



G W Y A D B P
CHEROKEE NATION®
Education Services

**The Comprehensive Cherokee Nation Education
Act of 2024**

**Annual Status Report of Cherokee Nation Higher
Education Programs and Partnerships**

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Cherokee Nation Education Scholarship Act Annual Review of Scholarship Programs and Partnerships

Education Services College Resource Center

INTRODUCTION

Cherokees have long believed that education is the springboard to a brighter future for our people. Since the advent of mission schools and our Cherokee National Male and Female Seminaries, education has played an immense role in our advancement as a nation.

Attaining a higher education degree is a truly momentous occasion and something to be proud of for a lifetime. In turn, it also encourages younger students to achieve their goals by showing them what is possible.

Cherokee Nation (CN) College Resource Center is an advocate for CN citizens pursuing higher education. Scholarship advisors provide comprehensive student advisement and scholarship searches. CN scholarships are available for eligible CN citizens residing within the CN reservation and contiguous boundaries or citizens who are eligible for the Pell grant and living anywhere in the United States. Eligible high school juniors and seniors may also qualify for concurrent college classes.

The Center has eight (8) scholarship advisors serving more than 6,600 students attending 568 colleges and universities across the United States. With a caseload average of 800 students, current processing time is 6-8 weeks.

College Resource Center Staff

Manager, Rachel Fletcher

Special Assistant, Brenda Butler

College Resource Specialist, Daniel Williams

Scholarship Advisor (A-B), Becky Kessen

Scholarship Advisor (C-E), Jennifer Grayson

Scholarship Advisor (F-H), Jonathan Meigs

Scholarship Advisor (I-M), Shayna Macias

Scholarship Advisor (N-R), Taylor Goodrich

Scholarship Advisor (S), Alica Salazar

Scholarship Advisor (T-Z), Neesie Blossom

Scholarship Advisor (Concurrent Enrollment), Bailey Green

I. CURRENT AND HISTORIC SCHOLARSHIP EXPENDITURES and STUDENT COUNTS

Scholarship Funding History

In early 2000's, the CN Scholarship was funded based on a student's Pell-eligible status. Students eligible for Pell received a portion of the Self-Governance funding averaging \$287 per semester, while Non-Pell and Graduate students were paid \$1,000 per semester based on legislative act.

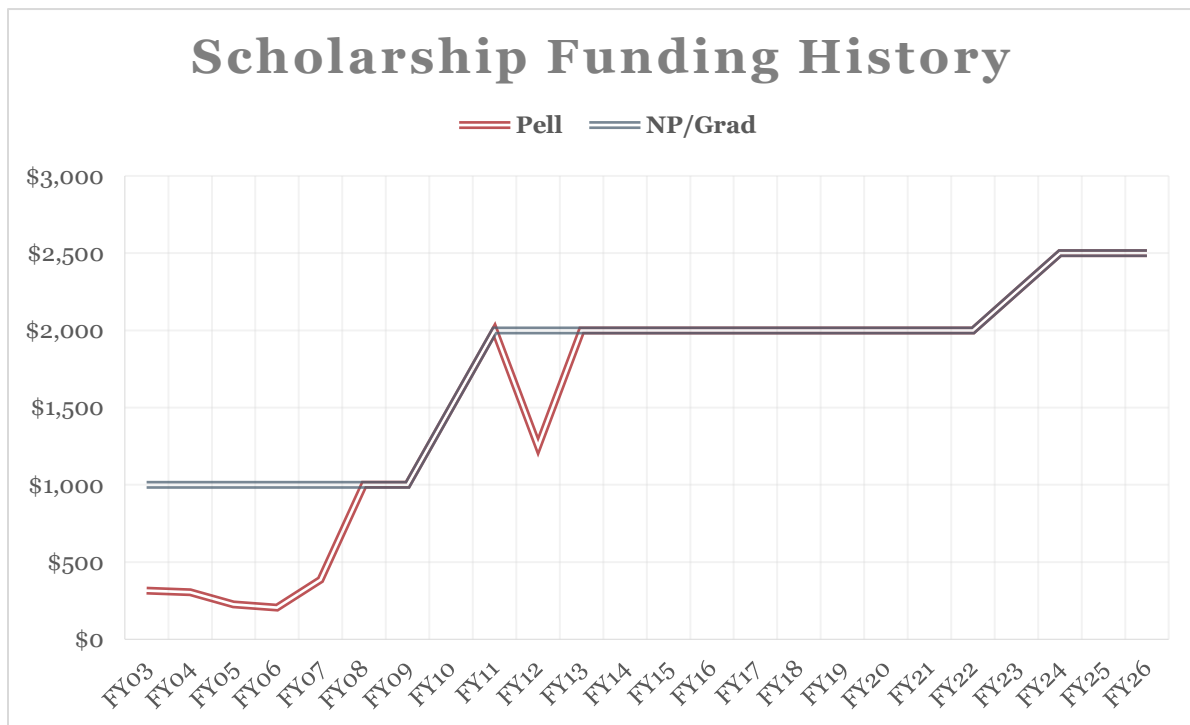
In 2007, funding for all students, regardless of Pell-eligible status increased to \$1,000 per semester.

In 2009, funding increased to \$1,500 per semester.

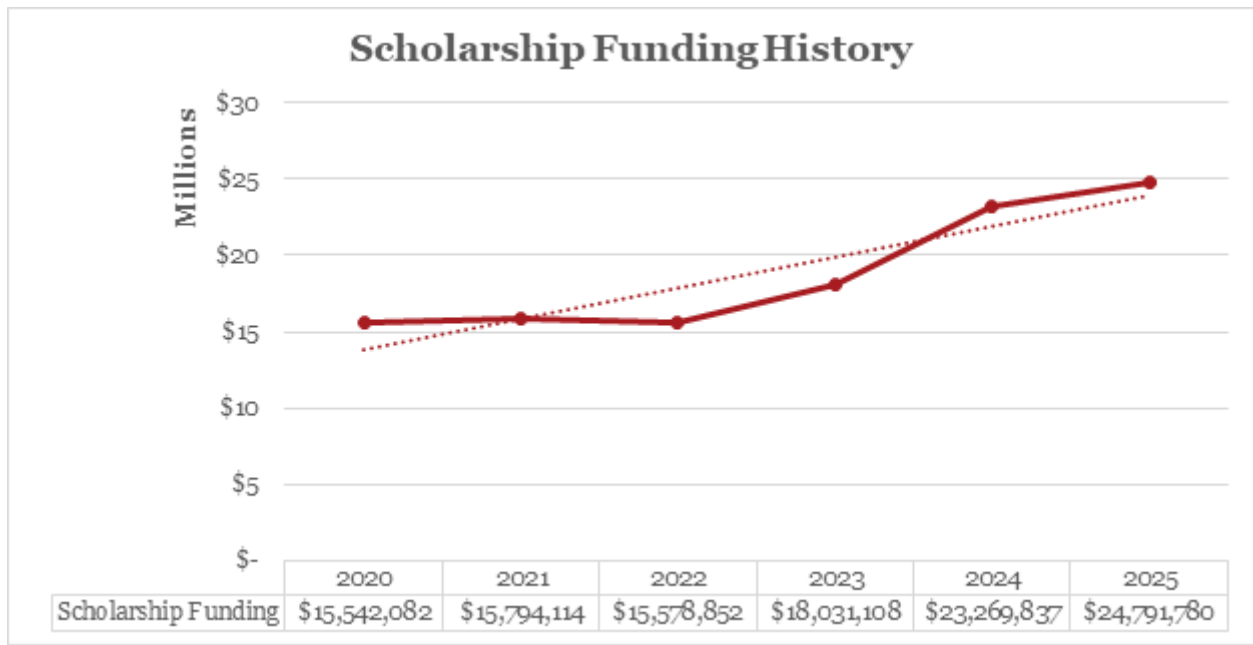
In 2010, funding increased to \$2,000 per semester.

In 2012, Pell funding changed to needs-based funding. Scholarship awards averaged \$1,250 per semester.

Funding remained at \$2,000 per semester until 2023, an increase of \$500 per semester increase over two-year period starting with a \$250 per semester increase to \$2,250 per semester and \$250 per semester increase in 2024 to reach the highest level ever at \$2,500 per semester.



Year	CN Scholarship	Concurrent Enrollment	Total
2020	\$15,115,183	\$426,899	\$15,542,082
2021	\$15,354,841	\$441,274	\$15,796,115
2022	\$15,031,631	\$547,222	\$15,578,853
2023	\$17,562,091	\$492,642	\$18,054,733
2024	\$22,775,064	\$462,990	\$23,238,054
2025	\$24,259,599	\$532,182	\$24,791,780



Undergraduate Scholarship

Scholarship program for CN citizens working toward their first associate's or bachelor's degree. Must apply for the federal PELL (FAFSA) grant. Full time enrollment for 12 or more earned hours, and part-time funding for 6 to 11 earned hours. Limited to 80 hours for associate's degree and 180 hours for bachelor's degrees. Proprietary institutions are not eligible under this scholarship.

