



December 15, 2025

GAY D3P  
**CHEROKEE NATION®**

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**Bryan Warner**  
*Deputy Principal Chief*  
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January 29, 2026

RE: Task Force on Community Organizing Final Report

Principal Chief Hoskin,

The Task Force on Community Organizing is proud to submit its full report and recommendations per [Executive Order 2025-01-CTH1](#). I want to thank you and Deputy Principal Chief Warner for your leadership on the topic of Cherokee community organizing across the United States. During our work, we have seen the overwhelming strength and potential of Cherokee communities, as well as increased financial and supportive resources from Cherokee Nation over the course of the last seven years. The Task Force strongly believes community organizing is the foundation of the Cherokee Nation and our people's success in all aspects of life. A strong community correlates to better mental and physical health, employment opportunities, educational opportunities, access to safe housing, and overall quality of life.

I would like to thank the members of the Task Force, Savannah Smith, Dawnena Squirrel, Vince Feeling, Roger Graham, Joseph Price, Brad Eubanks, and Shawn Crittenden. Their expertise and work ethic was invaluable to the success of this report. I would also like to thank Kristen Thomas and Brooklyn Neff, who worked diligently with the Task Force and provided administrative support. Finally, I would like to thank the Public Health Monitoring, Surveillance, & Evaluation Department, notably Dr. Pamela Gutman, Dr. Brady Garret, Hannah LaBounty, and Terrance Kominsky who analyzed data and provided it back to the Task Force. Their analysis provided an in-depth dive into the raw data, but in a way that is easily digestible to the reader.

This work and report simply would not have happened without the collective effort of each of the individuals acknowledged. This report and our shared work encapsulate the idea and spirit of Gadugi, a core principle displayed in our Cherokee communities.

Wado,

Canaan J. Duncan  
Deputy Secretary of State, Cherokee Nation

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<sup>1</sup> The Task Force issued an interim report on September 25, 2025, which is incorporated herein by reference as "Attachment 1."

## Introduction

Since time immemorial Cherokees have lived and governed themselves as a sovereign nation consisting of many towns vastly located throughout the Southeastern United States. A societal structure based upon working together to meet the needs of all Cherokees guided daily life for our ancestors. European contact and lifeways introduced new concepts, such as individual land and resource ownership and western societal structures that began disrupting our original lifeways. However, as United States policies and encroachment became more aggressive and focused on our removal, we saw the spirit of Gadugi reemerge to deliver our people through one of the darkest periods of history during our forced removal from our homelands by the government of the United States, also known as the Trail of Tears.

As the Cherokee People reestablished the Cherokee Government, educational systems, and infrastructure, we began to see a Nation whose forced focus on starting anew took precedent over our former establishment of Cherokee Lifeways. Cherokees spread throughout rural areas of the Cherokee Reservation, creating distance between them and government support and distance between them and their friends and family. In the early 1980s, Principal Chief Wilma Mankiller and Charlie Soap began to reintroduce the concept of Gadugi, or working together for a common goal, to address water infrastructure and housing needs of Cherokees living in these rural areas. The ideology that Cherokees helping Cherokees within their own communities began to spread, resulting in new infrastructure, community organizing and a renewed spirit of Cherokee mindsets throughout the Cherokee Nation Reservation.

Today, the Cherokee Nation is guided by the principle of Gadugi, as evidenced by Cherokee Nation's work in community organizing, supporting 66 Cherokee Community Organizations nationwide and operating 34 community centers throughout the Cherokee Nation Reservation. Cherokee Nation support comes from various avenues, but is primarily undertaken and administered by its Community & Cultural Outreach (CCO) Department, whose sole purpose is to provide support to these organizations for the betterment and sustainability of Cherokee Communities.

The Task Force on Community Organizing issues this report as provided by [Executive Order 2025-01-CTH](#). Throughout this report, we will discuss the current state of community organizing efforts within the Cherokee Nation and examine barriers and ways to improve and expand those efforts as we move towards a great Cherokee century of community organizing.

## Summary

The Task Force has carefully examined each of the objectives set forth in the Executive Order and have identified recommendations accordingly. The Hoskin-Warner Administration has placed a high level of focus on strengthening all Cherokee communities through local, grass roots led efforts and support that prioritizes governing from the bottom-up rather than a top-down model. Their leadership has allowed a new mindset to take hold; that no matter the size or location, the rest of the world may have forgotten some of our Cherokee Communities, but the Cherokee Nation will never forget. To demonstrate that commitment, in 2019 Principal Chief Hoskin and Deputy Principal Chief Warner initiated the [Housing, Jobs, and Sustainable Communities Act of 2019 \(LA-12-19\)](#) designating \$7.5 million over 3 years for energy efficiency and sustainability grants to Cherokee Nation owned community buildings operated by CCO Participating organizations. In 2022, Principal Chief Hoskin and Deputy Principal Chief Warner continued progress by initiating [The Housing, Jobs, and Sustainable Communities Reauthorization Act of 2022 \(LA-10-22\)](#), funding \$7 million towards sustainability grants to CCO Participating Organizations over 3 years. Upon expiration LA-10-22, in 2024 the Hoskin-Warner Administration took it a step further when they sent legislation to the Tribal Council that made the HJSCA

permanent. The permanent reauthorization of [HJSCA](#) invests \$6 million, over three-year cycles that repeat into perpetuity, directly to grants and improvements for CCO Participating Organizations. Additionally, in 2025 Principal Chief Hoskin and Deputy Chief Bryan Warner proposed an expansion of the existing [Public Health & Wellness Fund Act](#), which was unanimously passed by the Council of the Cherokee Nation. [The Public Health & Wellness Act of 2025](#) increased the percentage of dedicated third party health revenue funds for public health and wellness from 7% to 10%, thus increasing funds used for investments into community infrastructure. This act set forth the principal of the holistic view that, community is linked to the general well-being of its residents.

## **Purpose and Scope**

The Cherokee Nation Community Organizing Taskforce conducted two separate surveys to gather data from board members and non-board members of Cherokee Nation Community Organizations. A third and fourth survey was implemented among Cherokee Nation Elected Officials and Cherokee Nation Community & Cultural Outreach staff. Among other discussions, focus groups with CCO Participating Community Organization leaders were held during the 2025 CCO Conference and their responses were analyzed and included in the Community Organizing Interim Report (Appendixes 4). These surveys were to fulfill objectives specified in Executive Order 2025-01-CTH. The Executive Order established the Principal Chief's Task Force on Community Organizing to promote and support community organizing to enhance the quality of life of Cherokee communities and revitalize cultural life ways.

## **Method**

A 12-item survey was administered to individuals living both on reservation and at large. It is important to note that this survey was geared towards citizens that are not members of CCO Participating Organizations. A 41-item survey was administered electronically to individuals in a board member role for a Cherokee Nation Community Organization. Data was collected anonymously from 158 respondents. Non-board members administered a 16-item survey, and members of the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council completed a 12-item survey. The number of surveys completed by community organization members and Tribal Council members were 222 and 5, respectively. The Principal Chief and Deputy Principal Chief completed a 6-item survey, with open ended questions that aligned with other survey questions. Lastly, CCO staff administered a 22-item survey to its own staff that aligned with other surveys but prospectively based on their internal experience.

## **Key Finding & Recommendations**

Based upon the aforementioned surveys the following findings emerged as a general consensus among all groups surveyed.

- The largest barrier that CCO Participating community organizations operating a community building face is a continual, sustained physical presence at the facility.
  - Recommendation: As outlined in the 8/25/25 Interim Report (attached appendixes 2), the Task Force recommends the addition of 6 full-time employees known as Field Technical Assistants, to be located strategically at CCO Participating community buildings.
- Another barrier brought by consensus via surveys is lack of physical space for CCO Participating Organizations.
  - Recommendation: Administration, along with the Council, has equipped the Cherokee Nation with resources via HJSCA and the Public Health & Wellness Fund Act to strategically plan construction for new community building sites on the reservation. This planning is underway and will continue into perpetuity. At the current funding levels, Cherokee Nation has the capacity to construct upwards of 4 new community buildings each fiscal year.

- Surveys show that organizations feel they lack volunteer and community involvement in organizational activities and meetings.
  - Recommendation: Through the Cherokee Nation Gadugi Corp, a targeted effort for a community specific volunteer pipeline will be developed for each CCO Participating Organization. Upon assessment, a master plan for each organization will be developed to ensure increased volunteerism and participation.
- The need for increased CCO technical and funding support was a reoccurring need. It is important to note that “lack of awareness of grants” also reoccurred as a need and is likely to have impacted the thought of needing additional financial resources. The need for technical support generally focused on leadership and financial training.
  - Recommendation: CCO will meet in person with each organization to give an individual overview of each grant program CCO administers. CCO will develop a schedule for meetings with each organization, to be completed in FY2026. Further, existing CCO trainings will be held that focus on leadership and financial training. CCO will solicit professionals in the respective areas to administer the trainings.
- Board leadership reform was routinely mentioned in the survey as a need.
  - Recommendation: The previously mentioned leadership trainings will be a mechanism to address this concern. It is also recommended that CCO, during their in person meetings, address bylaws and administration of routine elections with organizations. CCO policies and procedures will be reviewed to ensure accountability measures are in place for organizations not in compliance with holding routine board member elections.
- Organizations unanimously expressed the need for more cultural presentations and activities brought by Cherokee Nation.
  - Recommendation: Continued cultural presentation schedules will be developed for community organizations. To ensure presenter availability is not an issue, it is recommended that a strategic plan for cultural presentation mentorship be developed in conjunction with the Cherokee National Treasure Program. It is further recommended that CCO utilize existing cultural advisors to review current presentations and recommend changes as necessary.
- Organizations highlighted the need for increased support for operational expenses.
  - Recommendation: The CCO COTTA grant has long been a grant that organizations utilize for operational expenses. COTTA grant funding has not been increased since 2016. It is recommended to increase the COTTA grant to a level more suited for the current economic environment. Additionally, an increase of funding is recommended to provide more stable funding and incentives to raise funds externally should be implemented to support community building operations. Furthermore, it is recommended to establish a new grant program that focuses on increasing capacity for organizations operating a community building, as well as incentivizing increased public awareness and usage.



## Appendix 1

Elected Official, Community Organization Members,  
Community Organization Board Member Survey

# Survey Report

Elected Official Survey

Community Organization Member Survey

Community Organization Board Member Survey



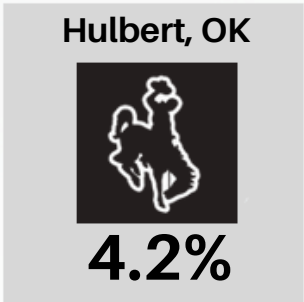
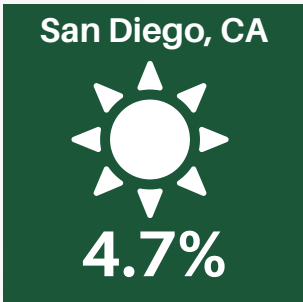
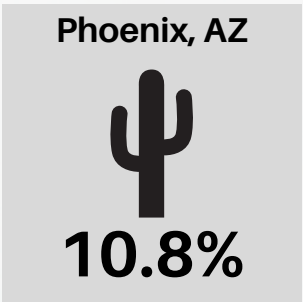
# Purpose & Scope

The Cherokee Nation Community Organizing Taskforce conducted two separate surveys to gather data from board members and non-board members of Cherokee Nation Community Organizations. A third and fourth survey was implemented among the Principal Chief, Deputy Principal Chief, and members of the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council. These surveys were to fulfill objectives specified in Executive Order 2025-01-CTH. The Executive Order established the Chief’s task force on community organizing to promote and support community organizing to enhance the quality of life of Cherokee communities and revitalize cultural life ways. Listed within the executive order are 23 objectives of which the current complement of surveys addressed 19.

