sites (9): Groceries \$15,500-\$16,000; staffing \$235,656 per year; NEW rent \$150/ month by site \$16,200 = \$267,856 operation cost per year for all 9 part-time sites

New activities budget \$30,000 per year

New total budget - \$603,056 - \$605,000 annually for all sites