At-Large Undergraduate Scholarship

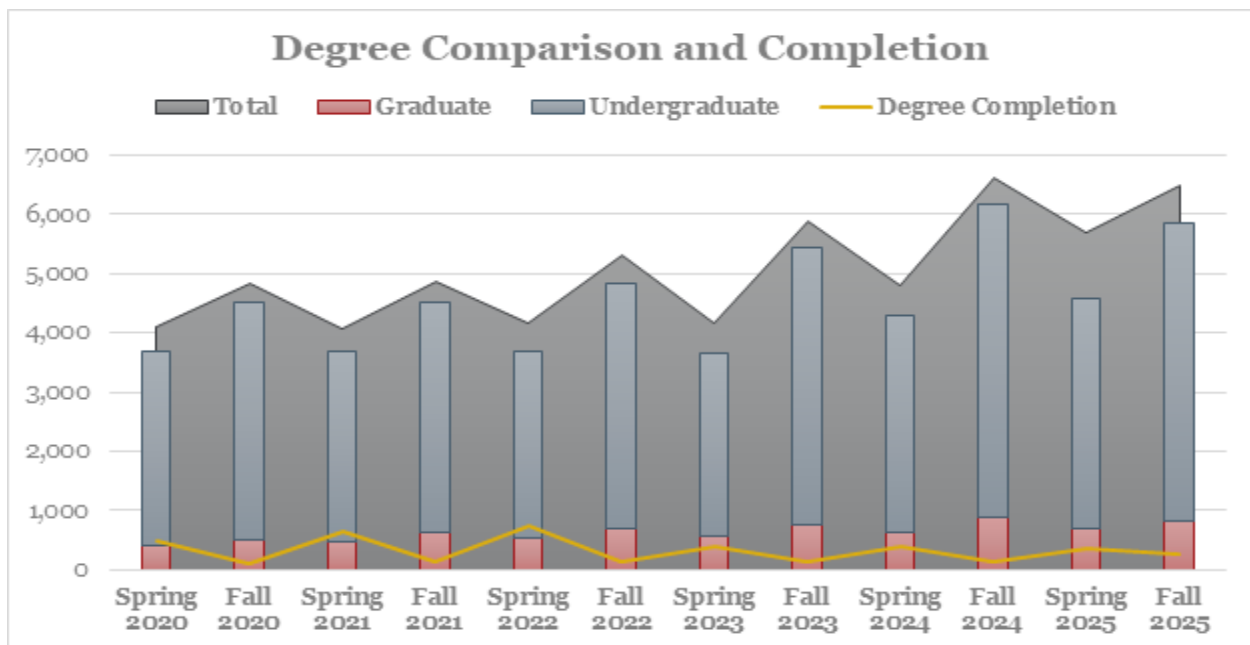
Scholarship program for CN citizens living anywhere in the United States working toward their first associate's or bachelor's degree. Must apply for the federal PELL grant (FAFSA). Students whose permanent address is outside the CN Reservation area or contiguous counties must be eligible for the federal Pell grant to be eligible for the CN At-Large Undergraduate scholarship. The contiguous area, gray area on enclosed map. Full time enrollment for 12 or more earned hours, and part-time funding for 6 to 11

earned hours. Limited to 80 hours for associate's degree and 180 hours for bachelor's degrees. Proprietary institutions are not eligible under this scholarship.

Graduate Scholarship

Scholarship program for CN citizens seeking their first master's or doctorate degree. Applicants living outside the CN Reservation or Contiguous area are not eligible. Proprietary institutions are not eligible under this scholarship. Master's degree work is limited to 6 semesters. Doctoral degree work is limited to 8 semesters. Full-time enrollment for 6 or more earned hours, and part-time enrollment for 3-5 earned hours.

Semester	Graduate	Undergraduate	TOTAL	Degree Completion
Spring 2020	411	3,268	4,107	501
Fall 2020	521	3,989	4,827	112
Spring 2021	462	3,241	4,061	661
Fall 2021	624	3,894	4,875	137
Spring 2022	532	3,158	4,157	755
Fall 2022	711	4,137	5,322	133
Spring 2023	572	3,083	4,176	388
Fall 2023	749	4,682	5,874	138
Spring 2024	638	3,666	4,816	390
Fall 2024	880	5,294	6,606	128
Spring 2025	684	3,909	5,691	372
Fall 2025	837	5,027	6,492	251

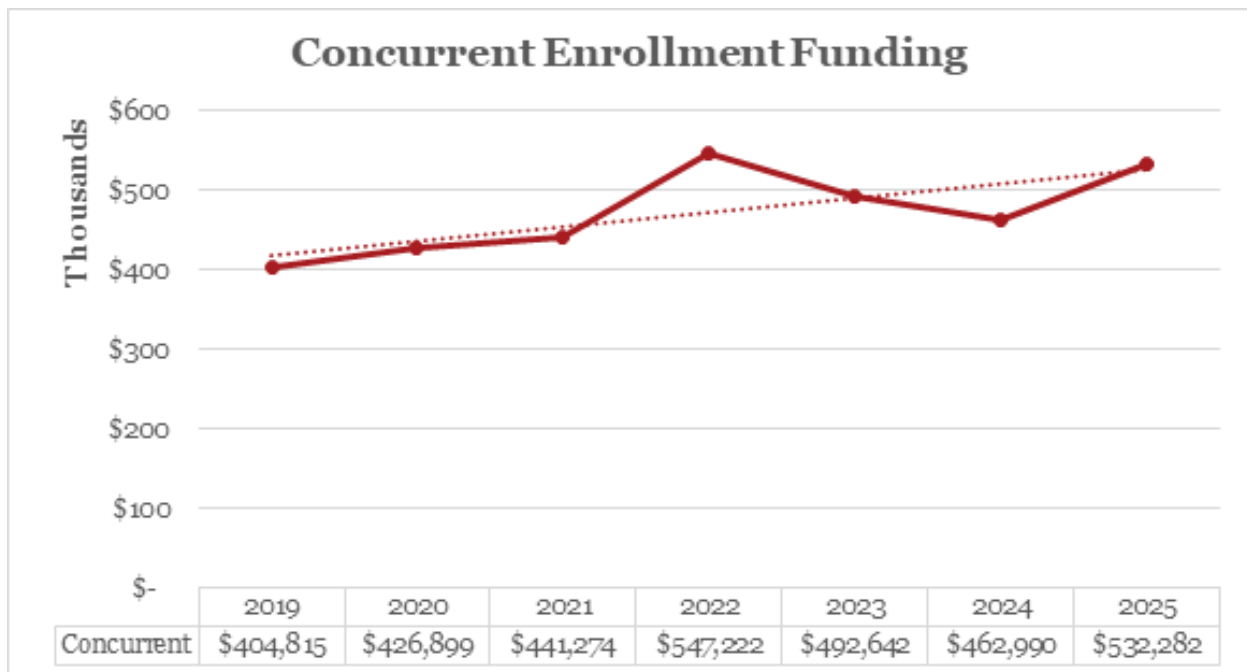


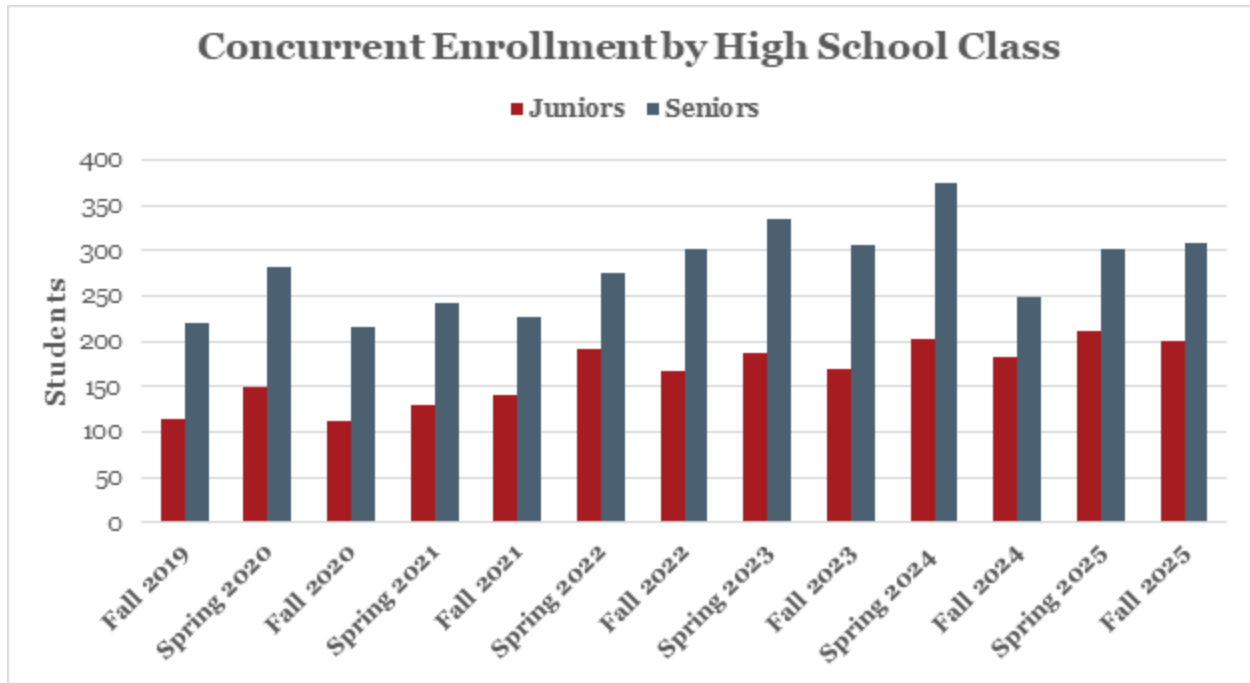
Concurrent Enrollment Scholarship

Scholarship program for high school juniors and seniors who are CN citizens seeking general education college credit hours while still attending high school. Students must be eligible for concurrent enrollment through their high school, with approval from a high school official and parent approval. Must submit college class schedules and transcripts.