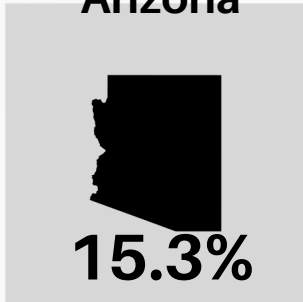
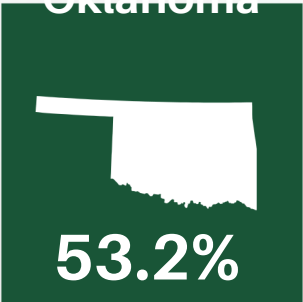
## Method

A 41-item survey was administered electronically to individuals in a board member role for a Cherokee Nation Community Organization. Data were collected anonymously from 158 respondents. Non-board members were administered a 16-item survey, and members of the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council completed a 12-item survey. The number of surveys completed by community organization members and Tribal Council members were 222 and 5, respectively. All data collection occurred between June 3rd and July 21st of 2025. All questions for the three surveys were required fields which relegated data missingness. There were 17 states represented in addition to the District of Columbia. Across both board members and non-board members, 53.2% reported their community organizations being located in Oklahoma. Arizona (15.3%) and California (9.5%) were the next most represented. After Texas (7.9%) none of the remaining states exceeded a reporting frequency of 5.0%. Expectedly and albeit in a different order, communities most frequently reported were from the three most frequently named states. Phoenix (10.8%) was most stated with San Diego (4.7%) and Hulbert (4.2%) rounding out the top three.

Top  
3  
Cities



Top  
3  
States



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# Analyses

Descriptive analyses were conducted on multiple choice and multiple response questions. Response frequencies for these items are reported below alongside corresponding visual representations. Data coding was initially completed independently by two analysts for survey questions that were solely open-ended or incorporated an open-ended element. Subsequently, analysts discussed to consensus any observed coding differences. After achieving unanimity, the analysts collaboratively identified the prevailing topics presented in the results below.

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As the current survey data was harvested to fulfill the compulsory objectives outlined in Executive Order 2025-01-CTH, the presentation of results has been organized by objective for coherence, comprehensibility, and clarity.

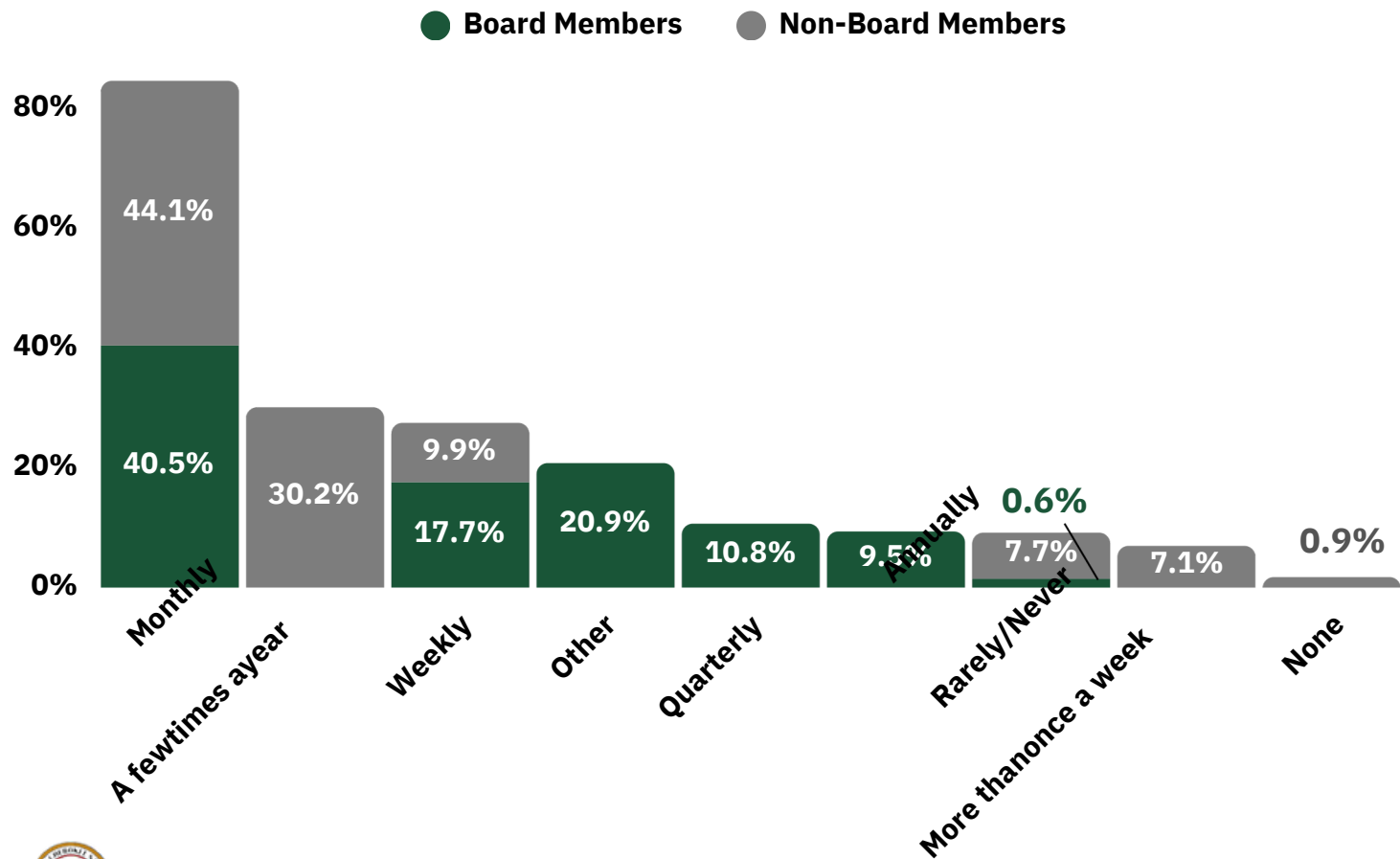


# Objective: i.

## Routine or periodic community activities of CCO participating organizations.

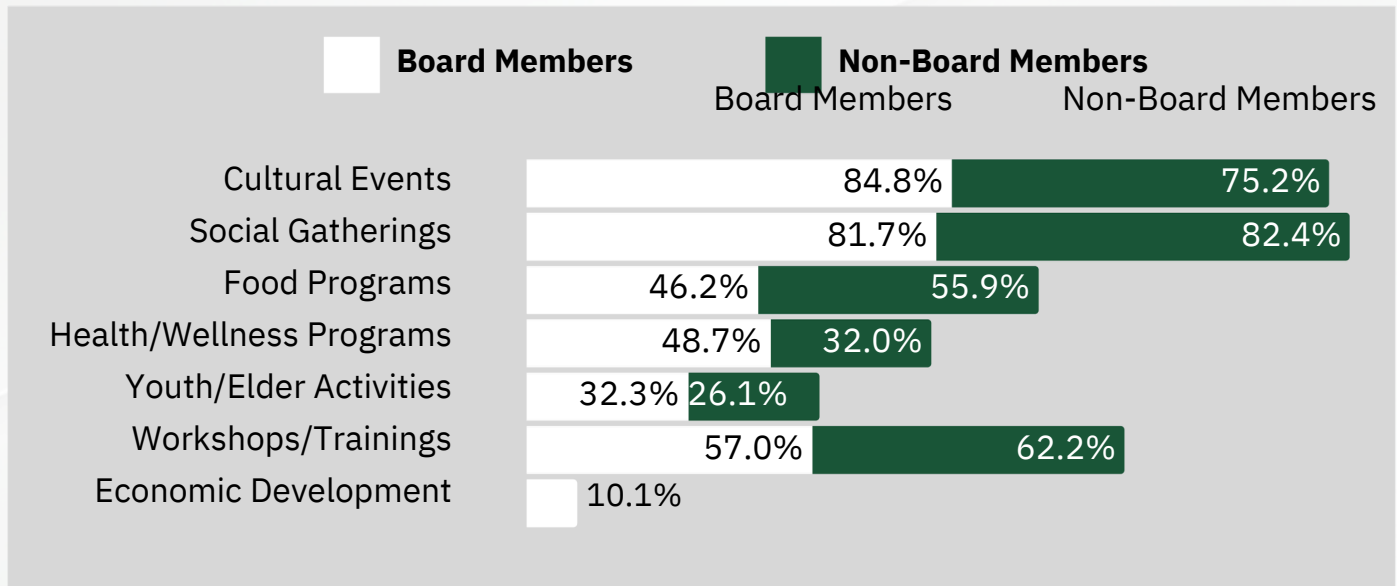
Monthly was the most frequently reported periodicity for both participating in (members) and hosting (board members) community organization activities with 44.1% and 40.5% of respondents, respectively. However, board members appear to be involved in organizational activities at an increased rate of regularity relative to non-board members. That is, board members more often reported weekly participation (17.7%board members 9.9%members). Further, a higher percentage of non-members reported engaging a few times a year (30.2%), compared to those board members reporting quarterly participation (10.8%).

Although comparability with the other two surveys is uncertain and the response options may be prone to individual interpretation, the data collected from Tribal Council members stand in some contrast to that of board members and non-board members. Specifically, 40.0% of Tribal Council respondents reported Cherokee Community Organizations in their districts as engaging in limited activities and another 40.0% selected moderately active.



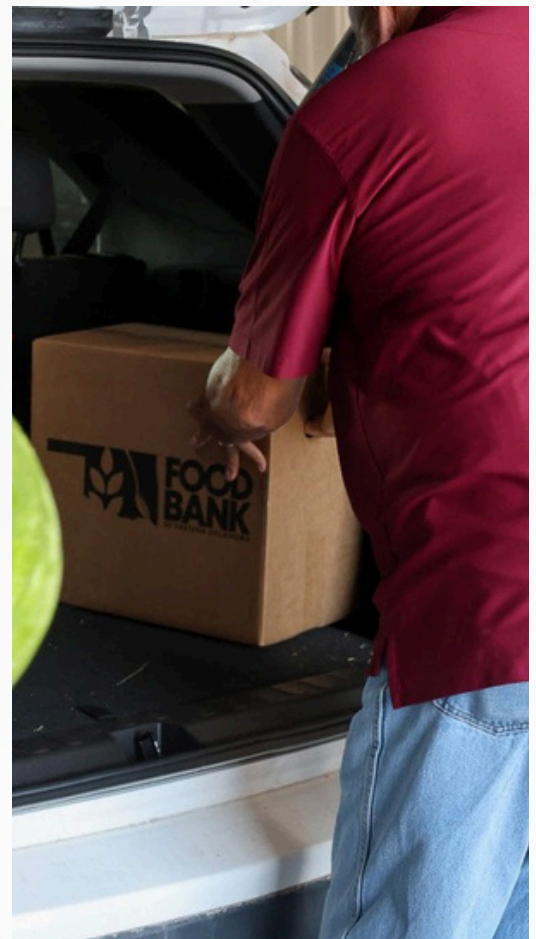
# Objective: ii.

## Categories of activities by CCO participating organizations.



Cultural events and social gatherings were the two most frequently reported categories of activities for both board and non-board members. The percentage of board members that indicated their Cherokee Community Organizations hosted cultural events was 84.8%, whereas approximately 75.2% of non-board members reported having participated in cultural events. Data for social gatherings were similar across the two groups with 81.7% of board members reporting hosting them and 82.4% of non-board members reporting participating in them. In third place for both samples was food-related events and activities with roughly half of each group endorsing this category.

Participants of the Tribal Council survey all reported that the organizations in their district conduct food security programs. Social gatherings (80.0%) and cultural events (60.0%) were the second and third most commonly reported as being conducted within the Councilors' districts.