Students will receive funding towards tuition, books and required fees for up to six (6) credit hours concurrently enrolled each semester. Summer semester will not be funded. Students who wish to take more than six hours will be responsible for payment. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) may waive six credit hours of tuition for seniors; the CN will pay the seniors cost of books and fees.

Scholarship payments will be made directly to the college/university. Payments will be made from one invoice for tuition, books and fees. Books must be charged at the on-campus bookstore and included on invoice from the college/university. No reimbursements will be made to the student or parent. Books not included on the invoice will be the responsibility of the student.





Concurrent Enrollment	Juniors	Seniors	Total
Fall 2019	115	221	336
Spring 2020	150	282	432
Fall 2020	111	215	326
Spring 2021	130	241	371
Fall 2021	140	226	366
Spring 2022	191	276	467
Fall 2022	168	302	470
Spring 2023	187	335	522
Fall 2023	170	305	475
Spring 2024	203	374	577
Fall 2024	182	248	430
Spring 2025	211	301	512
Fall 2025	201	309	510

Emergency Education Assistance

Scholarship program to provide financial assistance to CN citizens who are working to return to college or seek required certifications or licensures but are not able to due to financial barriers or for extenuating circumstances approved on by the Education Services Executive Director. Scholarship will be limited to one-time funding.

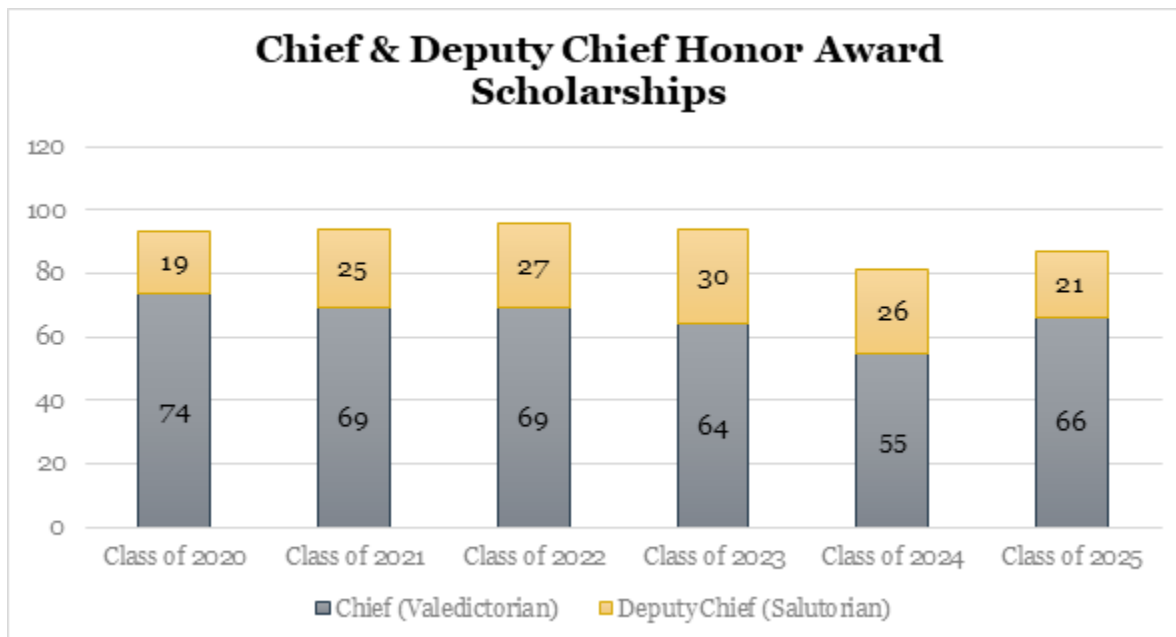
FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
10	1	5	15	20	27

Chief and Deputy Chief Honor Award Scholarship

Scholarship program recognizes and awards scholarship funds to CN citizens who are named Valedictorian or Salutatorian at public high schools located within the CN Reservation area and contiguous counties.

The one-time scholarship award of \$1,000.00 to a Valedictorian and \$750.00 to a Salutatorian is in addition to any funds the recipients may receive through the CN College Resources. If the high school decides to select more than one Valedictorian or Salutatorian, the award will be distributed equally between the numbers of eligible awardees. Students must have a GPA of at least 3.5 in order to qualify. In cases where schools do not name Valedictorians or Salutatorians, a Class Rank of 1 and 2 will qualify for the scholarship award.

Graduating Class	Chief Honor Award	Deputy Chief Honor Award	Total
Class of 2020	74	19	93
Class of 2021	69	25	94
Class of 2022	69	27	96
Class of 2023	64	30	94
Class of 2024	55	26	83
Class of 2025	66	21	87



II. SUMMARY OF EXISTING HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS WITH THIRD PARTY ENTITIES, INSTITUTIONS, COLLEGES, UNIVESITIES AND NON-PROFITS

Northeastern State University

Cherokee Nation and Northeastern State University (NSU) regarding the Gadugi Portal

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to develop and establish an agreement between NSU and CN for communicating to CN citizens through the Gadugi Portal, whereas CN citizens become acutely aware of training and education opportunities at NSU, financial incentives available through NSU and CN, cultural connections and workforce opportunities within the CN, and access to NSU and CN support services.

Cherokee Nation, Sequoyah High School (SHS), and Northeastern State University regarding Direct Admissions

The purpose of this MOU is to develop and establish a direct admissions program between NSU and SHS for SHS enrolled students, whereas (SHS) students may be automatically admitted to NSU without the need for submitting the standard application for admission. The intent is to outline student information necessary to facilitate admission of SHS students to NSU.

Cherokee Nation and Northeastern State University College of Education

The purpose of this MOU is to govern the use of scholarships to be provided by the CN to graduate students enrolled in NSU College of Education, Master of Science in Counseling Program, Addiction Counseling Track. The scholarship money will be spent entirely on students and will not be used for faculty, staff, or any department.

Cherokee Nation Education Services and Northeastern State University

The purpose of this Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is to collaborate on efforts to improve professional development and career placement of qualified pre-service teachers in pursuit of their education and licensure, including, but not limited to, implementing activities as outlined in the application for Department of Education (DOE) – 2025 Indian Education Professional Development (PD) application.

Cherokee Nation Foundation

Cherokee Nation and Cherokee Nation Foundation (CNF)

The purpose of this MOU is to simplify terms surrounding the Comprehensive Scholarship Act and outlying scholarships facilitated by the CNF that are clearly defined with the legislative act and require action.

***Cherokee Nation and Cherokee Nation Foundation for
Implementation of Public Health and Wellness Fund Act (PHWFA)
Behavioral Health Scholarship***

The purpose of this MOA is to establish a perpetual source of undergraduate and/or graduate scholarship assistance for CN citizen students pursuing degrees in behavioral health fields such as: LCSW -Licensed Clinical Social Worker, LPC- Licensed Professional Counselor, LADC- Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor, Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Post-Doctoral Psychologist (Under Supervision) or other in-demand behavioral health fields as determined by Cherokee Nation.

University of Northern Alabama

Cherokee Nation and University of Northern Alabama

The purpose of this MOU is to offer CN employees and CN citizens in good standing a scholarship to those accepted into any online or traditional undergraduate or graduate programs, certificates, or micro-credentials.