# Objective: iii.

## Barriers to conducting routine or periodic community activities.

Barriers of this nature were inquired about among board members only. Of the preset list of barriers, lack of facility space (46.2%), limited volunteer/staff availability (43.7%), lack of funding (43.0%), and low community participation (42.4%) garnered similar numbers of votes. Only 14.6% of board members identified limited access to technology or internet as a barrier.

Among responses written in, access to cultural programs/resources and geographic dispersion of membership were additionally identified.



### Facility space

### Volunteer/staff availability

### Funding

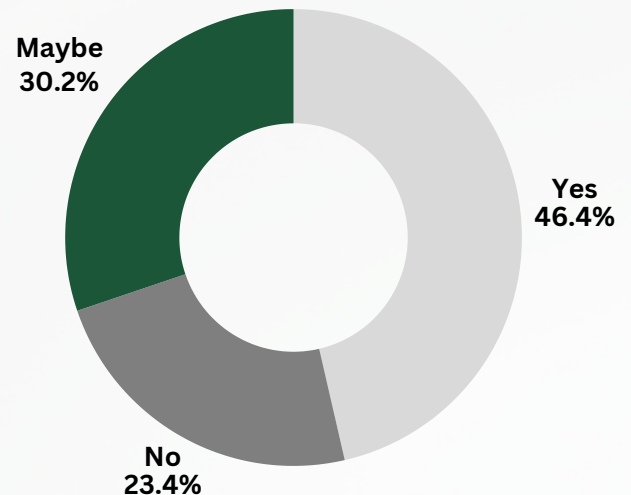
### Community participation

### Technology

# Objective: iv.

## Types of activities organizations desire to conduct or host, but are unable to conduct or host and reasons why.

Around a quarter of members surveyed (23.2%) responded in the negative to there being activities they would like to see offered that were not currently available. Uncertain about potential activities were 30.2% of respondents, while 46.4% marked “Yes” to the current unavailability of desired activities. When given the option to elaborate on the type of activities survey respondents would like to see offered, both board members and non-board members requested more be done with culture and language. Non-board members requested culturally-based social events such as hog fries and stickball games, whereas board members advocated for education opportunities to learn about Cherokee culture and traditional skills and practices. Both samples demonstrated an interest in health and wellness activities and programs, more events tailored to Elders, and efforts to incorporate spiritual and ceremonial activities. Board members also wanted to see more activities that included sports competitions and distributing/giving away food.

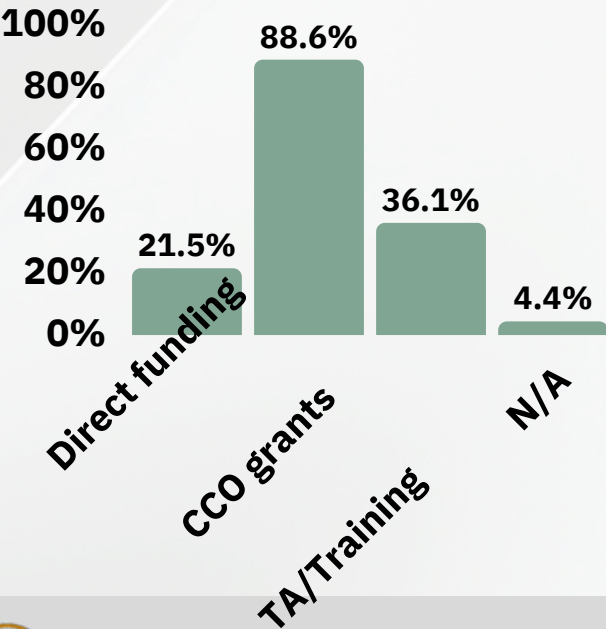
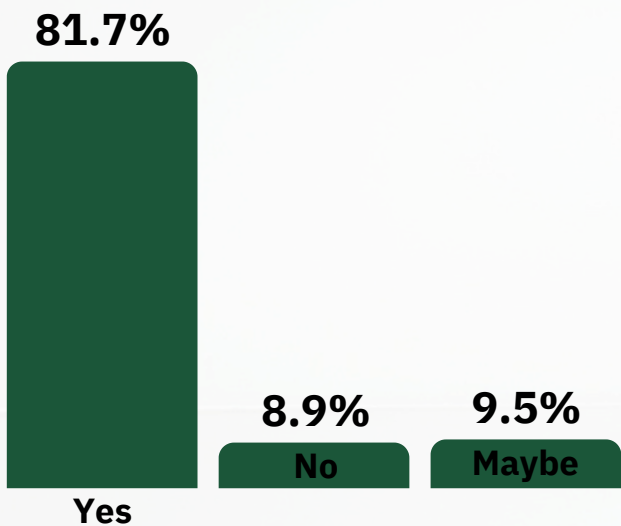


Concerning services that non-board members wanted to see, participants advocated an increased web presence beyond Facebook. One participant wrote, “The organization is on Facebook but doesn’t have a website to post more info, links.” Finally, website activities and a more user friendly and easily navigable website were among specifics listed.





# Objective: v. Participation in CCO grant programs.



Grant-related questions were posed solely to board members. When asked if their community organization receives Cherokee Nation financial support, 88.6% of respondents selected CCO Grants from among the types of assistance. Further, 81.7% of survey participants reported they had applied for a Cherokee Nation grant in the past 12 months. This number may actually be higher as nearly 9.5% indicated some uncertainty regarding having applied for or received a Cherokee Nation grant.



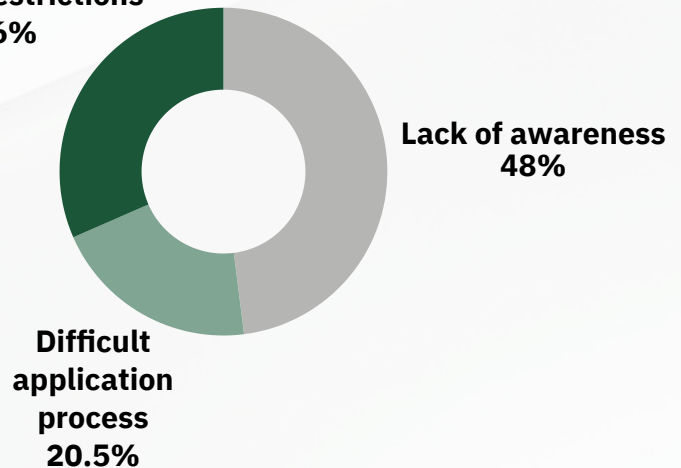
# Objective: vi.

## Barriers to participating in CCO grant programs.

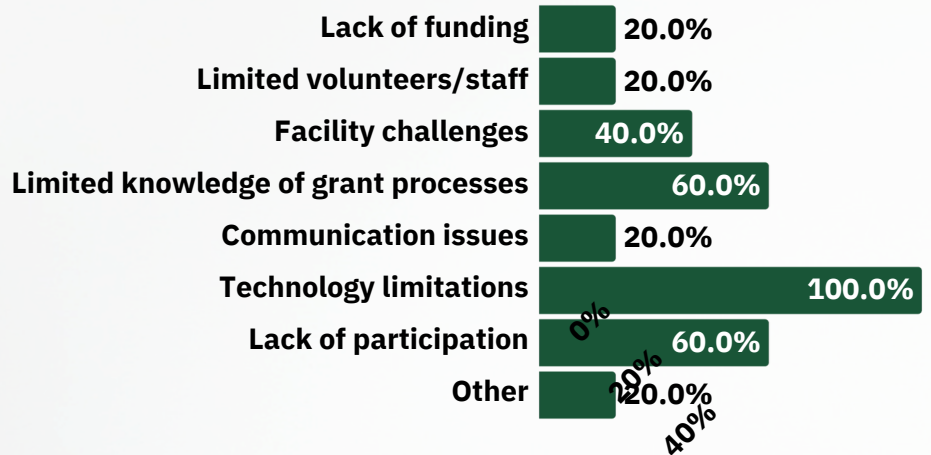
Barriers to participating in

grant programs as portrayed by board members were a lack of awareness (29.8%), eligibility restrictions (19.6%), and the application process being too difficult (12.7%). In addition, board members also detailed staff shortages, inadequate grant writing knowledge, skills, and capacity as barriers.

**Eligibility restrictions**  
31.6%

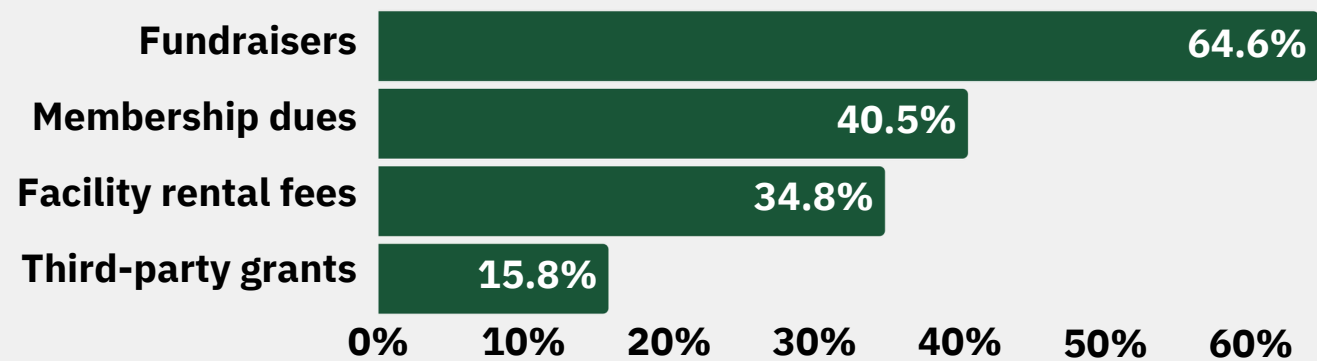


Tribal council survey participants (60.0%) listed “limited knowledge of grant processes” as a common barriers faced by Cherokee Community Organizations which corroborates board members reporting a diffidence in budgeting and spending grant funds.



# Objective: vii.

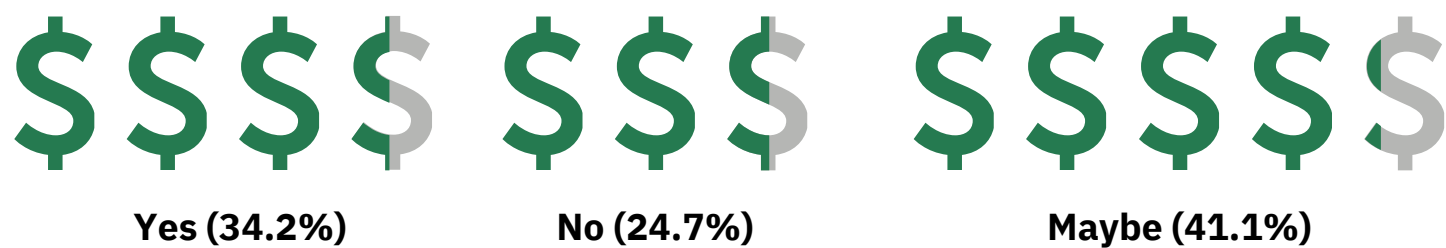
Fundraising or revenue generation from non-Cherokee Nation sources, by category.



Additional funds for Cherokee Community Organizations are raised most commonly via fundraisers as reported by board members (64.6%). Membership dues and facility rental fees were second and third most frequently cited at 40.5% and 34.8%, respectively. Third party grants was the option least chosen (15.8%), and donations were the predominate write-in response.

# Objective: ix.

Whether the organization perceives financial support provided by Cherokee Nation to be sufficient.



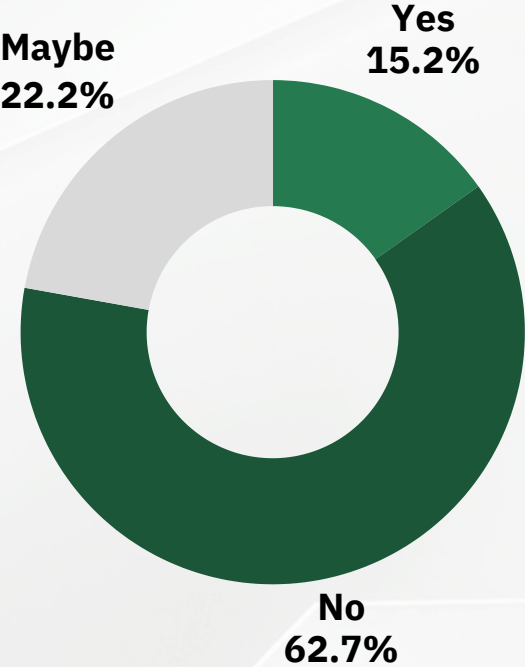
Cherokee Community Organization board members were asked if they believed Cherokee Nation financial support is sufficient. Only about one third responded in the affirmative (34.2%) whilst 24.7% and 41.1% selected “No” and “Maybe”, respectively.



# Objective: xi.

Whether the organization has done a formal community needs assessment.

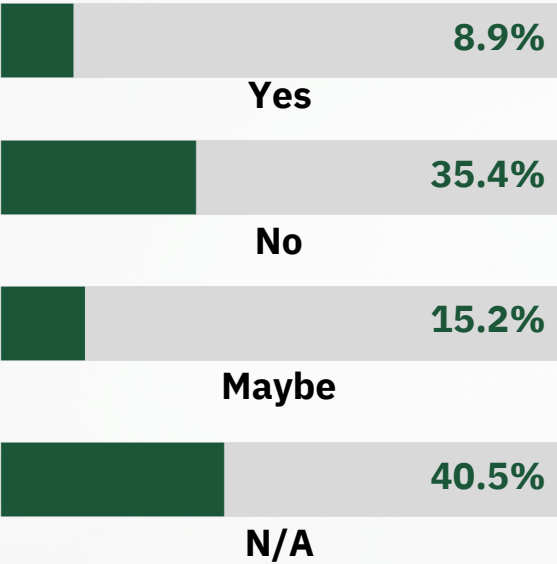
Only 15.2% of board members reported having undertaken a formal needs assessment within their communities. Hesitant to commit either way were 22.2% of board members, and 62.7% indicated the absence of a needs assessment.



# Objective: xii.

Whether the organization has developed a comprehensive capital construction plan.

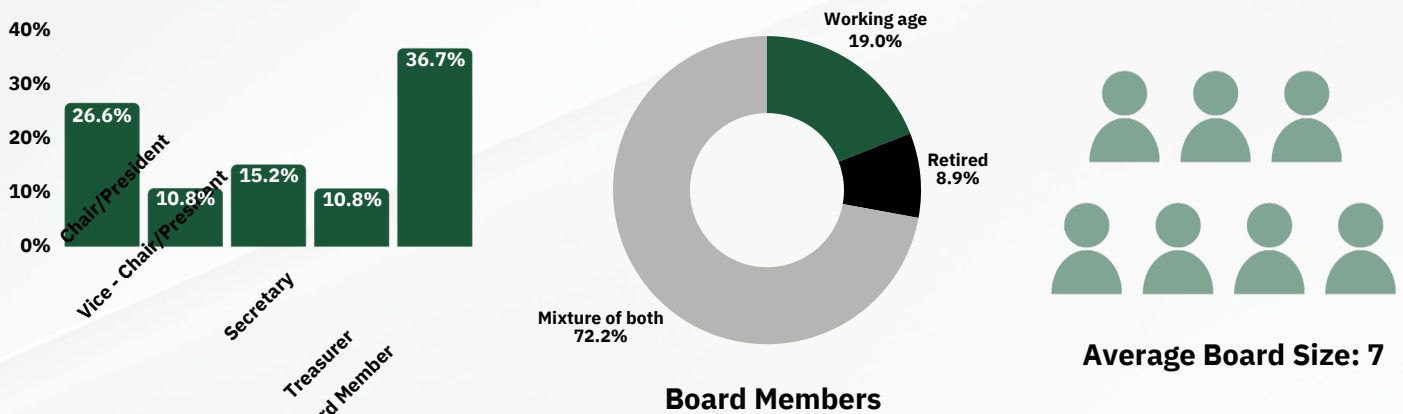
Capital construction plans were designated as lacking applicability by 40.5% of board members. Of the participants for whom a construction plan was applicable, 14.9% had developed a plan whereas 59.6% reported a planning deficit.



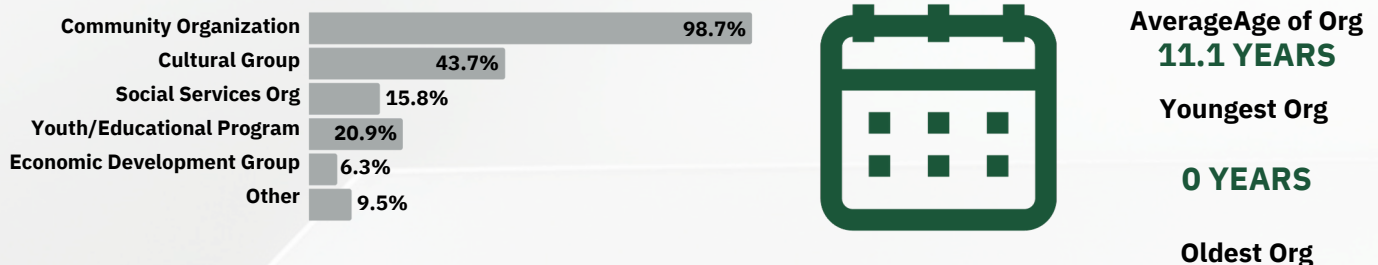
# Objective: xiii.

## Basic governance information.

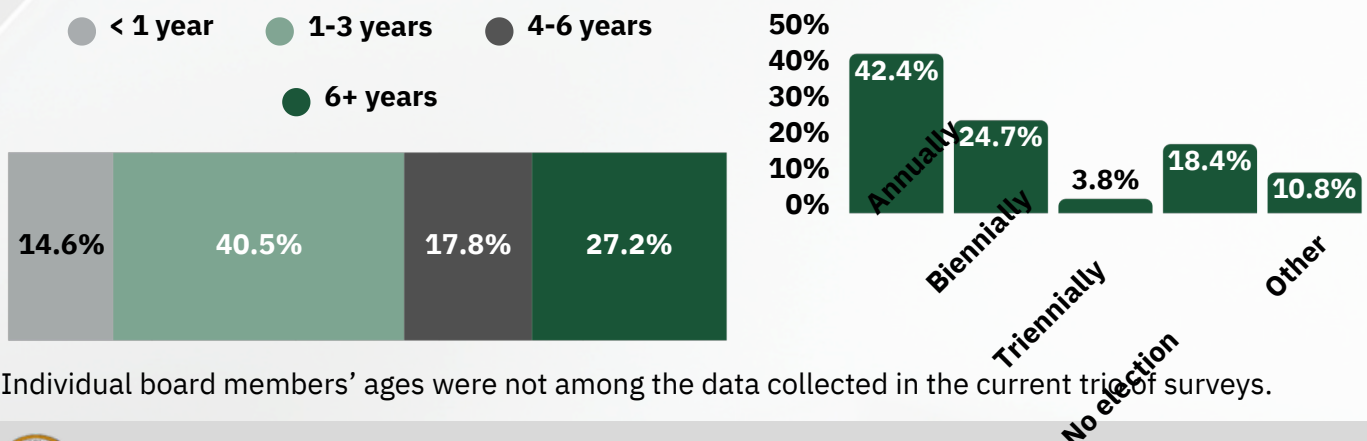
General board members were most common among survey respondents (36.7%) followed by Chairs/Presidents (26.6%). A vast majority of boards were reported to be comprised of a mix of working-age and retired individuals (72.2%), with the average board size consisting of 7 individuals. However, the range was substantial with the maximum board size constituting 33 individuals and 2 forming the minimum.



Virtually every respondent (98.7%) listed their organization as a community organization with the next most common designation being a cultural group (43.7%). Regardless of type of organization, the average age of the community organizations was 11.1 years with a minimum of 0 years and the eldest established 45.5 years ago.



Elections most commonly occur annually (42.4%) or biennially (24.7%). Once elected, most board members served terms of either two years (40.4%) or one year (14.1%). Variability among boards was observed in that 21.2% of boards terms varied in length by position and 12.2% of responding board members reported either not knowing term lengths or not having fixed terms. Among board members, 40.5% have served 1-3 years and approximately 27.2% served more than 6 years. Only 14.6% of survey participants were in their inaugural year of service.

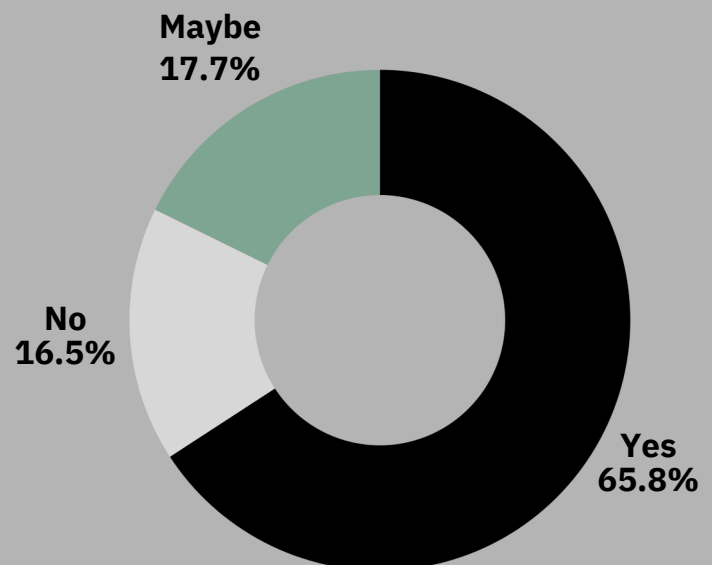


Individual board members' ages were not among the data collected in the current triennial surveys.

## Objective: xiv. Membership statistics and information.

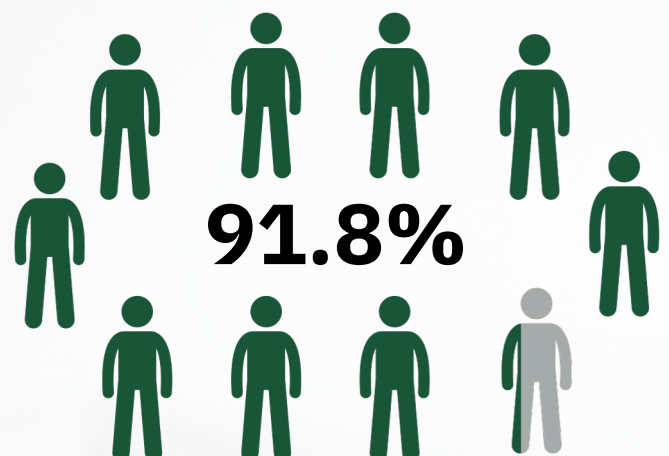
Active membership averaged about 84 people with a range of 1 to over 1000. Over half of Cherokee Community Organizations (55.1%) do not charge membership fees. About 5.1% of board members did not know if membership fees were charged and 39.9% responded affirmatively. Additionally, 65.8% of board members reported membership is open on a rolling basis for their organizations.

Although geographic scope was not directly assessed, members being diffused geographically was recounted as a barrier to organizations conducting regular activities. This suggests that some organizations serve or operate across a large geographic area.



## Objective: xv. Whether organization's leaders perceive the organization as part of a Cherokee Nation mission or objective.