III. TOTAL FUNDING PROVIDED BY CHEROKEE NATION OR ANY OF ITS ENTITIES TO THE CHEROKEE NATION FOUNDATION DURING THE MOST RECENT FISCAL YEAR

Cherokee Nation \$188,813

Programs - \$50,000

Scholarships – \$125,000

Payroll Deductions – \$8,136

Chief's Fund - \$3,677

Jiggs Phillips Scholarship - \$2,000

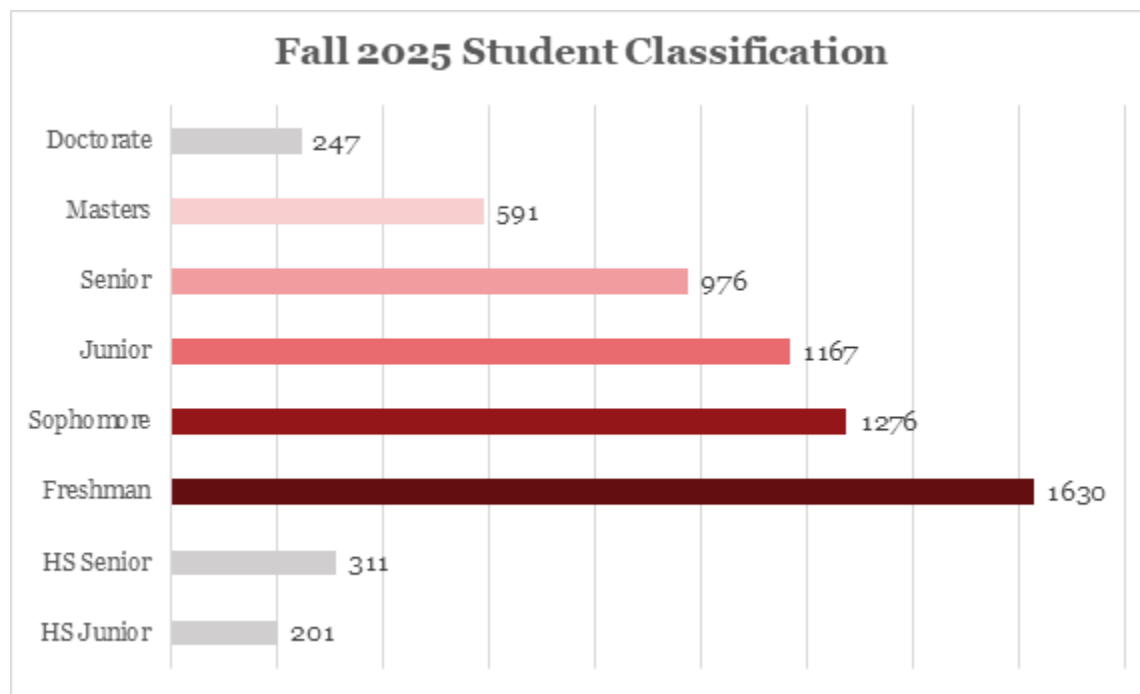
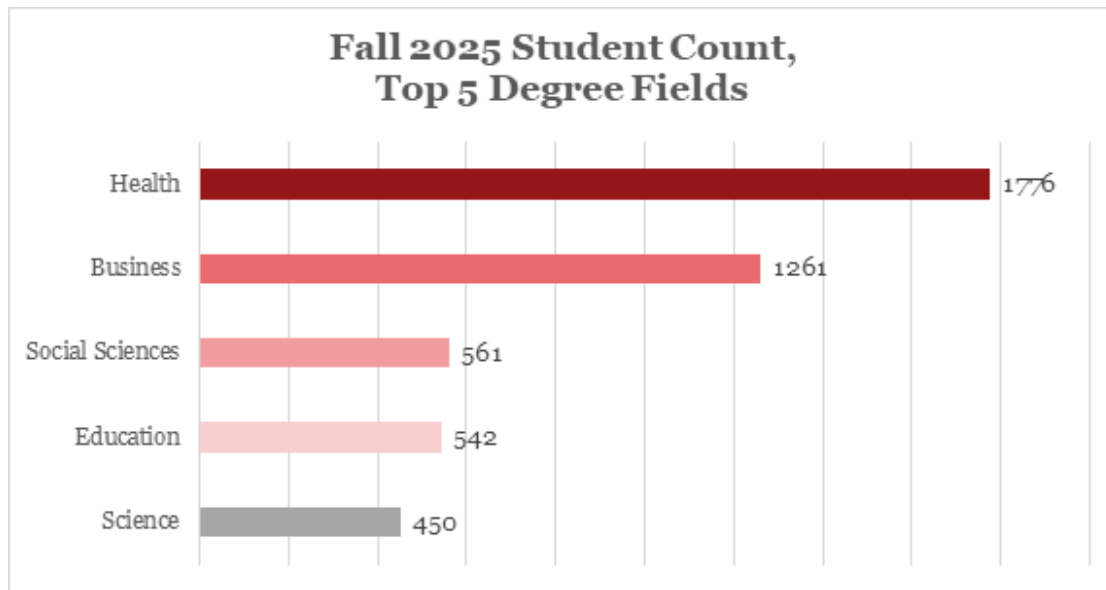
IV. MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS OF CHEROKEE NATION'S HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM, INCLUDING GRADUATION RATES AND JOB PLACEMENT

Beginning with 2021 academic year through Fall of 2025, CN College Resources program has increased the number of Fall semester awards by 20%. This success is a result of increased outreach to high schools, within and outside the CN reservation boundaries. An attendance increase from CN citizens at our College Fairs is also a contributing factor to the increase in scholarship awards.

Graduation rates are another measurement of success. Currently, CN College Resources has two methods to compile graduation data. The CN Stole program provides useful data to track graduation rates. CN has reported an increase, year over year, in stole applications since 2020. Students may also self-report their degree completion date.

CN College Resources is actively working on solutions to capture more complete data regarding graduation and retention of students attending a college or university. Data

sharing agreements with colleges and universities will allow CN College Resources to track student progress and deliver resources in a timelier manner. A survey is in development to gather historical information regarding a scholarship recipient's degree completion status and employment status. This survey will be conducted using the Gadugi Portal. As technology and software advances at CN, capturing data will be more efficient.



High School Honor Cords

The CN College Resource Center Honor Cord is available for current graduating high school seniors that are CN citizens. Students are eligible for an honor cord once per lifetime. Honor cords are provided to recognize CN citizens at high school graduation ceremonies. The Class of 2023 was first to receive the Honor Cord.

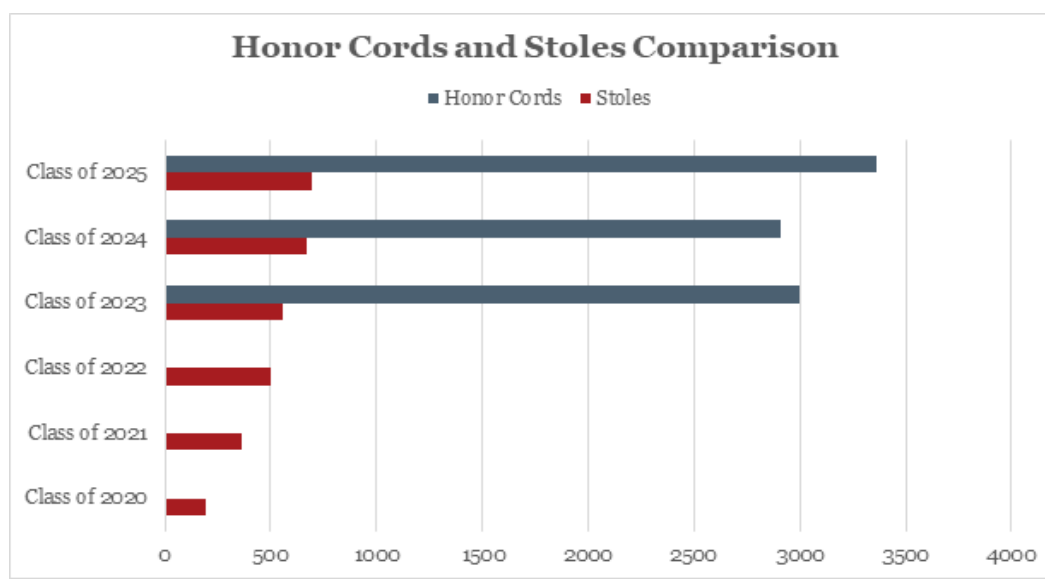
Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025
3,002	2,910	3,361

Stole Program

The CN Stole program is available for college students who are currently graduating and are CN citizens. The program offers the opportunity to receive graduation stoles for one associate (Art, Science, or Applied Science – Nursing), bachelors, masters, or doctoral degree. Under this program, students graduating from high school or vocational programs are not eligible. The student is responsible for obtaining permission from the college/university to wear the stole during commencement. Applications should be submitted at the beginning of the semester. Spring 2019 commencement was first to receive the stole.

The CN Stole program is a simple but meaningful way we can reward students who have completed their educational goals. The attractive red and white stole reads “Cherokee Graduate” in our written syllabary language and is designed to accompany the student’s traditional graduation cap and gown.

Class of 2020	Class of 2021	Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025
196	365	498	558	674	695



V. ANALYSIS OF THE COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION RELATIVE TO CHEROKEE NATION'S SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS, INCLUDING PROJECTED COSTS

Average Cost of Attendance Historical Overview (FY2020–FY2024)

Amounts listed include tuition (30 credit hours), room and board, books, and supplies

Research Universities: \$18,911 → \$21,269 +12.5%

Regional Universities: \$14,182 → \$16,010 +12.9%

Community Colleges: \$12,163 → \$11,209 -7.9%

Year	Research Univ. (i.e. OU, OSU)	Regional Univ. (i.e. NSU, RSU)	Community Colleges (i.e. CSC, CASC)
2020	\$18,911	\$14,182	\$12,163
2021	\$19,770	\$15,008	\$12,068
2022	\$20,195	\$14,725	\$12,086
2023	\$22,265	\$15,311	\$11,742
2024*	\$21,269	\$16,010	\$11,209

Current Year Snapshot (FY2024)*

	Research Univ. (i.e. OU, OSU)	Regional Univ. (i.e. NSU, RSU)	Community Colleges (i.e. CSC, CASC)
Tuition	\$9,419	\$7,738	\$4,736
Room & Board	\$10,800	\$7,141	\$5,104
Books	\$1,050	\$1,131	\$1,369
TOTAL	21,269	\$16,010	\$11,209

Five-Year Projection on Average Tuition (FY2025–FY2029)

Year	Research Univ. (OU, OSU)	Regional Univ. (NSU, RSU, UCO)	Community Colleges (CSC, CASC)
2024-25	\$9,886.50	\$7,809.00	\$4,800.00
2025-26	\$10,074.35	\$7,957.39	\$4,891.20
2026-27	\$10,275.84	\$8,116.54	\$4,988.02
2027-28	\$10,481.36	\$8,278.87	\$5,087.78
2028-29	\$10,690.99	\$8,444.45	\$5,189.53
2029-30	\$10,904.81	\$8,613.34	\$5,293.32

Institution Snapshots – Resident vs. Nonresident

The following callouts summarize per-credit tuition and mandatory fees for FY2024-25 and approved changes for FY2025-26, based on OSRHE tables and June 2025 Regents actions.

University of Oklahoma (OU)

Status	Per Credit (FY24-25)	FY25-26 Change	Annual (30 Cr) FY24-25	Annual (30 Cr) FY25-26
Resident	\$329.55	+\$9.80	\$9,886	\$10,180
Nonresident	\$915.55	+\$9.80	\$27,466	\$27,760

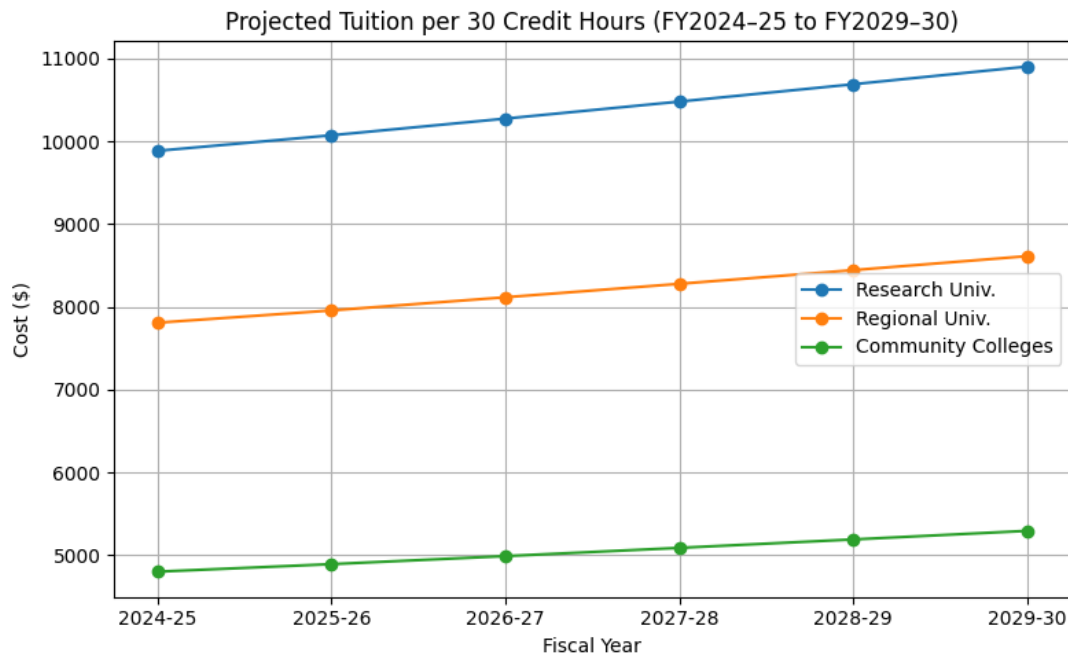
Northeastern State University (NSU)

Status	Per Credit (FY24-25)	FY25-26 Change	Annual (30 Cr) FY24-25	Annual (30 Cr) FY25-26
Resident	\$260.30	+\$7.70	\$7,809	\$8,040
Nonresident	\$576.30	+\$7.70	\$17,289	\$17,520

Connors State College (CSC)

Status	Per Credit (FY24-25)	FY25-26 Change	Annual (30 Cr) FY24-25	Annual (30 Cr) FY25-26
Resident	\$160.00	+\$1.00	\$4,800	\$4,830
Nonresident	\$320.76	+\$1.00	\$9,623	\$9,653

Sources: OSRHE FY2024-25 Tuition & Fee Rates; Regents' approvals (June 26–27, 2025).



Key Takeaways

- Affordability remains stable: Tuition increases are modest compared to national averages.
- Housing & food costs dominate: Room & Board is the largest cost component for universities.
- Forward outlook: Expect ~2% annual growth in total student budgets through FY2029 under current policy assumptions.

VI. SUMMARY OF, OR ENTIRE RECITATION OF CHEROKEE NATION HIGHER EDUCATION POLICIES, HIGHLIGHTING ANY RECENT OR ANTICIPATED CHANGES

Copy of current scholarship policies attached in Appendix B

Modify policy related to scholarship eligibility. We are preparing language to clarify and standardized wording in all print and electronic media related to eligibility of scholarships for Reservation/Contiguous Citizens and At-Large Citizens.

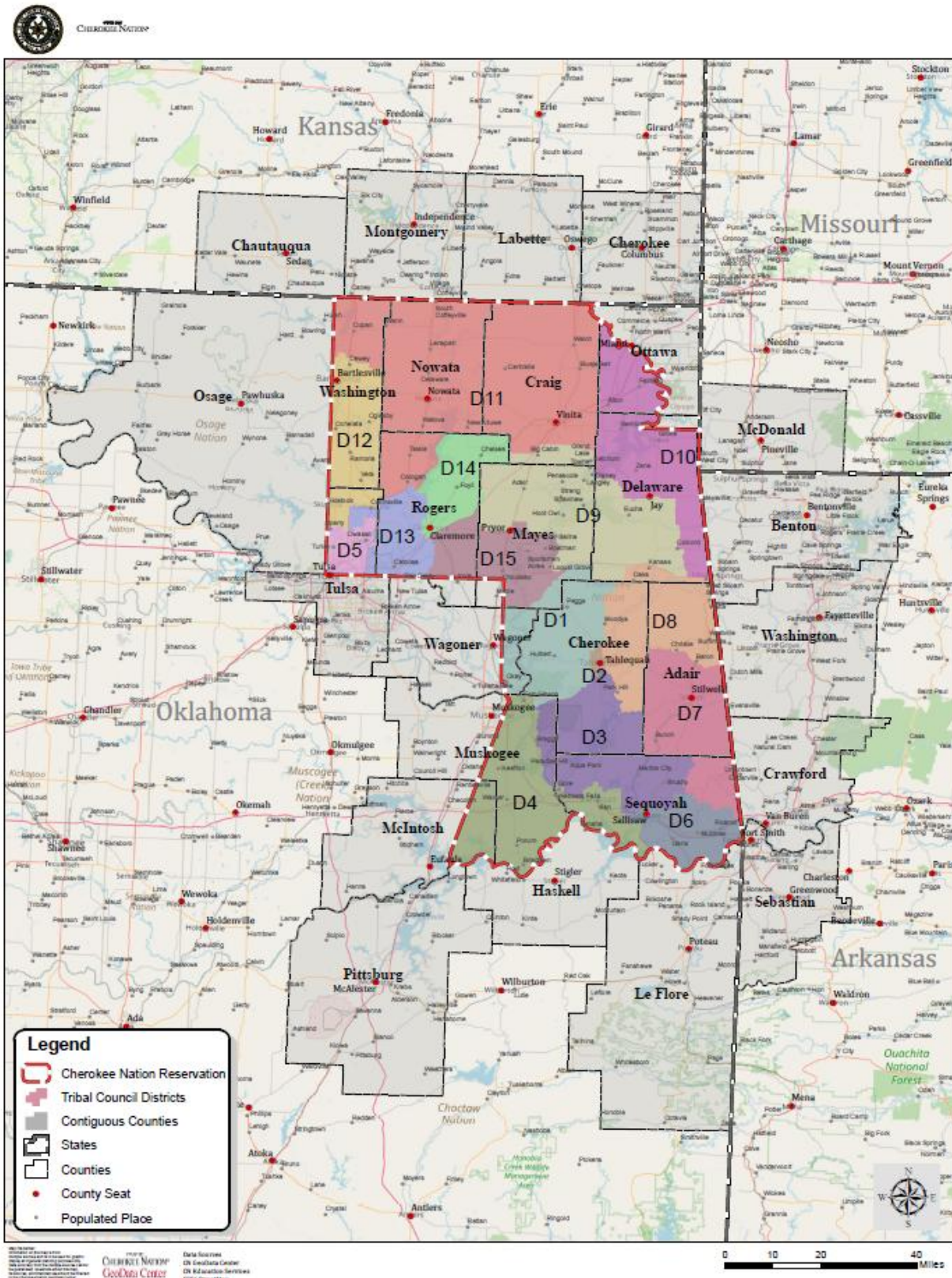
VII. RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING ANY NECESSARY LEGISLATIVE CHANGES TO THIS OR ANY OTHER CHEROKEE NATION LAW RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Open Enrollment for Spring Semester – Currently the CN Scholarship only has one open enrollment period for the academic year - March 1 to June 15. There is high demand for scholarship availability for new applicants in the spring semester each cycle, especially for non-traditional students going into critical need occupations such as nursing and IT. Many non-traditional, graduate, and self-paced programs offer start dates in the spring semester or in alternate, accelerated timelines. In Spring 2025, more than 300 students who otherwise would qualify for scholarship funding were denied due to being new applicants in the spring semester. Under current policies, spring-starting students would need to know their future educational plans at least six months in advance, as they would be required to apply for the fall semester scholarship and defer their scholarship approval to the spring, which is unrealistic for many students still figuring out their educational plans. Current policies exclude many potential scholarship recipients from receiving valuable scholarship money towards their education, and there is often frustration from these students due to the lack of flexibility within the program timelines. As resources are available, a pilot program may be initiated to determine the feasibility of a limited Open Enrollment for the Spring Semester. Legislation to provide funding for 50 undergraduate scholarships may be appropriate as we seek additional ways to serve CN citizens.