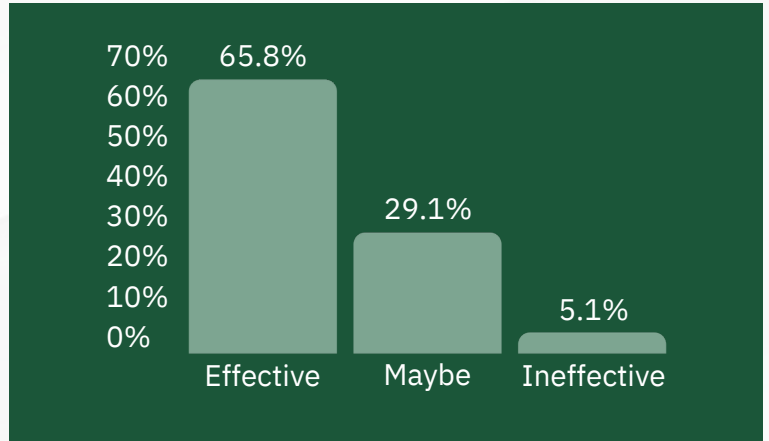
Respondents of the board member survey predominately (91.8%) set forth that their community organization aligned with the mission and objectives of Cherokee Nation.



## Objective: xvi.

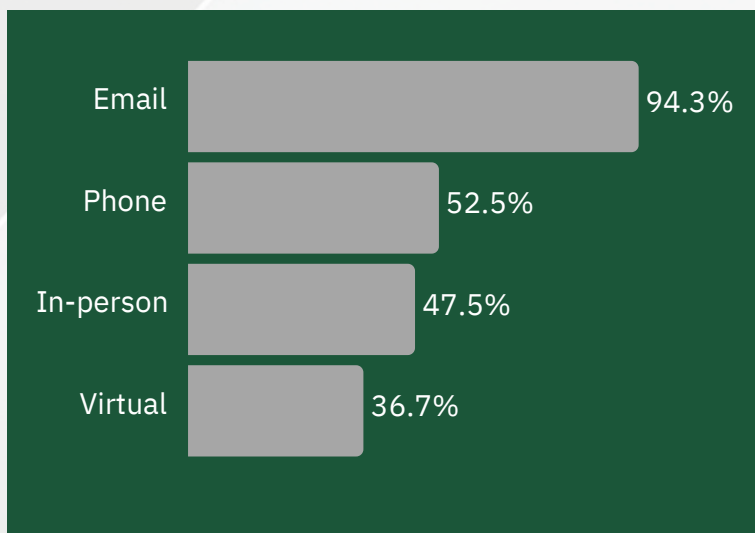
**Whether the organization's leaders believe there is effective communication to and from CCO on matters of relevance.**

Communication from CCO to the Cherokee Community Organizations was deemed effective by 65.8% of board members completing the survey. CCO communication was labeled as ineffective by 5.1% of respondents with the remaining individuals (29.1%) responding noncommittally.



## Objective: xvii.

**Most, and least, effective methods of communication by CCO to the organization.**



When communication is effective, board members by far selected email (94.3%) as most efficacious. Phone (52.5%) and in-person (47.5) communication both garnered support from approximately half of respondents. Least selected of the response options was virtual meetings receiving 36.7% of board members' endorsements.

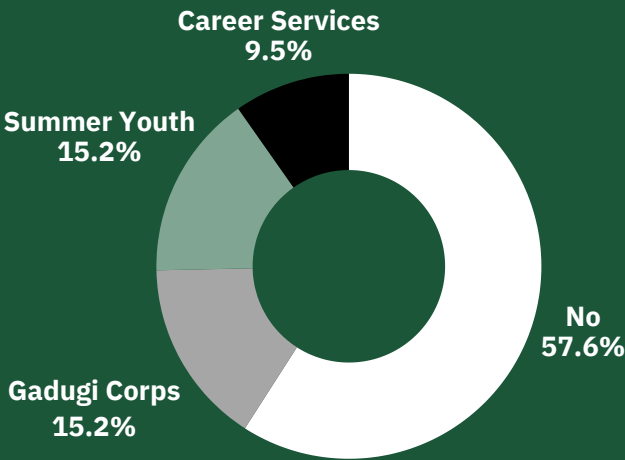
Trainings were most frequently written in for an avenue of effective communication.



# Objective: xviii.

Whether the organization has utilized workers paid for by Cherokee Nation and by type.

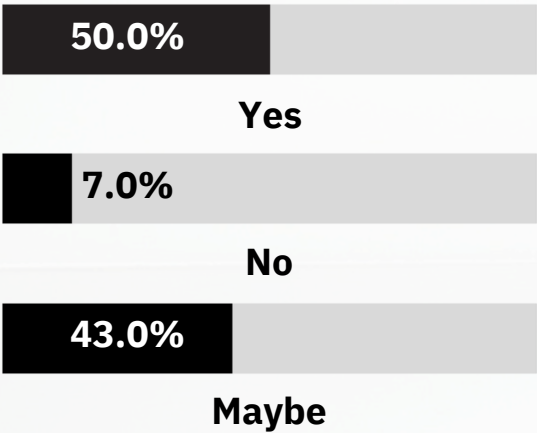
Upon presentation of the question about their organization having used Cherokee Nation paid workers, over half (57.6%) responded in the negative. Gadugi Corps Members and Summer Youth employment were both selected by 15.2% of survey respondents, and Career Services participants garnered affirmative responses from 9.5% of board members.



# Objective: xix.

Whether the organization desires the assistance of workers paid for by Cherokee Nation.

Exactly half of respondents showed an interest in paid worker assistance. Approximately 7.0% reported no interest and 43.0% were indecisive.

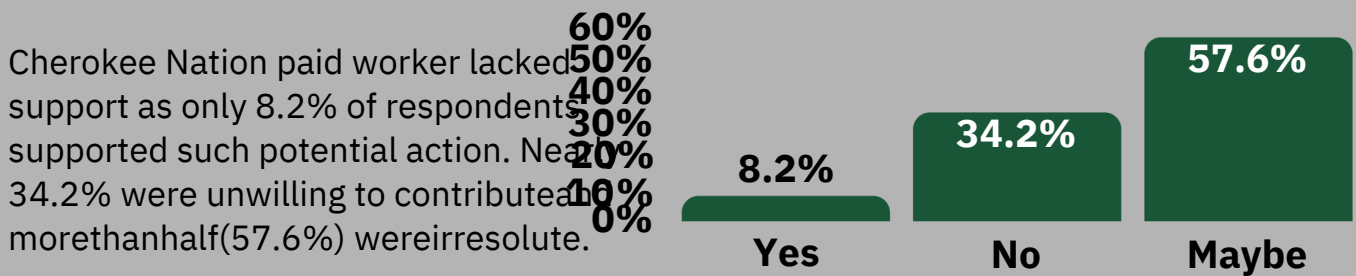




## Objective: xx.

Whether the organization would be willing to contribute to the compensation of a Cherokee Nation paid worker if one were provided.

Assisting with compensation for a

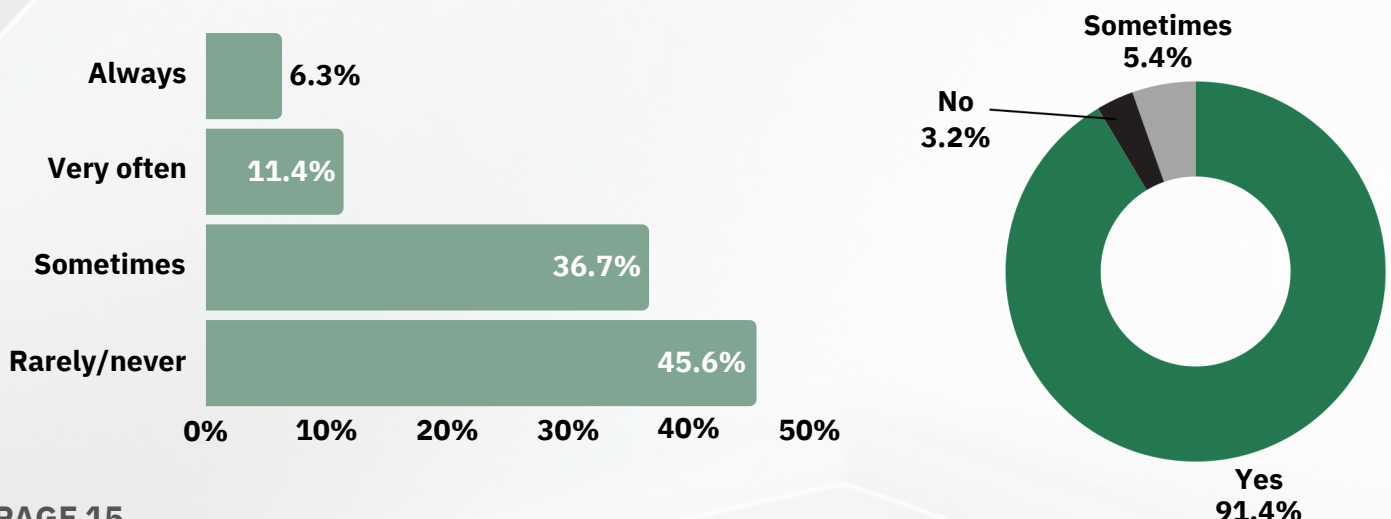


## Objective: xxi.

Access and barriers to technology for the conduct of organization's affairs and activities.

All Tribal Council survey participants reported that technology/internet limitations were barriers faced by organizations in their district. These data contrast with board member respondents of whom only 17.7% indicated very often or always facing barriers to accessing or using technology. That said, for those individuals who indicated facing barriers, they described issues of Elders not having access to technology or internet and a general lack of access to the internet and/or phone service. In addition, concerns were also conveyed regarding inadequate access to up-to-date technology and unsatisfactory technology knowhow.

The need for upgraded technology and the training to use it is strikingly evident when considering data from the non-board member survey. Approximately 91.4% of members indicated they have access to reliable internet and technology to stay up to date on organization-related activities. Thus, there seems to be a disconnect in that non-board members are ready and awaiting communications that board members are reporting being ill-equipped to send.



# Perceived Paths to Success



Members were asked to identify potential strategies to ensure they felt their experiences with the Cherokee Community Organizations are meaningful and fulfilling. Of the foci detailed, members were keen to prioritize the inclusion of Elders. Members wanted to develop relationships with Elders as well as do more for them. For example, one member shared that more meaning could be achieved via “Access to Elders who grew up in the culture that we could form relationships with.” Members were also eager to point out that having a building or a dedicated meeting space would greatly improve the success of the organizations to which they belong. Communication from the Cherokee Community Organization to its members regarding events and activities needed improvement as well as redoubling efforts to ensure events are culturally centered. Finally, non-board members strongly advocated leadership reform. One person wrote, “Our leadership has allowed non-Cherokees ... in positions of leadership.” A second member stated, “Better leadership... from the board and CCO.”, and a third typed “Generate good new leadership candidates.” Even with all these recommendations, 93.7% considered their experience with the organization good or excellent and 94.1% of members reported they would recommend their organization to other Cherokees in their area.

Corroborating the barriers presented in Objective vi., Tribal Councilors also reported that the most common requests they receive include space, funding, and increasing community participation. Added to this were the Councilors’ beliefs that more involvement from CCO would be beneficial. One council member wrote, “Have CCO Board Members that are frequently visible, active, and involved within the community.”. Input regarding community organization success concluded with Tribal Council members sharing their recommendations. Of participating Councilors, regular elections and transparency were the most common recommendations.

Challenges to success as construed by Cherokee Community Organization board members entailed a lack of physical resources (viz., a permanent facility), financial barriers, and a general need for board members to receive leadership training. Underwhelming participation in all human-related aspects is an encumbrance. That is, scarcity of board members, community indifference to engagement, and insufficient volunteer support were all expressed. Moreover, there is a paucity of young and middle-aged adults among the membership of some community organizations. Additional support was called for in the areas of more cultural presenters and cultural presentations as well as all things technology related – better technology, better internet access, and training on how to maximize the use of technology. Finally, board members crave technical and training assistance for grants as well as more training and meetings with Cherokee Nation CCO.