CONCLUSION

Cherokee Nation College Resource Center is proud to be empowering our young Cherokee Nation citizens and non-traditional students with an opportunity for personal and professional growth to better serve their families and strengthen our Cherokee communities. This is important in their journey of lifelong learning. Serving more than 6,600 Cherokees is a great honor and we look forward to growing that number each year, and increasing our graduation and employment rates.

APPENDIX A – Scholarship Map



APPENDIX B – Scholarship Policies



Cherokee Nation College Resource Center Scholarship Policies

Introduction

The Cherokee Nation College Resource Center (CRC) provides scholarships and education services for full-time and part-time undergraduate and graduate college students. Students must be registered citizens of the Cherokee Nation, as verified by the Cherokee Nation Registration Department. Cherokee Nation scholarships are intended to supplement financial needs for those pursuing a degree from an accredited post-secondary institution and are contingent on the availability of funding.

All scholarship recipients (except Pell-eligible undergraduate students) must have a permanent residency inside the Cherokee Nation Reservation area or contiguous counties. Pell-eligible undergraduate students are eligible without regard to residence. The contiguous area is more clearly defined as:

1. Haskell, LeFlore, McIntosh, Muskogee, Osage, Pittsburg, Tulsa, and Wagoner counties in Oklahoma.
2. Benton, Crawford, Sebastian and Washington counties in Arkansas.
3. Chautauqua, Cherokee, Labette and Montgomery counties in Kansas.
4. McDonald County in Missouri.

The major or field of study is not limited. Non-accredited institutions, and preparatory academies are not considered eligible for scholarship. The Directory of Higher Education and other sources will be used to validate the institutional accreditation.

Scholarships do not provide funding for conferences, symposia or workshops. CRC will provide scholarship assistance for a limit of one associate's, one bachelor's, one master's, and one doctoral degree. Once a student has received funding for a degree level, the student will be ineligible for future funding for the same type of degree.

Cherokee Nation scholarship awards may affect other funding sources (federal, state or private funding sources). Students who receive full scholarships from other agencies, such as: Indian Health Service (IHS) or other agencies, which may result in an excessive award at the chosen institution, are not eligible. Students who receive funding from

other tribes (tuition, books, housing and/or fees) are also not eligible. Verification of funding sources from other services can be conducted.

Deadlines for applications will be published on the application form, CRC website and social media accounts. Scholarships are funded on an academic year defined as fall and spring semesters. All deadlines will be based on Central Time zone.

Students must make satisfactory academic progress toward a degree. In order to ensure academic progress is being made, students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) and complete (pass) a minimum number of credit hours. Future scholarship awards will be based on the hours earned during the previous semester (full-time or part-time) and completion of Self-Help requirements or the approved community service alternative method.

Legislative Act 39-04 requires recipients of the Cherokee Nation Scholarships to volunteer one hour of Self-Help service to the Cherokee Nation or a non-profit entity for every \$100 they receive in scholarship funding. (Example: \$1,000 per semester = 10 community service hours). Projects and activities sponsored by Cherokee Nation are preferred. Self-Help service must be hands-on community involvement focused on humanitarian activities (examples: food pantry, clothing closet, soup line, and disaster cleanup). Self-Help service cannot be completed with immediate family, or a family owned/operated organization. Questions regarding Self-Help should be referred to the Cherokee Nation College Resource Center. Documented career exploration activities, including internships, will be allowed to replace Self-Help hours with prior approval from the assigned College Resource Advisor or Manager. The CRC manager, with approval by the Education Services Executive Director, may add an alternative method to the required community service requirements. Students who do not complete the required number of community service hours will be suspended from the program for a period of one calendar year. Self Help service hours must be performed during the semester awarded. The Cherokee Nation College Resource Center reserves the right to refuse service hours.

The Cherokee Nation College Resource Center utilizes technology resources to streamline the application process. The use of online applications, electronic documents and email correspondence is necessary to maintain efficiency. Documents must be saved in a portable document format (PDF) format, and must identify the student, school and semester attending. Grades must include student name, school name, semester attending and cumulative hours and GPA earned. Students are encouraged to use a non-school related email that is checked on a regular basis, including during school breaks. Date and timestamps on email headers will be used to determine receipt confirmations.

1) UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP (LA03-12B) - The undergraduate scholarship program is for students pursuing an Associate's or Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university. Twelve (12) hours or more will be considered full-

time status. Funding for certificate and license programs to obtain required certification and licensure will be contingent on the availability of funding and program eligibility requirements.

- Students who attend a military academy or a college/university with a tuition free education for Native Americans and Alaska Natives of federally recognized tribes will fall under the Institutional Aid Program. Scholarship recipients attending an institution described above can utilize scholarship aid in paying required institutional fees, books, as well as travel and equipment needs for the programs at those designated institutions. Travel grants, reimbursements, and/or payments made in regards to a scholarship or fellowship are NOT covered under the IRS accountability rule and therefore are taxable to the scholarship recipient. Student will be responsible for keeping receipts and reporting on their tax return. Scholarship funding will not exceed the maximum allowed for the Cherokee Nation Scholarship program. Students will be required to follow the guidelines of the Cherokee Nation Scholarship Funding Agreement.
- Students who attend military academies (United States Military Academy at West Point, United States Naval Academy, United States Coast Guard Academy, and the United States Merchant Marine Academy) may also receive full scholarship funding through the Institutional Aid program.
- Proprietary (for profit) institutions will only be funded if Cherokee Nation has formed a partnership with the institution. This list of approved proprietary institutions can be found on the CRC website. The Directory of Higher Education and other sources will be used to make this determination.
- Associates' of Applied Science Degrees will only be funded if they are on the approved College Resource Center list or if Cherokee Nation has formed a partnership with the institution. Only majors deemed critical to the operations of the Cherokee Nation government or Cherokee Nation instrumentalities will be considered and approved by the Education Executive Director.

Non-accredited institutions, and preparatory academies will not be funded.

A. Pell-Eligible Scholarship

Registered Cherokee Nation citizens and other federally recognized tribal members who are eligible for the Federal PELL grant do not have to meet residency requirements to apply for scholarship assistance.

B. Non-Pell Eligible Scholarship

Scholarships are available to registered Cherokee Nation citizens who are not eligible for the federal PELL grant with residency in the Cherokee Nation

Reservation Area or contiguous counties, including those in Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri and Arkansas. Residency will be determined by the Cherokee Nation Registration Department system, current Student Aid Report, and most recent transcript.