Additional comments and suggestions reiterated topics already touched upon (e.g., leadership training, financial assistance, involving youth and Elders, more and varied information around grants, etc...), but also included general training for non-profit operations as illustrated in the following quote, “Can CN CCO provide a consultant and training resource for non-profit board operations for activities like taxes, budgeting, board training?” Finally, and of great import, is the desire to infuse more culture in activities and events which is summed up by this board member quote, “Most of our council wants to learn more of history, language, culture and other programs so we can bring them to our members because we don’t get enough programs and that is what our group loves.”

**“Access to elders who grew up in the culture that we could form relationships with.”**

**“Most of our council wants to learn more of history, language, culture and other programs so we can bring them to our members because we don’t get enough programs and that is what our group loves.”**

**“Have CCO Board Members that are frequently visible, active, and involved within the community.”**



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# Conclusion

Within the triumvirate of surveys serving as the basis for this report, a successful triangulation of perspectives was explored regarding the objectives of Executive Order 2025-01-CTH. Further, the data collection efforts also delved into the vantage points of three disparate demographics regarding what organizations need to thrive. Viewing the data as a whole revealed three overarching concepts: 1) physical resources, 2) financial resources, 3) and support from CCO. The foremost was predominated by requests for community buildings and permanent spaces, the latter was an umbrella category that encapsulated help with technology, increasing membership, training board members, and improved quantity and punctuality of communication from CCO. Finally, within the sweeping concept of support, Cherokee Community Organizations demonstrated a passion for more Cherokee culture – more options, more presentations, more access to Elders, more presenters, etc... Cherokee Community Organizations are impassioned about uplifting Cherokee culture and are entreating customized aid to achieve their missions and visions.





Appendix 2  
Cherokee Citizen Survey

# SURVEY REPORT

2026

**Community Organizing Taskforce  
Non-Member Survey Report**





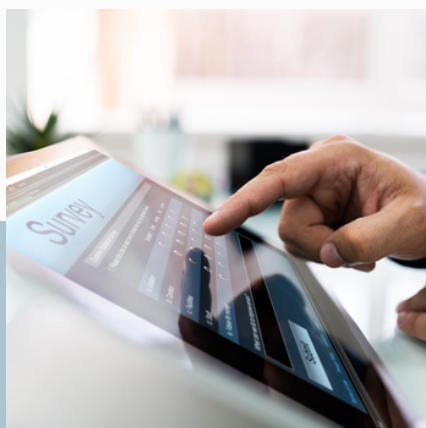
# Purpose & Scope

The Cherokee Nation Community Organizing Taskforce conducted a survey for individuals who live near a Cherokee Nation community organization but who are not currently members. This survey was administered to fulfill objectives specified in Executive Order 2025-01-CTH. The Executive Order established the Chief's task force on community organizing to promote and support community organizing to enhance the quality of life of Cherokee communities and revitalize cultural life ways. The objectives addressed fully or in part via the current non-member survey are:

vi. Barriers to participating in CCO grant programs.

xxii. Quality, reach and effectiveness of the organizations public relations and outreach and opportunities to improve the same.

xxiii. Whether, within the Cherokee Nation reservation and contiguous areas, Cherokee Nation citizens are familiar with CCO Participating organizations, are members of a CCO participating organization and, if not, whether they are interested in learning more about their local CCO participating organization.



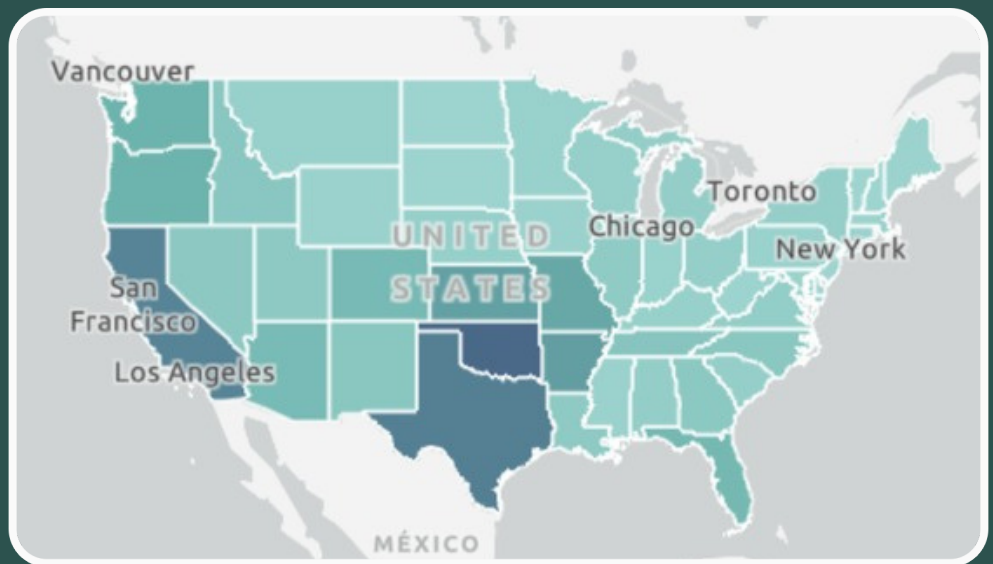
## Method

A 12-item survey was administered electronically to individuals living both on the reservation (22.5%) and at-large (72.8%). Data collection began on June 10th of the current year and ended on July 14th. A total of 4,039 responses were collected anonymously. All questions were required, which relegated the impact of data missingness on the results.

# Respondents



Cherokee citizenship was reported for 97.4% of respondents and all 50 states were represented. Oklahoma was the most frequent state of residence (49.8%) with Texas and California second and third most frequently selected at 7.1% and 6.7%, respectively. In contrast, each of 16 states were resided in by less than 10 respondents. Nearly 1,400 communities were represented among respondents with Tulsa (5.2%) and Tahlequah (2.6%) being the most common.



## Analyses

Descriptive analyses were conducted on multiple choice and multiple response questions. For these items response frequencies are reported along with corresponding visual representations. For survey questions that were solely open-ended or incorporated an open-ended element, inductive thematic analysis was applied. In an inductive approach, keywords and themes emerge naturally and contribute to a data-driven understanding of the data. It is a bottom-up approach which allows coders to remain open to patterns, ideas, and themes as they emerge from the data.<sup>1</sup>

Code identification was completed independently by two analysts. Subsequently, analysts met and discussed to agreement any observed differences in categories and codes. After achieving consensus, the analysts worked in concert to identify overarching themes. Themes derived from respondents' data are presented in the results below.



## Results: Awareness/ Membership

Survey respondents were first asked if they were aware of any Cherokee Nation Community and Cultural Outreach Department (CCO) participating community organizations (PCOs) where they live. A vast majority (83.4%) indicated no awareness, and 6.8% indicated uncertainty by selecting “Maybe” (see Figure 1). Aligning with this lack of knowledge, 70.9% of respondents reported their non-member status being a result of them not knowing of any PCOs. While 29.0% of survey takers reported not being members because they had not been invited or encouraged (see Figure 2), 56.2% of these individuals also reported being unaware of any PCOs. When selections for these two items are considered in combination, responses from 16.3% of the overall sample suggest respondents may not have known about PCOs because no attempt was made to reach out to them. Moreover, 28.2% of individuals who reported knowing of a PCO where they live also indicated they were not a member because they had not been invited or encouraged. Additionally, 7.1% of this same group indicated they did not think PCOs applied to them.

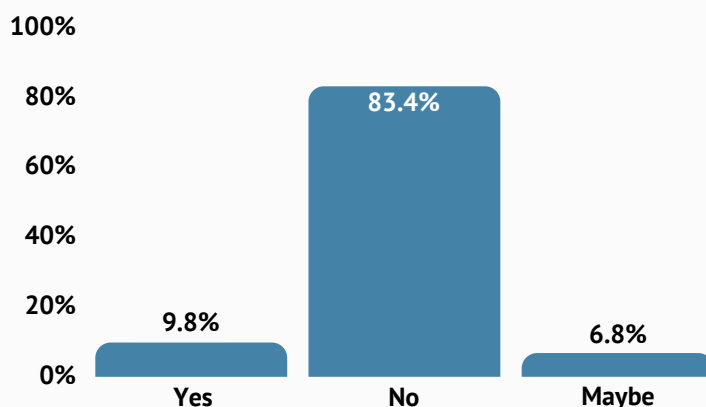


Figure 1. Awareness of PCOs

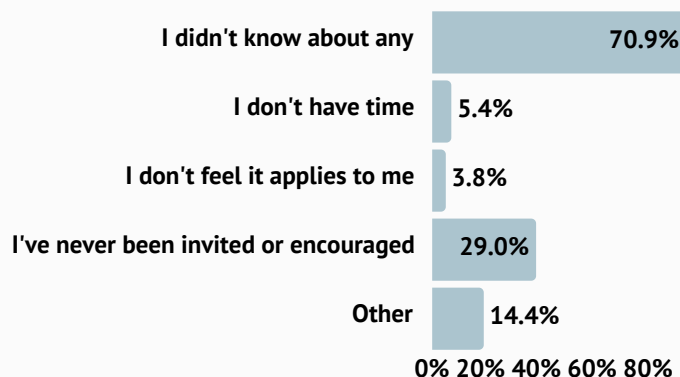


Figure 2. Reasons for non-membership

## Results: Membership Themes

Four primary themes emerged from analysis of write-in responses regarding reasons for non-membership: 1) **Access**, 2) **Communication**, 3) **Engagement**, and 4) **Inclusiveness**.



### ACCESS

- Distance
- Transportation
- Cost of attending
- Personal responsibilities
- Disability accommodations



### INCLUSIVENESS

- Fear of not belonging
- Not feeling welcome at events



### ENGAGEMENT

- No PCOs present in area
- Low PCO activity
- Difficulty in becoming member
- PCO staff unresponsive



### COMMUNICATION

- Lack of knowledge of CCO and PCOs
- Lack of event promotion
- How to locate PCOs
- Membership requirements for PCOs
- How to volunteer

# Results: General Interest

Interest in joining or learning about a nearby CCO participating organization was substantial. Only 2.5% of respondents selected “No” whereas 70.6% marked “Yes” (see Figure 3). However, only 26.5% of the entire sample had definitely attended an event or activity hosted by a Cherokee Nation Community and Cultural Outreach participating organization (see Figure 4). Further, of only those interested in joining or learning more, 65.5% had not attended an activity or event. Thus, close to half of all respondents (46.2%) indicated an interest in membership and knowing more despite no previous participation.

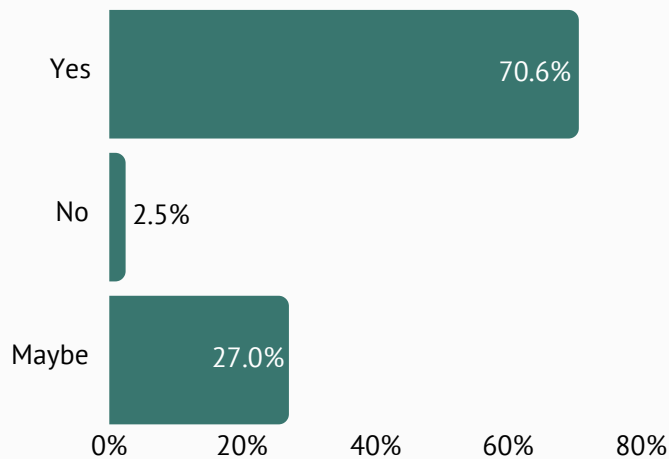


Figure 3. Interest in joining PCO

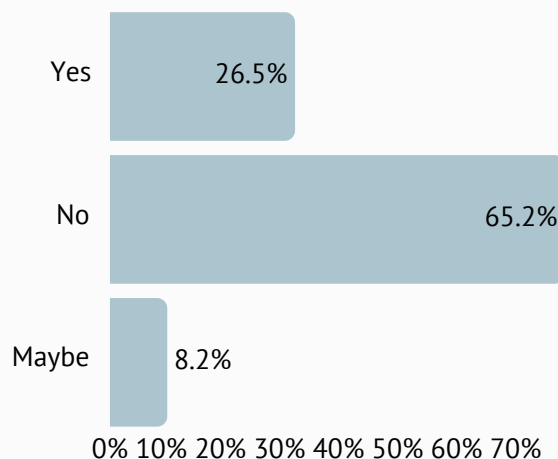


Figure 4. PCO event attendance



# Results: Interest in Events/Services



A review of respondents' data indicated a general interest in all the preset service and event options (see Figure 5). Cultural events received the most support with 73.1% of survey takers' endorsements. Outside of "Other" at 7.0%, the lowest but still well supported service was food assistance and meal programs, advocated for by 41.8% of the full sample.