How to apply

Must meet all program eligibility requirements

Guidelines to maintain undergraduate scholarship

- **Application period:** Fall and spring semester
- **Residency verification:** Cherokee Nation Registration Department system, current Student Aid Report, and most recent transcript
- **Self-Help Service Requirement:** Recipients of the Undergraduate Scholarship are required to complete the alternative method or volunteer one hour of Self-Help service to the Cherokee Nation or a non-profit entity for every \$100 they receive in scholarship funding. Official written verification will be required. (Example: \$1,000 per semester = 10 community service hours). Documented career exploration activities, including internships, will be allowed to replace Self-Help hours with prior approval from the assigned College Resource Advisor or Manager.
- **Minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average:** 2.0 cumulative
- **Hours:** earn minimum of 6 credit hours (part-time) per semester
- **Grade of Incomplete 'I':** Students earning grade of 'I' will be funded based on the number of hours earned at the time the transcript is received, with additional funds processed upon receipt of revised transcript, must be submitted within 60 days of renewal deadline
- **Repeat class:** Students repeating a class or classes are not eligible for funding for the same class
- **Probation:** Occurs if the student falls below the 2.0 cumulative GPA
- **Suspension (GPA):** Occurs if the student fails to meet the 2.0 cumulative GPA for two consecutive semesters
- **Suspension (Hours):** Occurs if the student fails to earn a minimum of 6 hours for the semester
- **Suspension (Self-Help):** Occurs if student fails to complete the required number of self-help hours within the semester
- **Adjustment to scholarship award:** Occurs if a student earns less than 12 hours, for example: If 6-11 hours are earned, the award will be reduced by 50%
- **Limit to number of semesters funded:** 10 semesters
- **Funding schedule:** Fall and spring semesters
- **Payments:** All payments will be made directly to the college/university, except for the Institutional Aid program. Funding for the Institutional Aid program is sent directly to the student's GaDuGi Portal email via electronic payment (Chase Payment method).

Undergraduate Scholarship Renewal Requirements

After the fall semester, students must submit an online renewal application by the stated deadline, with their transcript with fall grades posted and self-help verification form. After the spring semester, students will be required to submit an online renewal application by the stated deadline, with a transcript with spring grades posted, self-help form or approved community service alternative method and updated student aid report.

2) GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP (LA03-12B) - Scholarship program for Cherokee Nation citizens pursuing a Master's or Doctoral Degree from an accredited college or university with residency in the Cherokee Nation Reservation or contiguous Oklahoma counties, including those contiguous counties in Kansas, Missouri and Arkansas. Six hours will be considered full-time status. Residency will be determined by the Cherokee Nation Registration Department system, letter of acceptance to graduate program and most recent transcript. Funding for certificate and license programs to obtain required certification and licensure will be contingent on the availability of funding and program eligibility requirements.

- Students who attend a military academy or a college/university with a tuition free education for Native Americans and Alaska Natives of federally recognized tribes will fall under the Institutional Aid Program. Scholarship recipients attending an institution described above can utilize scholarship aid in paying required institutional fees, books, as well as travel and equipment needs for the programs at those designated institutions. Travel grants, reimbursements, and/or payments made in regards to a scholarship or fellowship are NOT covered under the IRS accountability rule and therefore are taxable to the scholarship recipient. Student will be responsible for keeping receipts and reporting on their tax return. Scholarship funding will not exceed the maximum allowed for the Cherokee Nation Scholarship program. Students will be required to follow the guidelines of the Cherokee Nation Scholarship Funding Agreement.

How to apply

Must meet all program eligibility requirements.

Guidelines to maintain graduate scholarship

- **Application period:** Fall and spring semester
- **Residency verification:** Cherokee Nation Registration Department system, letter of acceptance to graduate program and most recent transcript
- **Self-Help Service Requirement:** Recipients of the Graduate Scholarship are required to complete the alternative method or volunteer one hour of Self-Help service to the Cherokee Nation or a non-profit entity for every \$100 they receive in scholarship funding. Official written verification will be required. (Example:

\$1,000 per semester = 10 community service hours). Documented career exploration activities, including internships, will be allowed to replace Self-Help hours with prior approval from the assigned College Resource Advisor or Manager.

- **Minimum Cumulative grade point average:** In good standing with the school
- **Hours:** Earn minimum of 3 credit hours (part-time) per semester
- **Grade of Incomplete 'I':** Students earning grade of 'I' will be funded based on the number of hours earned at the time the transcript is received, with additional funds processed upon receipt of revised transcript, must be submitted within 60 days of renewal deadline
- **Repeat class:** Students repeating a class or classes are not eligible for funding for the same class
- **Probation:** Occurs if the student is no longer in good standing with the university.
- **Suspension (GPA):** Occurs if the student fails to remain in good standing two consecutive semesters
- **Suspension (Hours):** Occurs if the student fails to earn a minimum of 3 hours for the semester
- **Suspension (Self-Help):** Occurs if student fails to complete the required number of self-help hours within the semester
- **Adjustment to scholarship award:** Occurs if a student earns less than 6 hours, for example: If hours 3-5 hours are earned, the award will be reduced by 50%
- **Limit to number of semesters funded:** Graduate funding is inclusive of both the Masters and Doctoral degree. Funding is limited to 6 semesters for one Masters and 8 semesters for one Doctorate degree.
- **Funding schedule:** Fall and spring semesters
- **Payments:** All payments will be made directly to the college/university, except for Institutional Aid. Funding for the Institutional Aid program is sent directly to the student's GaDuGi Portal email via electronic payment (Chase Payment method).

Graduate Scholarship Renewal Requirements

After the fall semester, students must submit an online renewal application by the stated deadline, with their transcript with fall grades posted and self-help form or approved community service alternative method.

After the spring semester, students will be required to submit an online renewal application by the stated deadline, with a transcript which has spring grades posted and self-help form or approved community service alternative method.

3) CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT SCHOLARSHIP (LA02-18) - Scholarship opportunity to provide financial assistance to high school juniors and seniors seeking college credit hours while still attending high school. Registered Cherokee Nation citizens must have residency in the Cherokee Nation Reservation or contiguous Oklahoma counties, including those contiguous counties in Kansas, Missouri and Arkansas.

Students must be attending high school and be classified as either a Junior or Senior. Students must be eligible for concurrent enrollment through their high school, with an approval letter from a high school official/counselor and parent/guardian approval letter. Must be a registered Cherokee Nation citizen and must submit college class schedules and transcripts.

Students will receive funding towards tuition, books and required fees for up to six (6) credit hours concurrently enrolled each semester. Funding not to exceed the maximum allowed for the Cherokee Nation Scholarship program. Students who wish to take more than six hours will be responsible for payment. Through the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, high school seniors who meet the eligibility requirements are entitled to receive tuition waivers for up to 18 credit hours and high school juniors can receive tuition waivers up to 9 credit hours, subject to available funding.

Scholarship payments will be made directly to the college/university. Payments will be made from the college/university invoice for tuition, books and fees. Books must be charged at the on-campus bookstore and included on invoice from the college/university. No reimbursements will be made to the student or parent. Books not included on the invoice will be the responsibility of the student or parent.

How to apply

Must meet all program eligibility requirements

Guidelines to maintain concurrent enrollment scholarship

- **Application period:** Fall and spring semesters
- **Residency verification:** Cherokee Nation Registration Department system, most recent transcript, and application
- **Self-Help Service Requirement:** Recipients of the Concurrent Enrollment Scholarship are required to complete the alternative method or volunteer one hour of Self-Help service to the Cherokee Nation or a non-profit entity for every \$100 they receive in scholarship funding. Official written verification will be required. (Example: \$500 per semester = 5 community service hours). Documented career exploration activities, including internships, will be allowed to replace Self-Help hours with prior approval from the assigned College Resource Advisor or Manager.
- **Approved courses:** Students must take required General Education courses, (Examples: Composition I or II, College Algebra, General Physical Science or

Biology, Political Science, Speech, Health, Humanities, Computer Science, and other required general education courses)

- **Minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average:** 2.5 cumulative (college transcript)
- **Hours:** Earn minimum of 3 credit hours per semester
- **Grades of W, F or I:** Students earning grades of W or F, will automatically be suspended from the program for 1 semester.
- **Repeat class:** Students repeating a class or classes are not eligible for funding for the same class
- **Suspension (GPA):** Occurs if the student fails to meet the 2.5 cumulative at the end of the semester
- **Suspension (Hours):** Occurs if the student fails to earn a minimum of 3 hours for the semester
- **Suspension (Self-Help):** Occurs if student fails to complete the required number of self-help hours within the semester
- **Limit to number of semesters funded:** 4 semesters
- **Funding schedule:** Fall and spring semesters
- **Payments:** All payments will be made directly to the college/university for the amount of the invoice.

Payment Matrix – Concurrent Enrollment Scholarship

# Hours Enrolled	Juniors (Tuition, Books, Fees)	Seniors (Books & Fees)
3 hours	Tuition, Books & Fees	Books & Fees
6 hours	Tuition, Books & Fees	Books & Fees

Concurrent Enrollment Scholarship Renewal Requirements

After the fall semester, students must reapply with an online application for the next semester by the stated deadline. Students must submit their college transcript with fall grades posted, spring college class schedule, self-help form or approved community service alternative method, approval letter from high school official/counselor, and an approval letter from parent/guardian

After the spring semester, students will be required to submit an online renewal application by the stated deadline, with a high school transcript, college transcript with spring grades, fall college class schedule, self-help form or approved community service alternative method, approval letter from high school official/counselor, and an approval letter from parent/guardian.