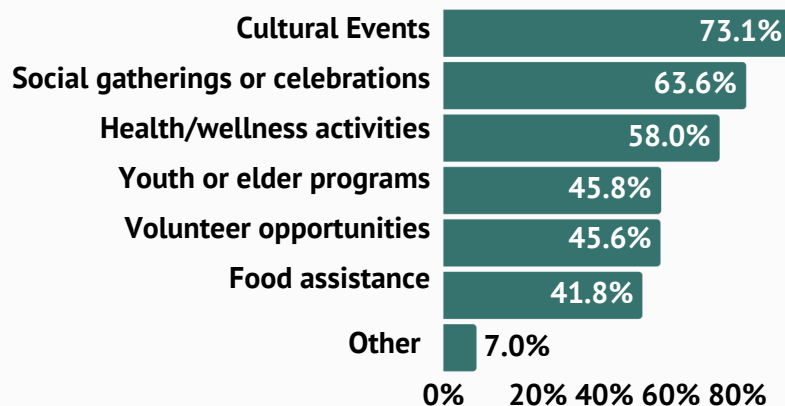


Figure 5. Interest in events or services



The four themes extracted from those selecting "Other" included:

**1) General Knowledge, 2) Traditional/Cultural Knowledge, 3) Cherokee Nation Services, and 4) Events.**

## GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

- Bridges out of Poverty training
- Cherokee Nation Governance
- How to access historical records
- Genealogical assistance
- Legal help
- Services and benefits at-large citizens

## CN SERVICES

- Benefits
- At-large voting
- Job training
- Tribal registration
- Housing assistance
- Academic assistance
- Photo ID
- All CN services

## TRADITIONAL/CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

- Animal husbandry
- Philosophy Spirituality Traditional
- methods for fashioning tools, crafts,
- and hunting implements Language
- History Information for non-Cherokee
- allies (e.g., spouses, advocates,
- caregivers)
- 

## EVENTS

- Distance
- Transportation
- Cost of attending
- Personal responsibilities
- Disability
- accommodations

# Results: Participation

Individuals participating in the current survey were asked what would make them more likely to participate in local community events. Their responses revealed three primary topics:

1) Communication, 2) Access, and 3) Engagement.



“*Include everyone, all human kind; however many.*

-Cherokee Community Value

## COMMUNICATION

- Regular, timely, and detailed event invitations
- Additional formats to social media

“Just simply knowing about them.”

## ACCESS

- Reasonable proximity
- Event times outside of work schedule
- Disability, health, age-related accommodations
- Virtual attendance options
- Feeling accepted
- Feeling a sense of belonging

“Feeling like I actually belong and am not in the way or being a burden.”

## ENGAGEMENT

- Knowledge of volunteer opportunities
- Family- and kid-friendly
- Quality entertainment
- Good food
- Captivating cultural activities

“Authentic connection to Cherokee traditions.”

The final survey question soliciting additional thoughts or suggestions garnered feedback similar to the aforementioned and yielded little novel information. However, one aspect that arose among the responses was a desire for Cherokees, specifically those at-large, to be able to connect to other Cherokees in their areas. Materializing from the data was a yearning for a sense of community and cultural connectedness. The observed zeal to connect with one another is underscored by only 7.6% (see Figure 6) of participants indicating they felt like there were enough opportunities to connect with other Cherokee citizens in their area. Further, of at-large respondents, only 4.6% responded in the affirmative.

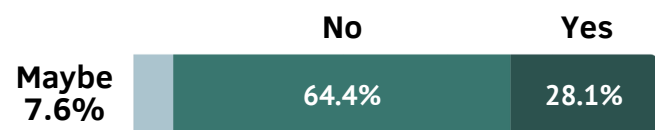


Figure 6. Opportunities to connect

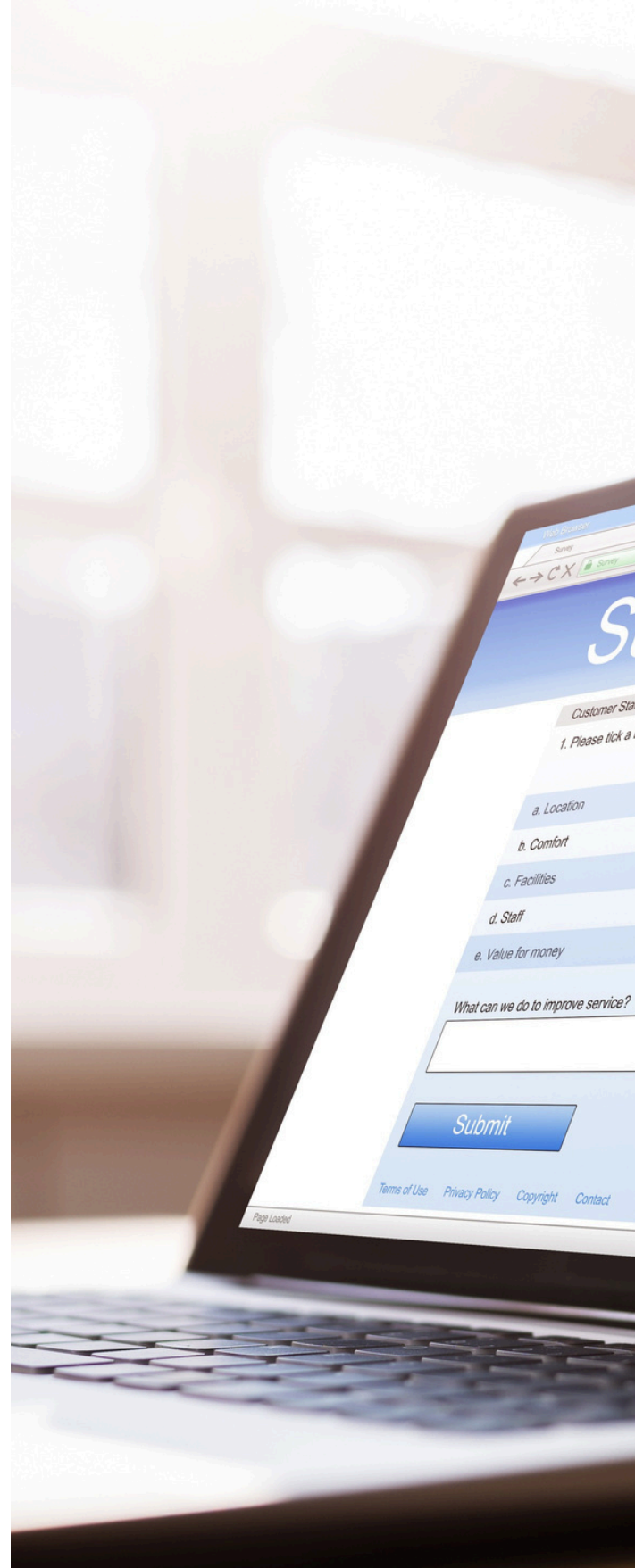


# Limitations

Demographic variables such as sex and age were not included in data collection. The length of the survey was quite manageable, as the average time of completion was 4 minutes and 44 seconds. Two additional questions would not elevate substantially completion time and would increase the ability to stratify findings to make the data actionable in a more targeted manner.

Uncertainty looms about the leverage of individual respondents. The data appear to have been collected anonymously, and without indication of collection methodology the likelihood of participants having completed more than one survey cannot be assessed or addressed.

Many respondents indicated that they were unaware of both the Cherokee Nation Community and Cultural Outreach Department and Participating Community Organizations. Thus, gleaned information may be of lesser usefulness than anticipated. For example, respondents often were not aware of a distinction between CCO and PCOs which may have resulted in the data being less likely to fulfill predetermined goals.





# Recommendations

Overall, survey respondents appeared appreciative of the opportunity to be heard. Thus, continued engagement via future invitations to provide feedback will likely yield positive outcomes. It is recommended, however, that methodological insufficiencies be addressed. These include potential addition of demographic variables, establish protocols that minimize likelihood of more than one submission per respondent, and take steps to adjust instructions and items to ensure clarity. Consider embracing opportunities to educate Cherokee citizens regarding the mission and vision of the Cherokee Nation CCO Department, as well as highlighting the distinct roles of CCO and PCOs. Review methods of communication and assess their effective reach. It is unknown if “Facebook” is being used as a catch-all by respondents to represent social media in general or if they believe Facebook is truly the only source of information about PCO events and activities. Nonetheless, respondents, often elders, requested more direct methods of communication – email, text messages, newspapers, etc. Entertain creating a stronger, strategic online presence for both CCO and PCOs to enhance communication and member recruitment. Increase the breadth of the online platforms by which information is disseminated. This includes partnerships with PCOs to potentially allow communication efforts through the Cherokee Nation Gadugi Portal. Expanded efforts should also include a directory for PCOs, perhaps an interactive map of the states and other countries to support members and non-members in locating the most proximal and accessible PCOs.

Given the magnitude of the geographic area from which respondents hail, it may be advantageous to create a collective of regional PCO coordinators. Coordinators would be advantageous for tracking and membership maintenance in addition to providing a reliable point of contact to acquire information regarding volunteer opportunities and event coordination.

Implementation of a system for continuous quality improvement that seeks to uplift and cultivate cultural connection. One demographic of focus should be Cherokees of multicultural families, as they long to have both cultural connectedness and acceptance of their non-Cherokee family members.

Finally, survey participants expressed eagerness to connect to other Cherokees in their areas. Thus, a voluntary Cherokee directory for at-large citizens may provide opportunities for Cherokees to stay connected to their fellow tribal members and culture. Such a directory would adhere to the Executive Order decree to revitalize cultural life ways and would be an endorsement of Cherokee Community Values, viz., *Visit one another with love, locate and find one another.*



# Conclusion

Summarily, the Cherokee Nation Community Organizing Taskforce – Non-Member Survey was unequivocally successful in amassing actionable data in service of addressing objectives vi, xxii, and xxiii from Executive Order 2025-01-CTH.

Specifically, within these data are clearly delineated real and perceived barriers for Cherokee citizens to participate in CCO grant programs (vi).

Very clearly stated were non-members' perceptions of the quality, reach, and effectiveness of organizations' public relations and outreach as roundly inadequate and ineffective (xxii).

Finally, the results show that Cherokee citizens who responded to the current survey were largely unfamiliar with CCO or PCOs but indicated a considerable appetite for learning more about and being involved in their local CCO participating organizations (xxiii).



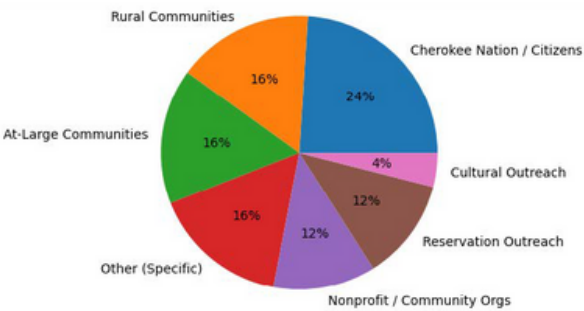
1. How long have you worked in your current position?