4) CHIEF AND DEPUTY CHIEF HONOR AWARDS

The Cherokee Nation recognizes and awards scholarship funds to registered Cherokee Nation citizens who are named Valedictorian or Salutatorian at public high schools located within the Cherokee Nation Reservation area and contiguous Oklahoma counties, including those contiguous counties in Kansas, Missouri and Arkansas.

The one-time scholarship award of \$1,000.00 to a Valedictorian or rank of 1, and \$750.00 to a Salutatorian or rank of 2 is in addition to any funds the recipients may receive through the Cherokee Nation College Resources. If the high school decides to select more than one for each honor, the award will be distributed equally between the numbers of eligible awardees. Students must have a GPA of at least 3.5 in order to qualify. In cases where schools do not name Valedictorians or Salutatorians, a Class Rank of 1 and 2 will qualify for the scholarship award.

How to apply

Must meet all program eligibility requirements

Guidelines to receive Valedictorian/Salutatorian Scholarship

- **Application period:** March 1 to March 31
- **Residency verification:** Cherokee Nation Registration Department system, most recent transcript and application
- **Minimum cumulative grade point average:** 3.5 cumulative
- **Funding limit:** 1 time
- **Payments:** Payments will be made directly to student

5) EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PATHWAY (EAP) PROGRAM

Program to help provide financial assistance to registered Cherokee Nation citizens who are experiencing financial barriers, extenuating circumstances, technology obstacles, or certification and licensing issues to further educational goals. Program application will be approved by the Education Services Executive Director or designee. Cherokee Nation citizen must reside within the Cherokee Nation Reservation area and contiguous Oklahoma counties, including those contiguous counties in Arkansas, Kansas, and Missouri.

Program funding is limited to a one-time only funding per student.

How to apply

Must meet all program eligibility requirements

Guidelines to receive the Educational Assistance Pathway

- Must be a registered Cherokee Nation citizen
- Must have cumulative GPA of 2.0

- Cannot be currently receiving funding from the Cherokee Nation Concurrent Enrollment, Undergraduate or Graduate scholarship
- Students who received a refund from the college/university during the semester in which balance was incurred will not be eligible
- Balance at a college/university cannot be for current semester and must be at least 180 days past due. Funds will be mailed to the college/university
- Pays for tuition, books and required fees. Late fees, collection fees, parking fees, fines, penalties and sports tickets are not allowed
- Reimbursements for testing or certifications will only be considered if they are deemed critical to the operations of the Cherokee Nation government or Cherokee Nation instrumentalities and approved by the Education Executive Director. Subject to Educational Assistance Pathway guidelines.
- Technology funding will be contingent upon the availability of funding.

6) GRADUATION STOLE PROGRAM

Upon applying for graduation at your institution we ask that you let your College Resource Scholarship advisor know that you are completing your degree.

In recognition of scholastic achievement for the Cherokee Nation Scholarship recipients, a silk screen print graduation stole will be provided to registered Cherokee Nation citizens who are graduating with an Associate's, Bachelors, Masters, or Doctoral degrees regardless of residency. Students should contact their scholarship advisor prior to graduation ceremonies. Under this program citizens will receive one graduation stole per degree level.

The student is responsible for obtaining permission from the college/university to wear the graduation stole during commencement.

How to apply

Must meet program eligibility requirements

Guidelines for Graduation Stole Program

- **Minimum cumulative grade point average:** 2.0 cumulative or higher
- **Degree:** Associate's, Bachelors, Masters, or Doctoral
- **Limits:** 1 stole per degree level, per lifetime
- **Stole retrieval:** Pickup or Mailed directly to eligible student

7) HONOR CORD PROGRAM

The Cherokee Nation College Resource Center Honor Cord is available for current graduating high school seniors that are registered Cherokee Nation citizens. Students are eligible for an honor cord once per lifetime. Honor cords are provided to recognize Cherokee Nation citizens at high school graduation ceremonies.

The student is responsible for obtaining permission from the post secondary institution to wear the graduation stole during commencement.

How to apply

Must meet program eligibility requirements

Guidelines for Honor Cord Program

- Student must be a registered citizen of the Cherokee Nation.
- Student must be attending high school.
- Student must have a permanent residency within the United States.
- Students are eligible for one honor cord, ONCE PER LIFETIME.
- Students must be classified as a graduating high school senior.

Degree: High School Diploma

Limits: 1 cord per lifetime

Stole retrieval: Pickup or Mailed directly to eligible student

Probation, Suspension, and Denial

First time applicants not meeting the minimum GPA requirements will be awarded but placed on scholarship probation for one semester. Continuing students who do not maintain cumulative GPA requirements, may be placed on probation for one semester.

At the end of the probationary period, if a student fails to earn a minimum cumulative GPA or earn enough credit hours in accordance with the guidelines, they will be placed on scholarship suspension. While on suspension, students are not eligible for any Cherokee Nation Scholarship program. Once a student's cumulative GPA or credit hour meets the minimum requirements, the student may reapply.

Please note: Scholarship probation and suspension are separate from academic probation and suspension as provided by an educational institution.

Students may be denied based on not meeting the minimum hour and GPA requirements, submitting late or incomplete applications, falsifying/altering information, incomplete community service hours or the approved alternative community service method, or lack of availability of funding.

Hardships

Students may experience hardships during their academic career. Hardship is defined as a medical or emotional event that keeps a student from completing the hours in the semester for which he/she has been awarded. Examples may include, but not limited to prolonged illness, surgery, car accident or death of family member or divorce. These hardships may be excused and the student may remain eligible if the student submits

documentation that verifies the circumstance prior to the end of the semester. Funding will be reassessed due to hardship.

Requests for medical hardship waiver must be made in writing by the student requesting a hardship waiver, explaining the circumstance and including a medical statement from physician(s) that the student was under their care and had to withdraw or could not successfully complete classes due to medical reasons.

Requests for other hardship waivers must be made in writing by the student requesting waiver and providing documentation that supports the reason for withdrawal or inability to successfully complete classes.

College Resource Center Appeal Procedure

Scholarship applications may be denied based on not meeting the minimum requirements (hours earned and community service), submitting late or incomplete applications, falsifying information, or lack of availability of funding. Students may experience hardships during their academic career. A hardship is defined as a medical or emotional event that keeps a student from completing their minimum requirements in the semester for which they have been awarded. Examples may include, but are not limited to prolonged illness, surgery, car accident or death of family member or divorce.

These hardships may be considered for an application approval to remain eligible if the student submits documentation that verifies their circumstance prior to the end of the semester. Students must complete at least one of the minimum requirements to be considered for an appeal approval.

- An appeal requests for a **medical hardship** waiver must be made in writing by the student. Students must explain their circumstances and provide a medical statement from the physician(s) that the student was under their care and had to withdraw or could not successfully complete classes due to medical reasons.
- An appeal requests for **other hardships** must be made in writing by the student. The student must explain their circumstances and provide documentation that supports the reason for their withdrawal or inability to successfully complete classes or community service hours.
- Completion of community service or the approved alternative community service method.

Process

1. To appeal, students must provide a detailed letter explaining the students reasoning for the appeal and submit supporting documentation (medical statement from the physician and/or other documentation depending on their circumstances) to their advisor.

2. Once the complete appeal is received from the student, the advisor will fill out the College Resource Center Appeal Form (Pg2) and submit the completed appeal to the College Resource Center staff.
3. Appeals will be heard, from the advisor, at the College Resource Center's monthly meetings. Once the appeal has been heard and a decision is made by the College Resource Center's staff and manager, the decision will be documented on the appeal form. College Resource Center staff and manager decisions are final and not appealable.
4. To avoid nepotism on appeals, any College Resource Center's staff and manager will be excluded from the appeals process for any case where nepotism may occur. The appeal will instead go to the Education Administration for a final decision.

When a decision has been confirmed, a notification of approval/denial will be sent to the student.

FUNDING PRIORITY

Scholarships shall be contingent on the availability of funding. The following priority system can be implemented in the event of budgetary constraints. In the event of a tie in cumulative GPA/ACT computation, the cumulative GPA and composite ACT score will be multiplied and ranked beginning with the highest score.

A. Cherokee Nation Scholarship Program

1. Continuing students

- a. Seniors (90+ hours earned)
- b. Juniors (60 to 89 earned hours)
- c. Sophomores (30 to 59 earned hours)
- d. Freshmen (0 to 29 earned hours)

2. New students

- a. Seniors (90+ hours earned)
- b. Juniors (60 to 89 earned hours)
- c. Sophomores (30 to 59 earned hours)
- d. Freshmen (0 to 29 earned hours)

3. Graduate Students

- a. Master's
- b. Doctoral

B. Concurrent Enrollment Scholarship

1. Continuing Students

- a. High School Seniors
- b. High School Juniors

2. New Students

- a. High School Seniors
- b. High School Juniors

Approved: June 2023



G W Y A D B F
CHEROKEE NATION®

Cherokee Nation Education Services
College Resource Center
PO Box 948
Tahlequah, OK 74465-0948
918-453-5000 ext. 5465
collegeresources@cherokee.org