Less than 1 year	10
1-3 years	10
4-6 years	1
More than 6 years	4



2. With what types of organizations or communities do you primarily work?

25  
Responses



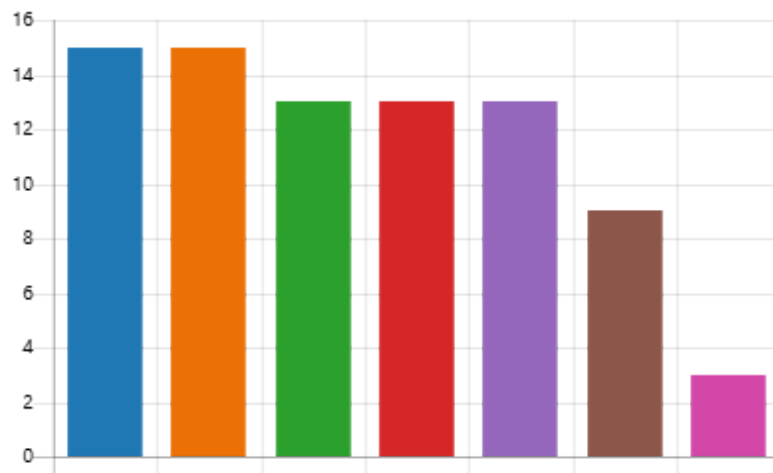
3. How would you describe the overall capacity of most community organizations to conduct activities?

Strong and self-sustaining	3
Moderate, with occasional support	16
Limited capacity, high support	5
Highly dependent on CCO assistance	1



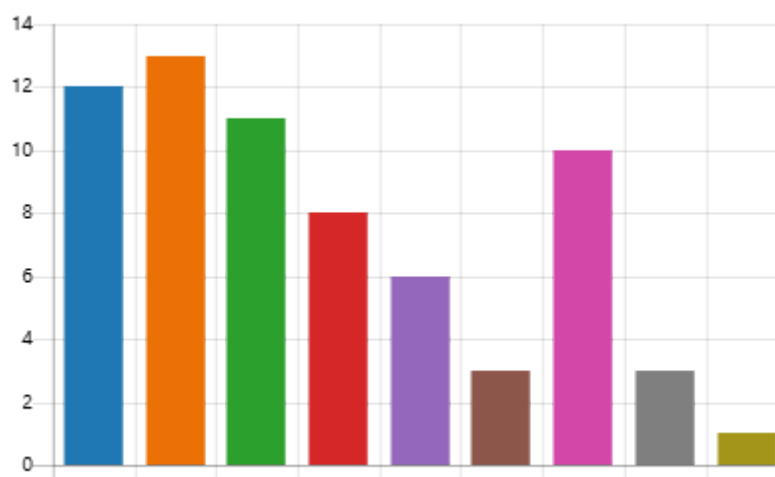
#### 4. What types of activities do organizations most commonly conduct?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Cultural events	15
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Social gatherings	15
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Food security programs	13
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Health and wellness activities	13
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Youth or Elder programs	13
<span style="color: brown;">●</span> Educational workshops	9
<span style="color: magenta;">●</span> Other	3



## 5. What common barriers do organizations report facing?

Lack of funding	12
Limited volunteers or staff	13
Limited knowledge of grant programs	11
Facility challenges	8
Communication issues	6
Technology/Internet limitations	3
Lack of community participation	10
No commonly reported barriers	3
Other	1



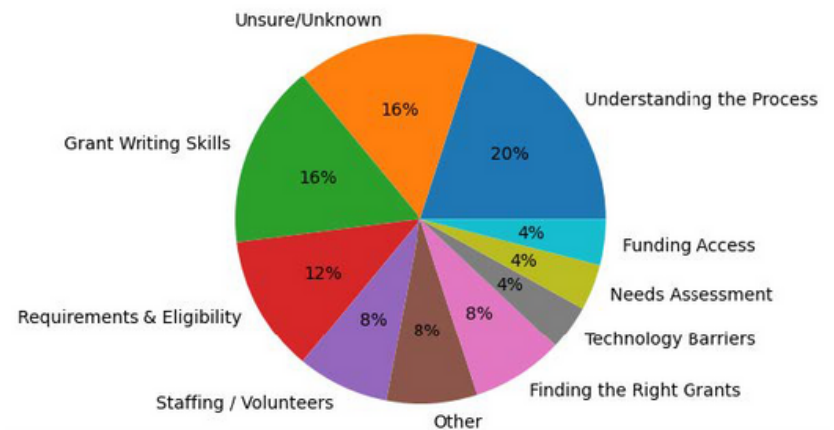
## 6. How would you rate the effectiveness of CCO grant programs in meeting organizational needs?

Very effective	13
Somewhat effective	12
Somewhat ineffective	0
Ineffective	0



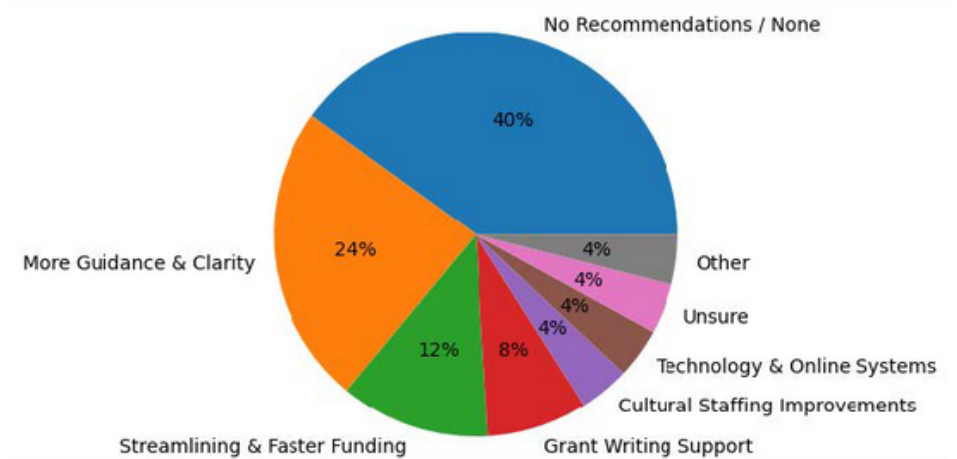
7. What are the most common challenges organizations face when applying for grants?

25  
Responses



8. Are there any improvements you would recommend for the grant application or administration process?

25  
Responses



9. How often do you provide technical assistance or training to organizations?

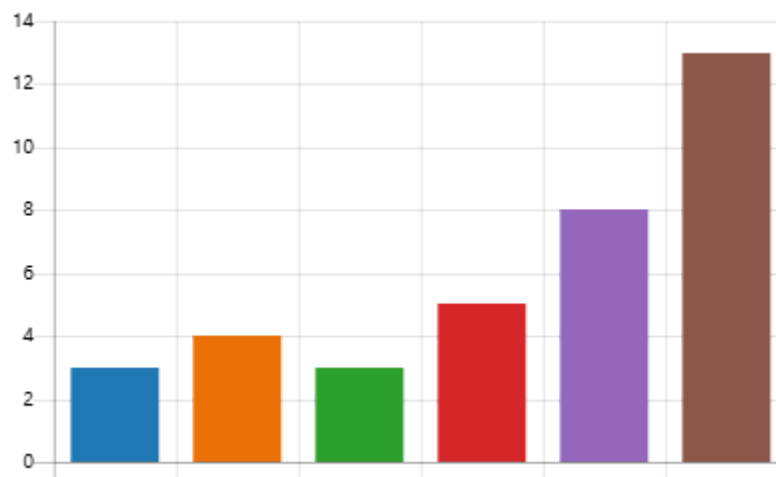


5  
6  
1  
1  
12



## 10. What kinds of technical assistance do you most provide?

Help with grant applications	3
Strategic planning	4
Board training or governance	3
Event planning support	5
Technology or outreach training	8
Other	13



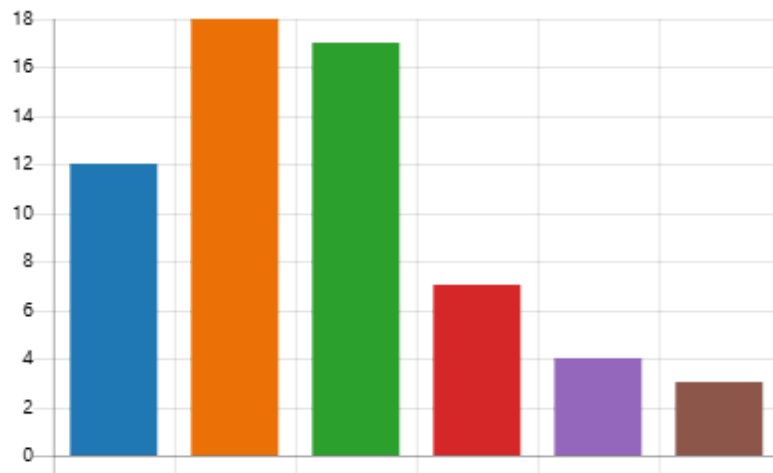
## 11. How effective is CCO communication to community organizations?

Very effective	13
Somewhat effective	9
Not effective	0
Unsure	3

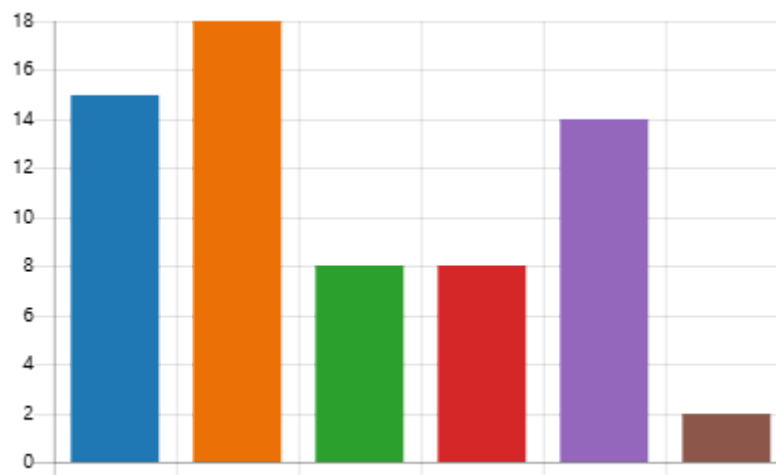
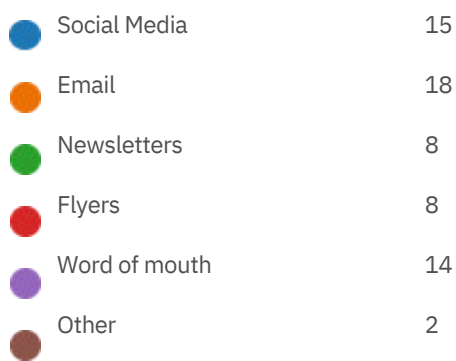


## 12. What methods are the most effective for communicating with organizations?

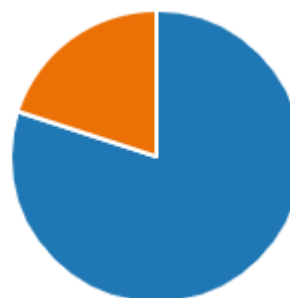
Email	12
Phone calls	18
In-person visits	17
Zoom/virtual meetings	7
Social media	4
Other	3



13. What methods do organizations commonly use to communicate with their members and the public?



14. What improvements could be made to help organizations improve their communication and outreach?



15. Have you coordinated for Cherokee Nation-paid workers to be placed with a CCO?

Yes	4
No	8
Maybe	1
Not applicable to my job role	12



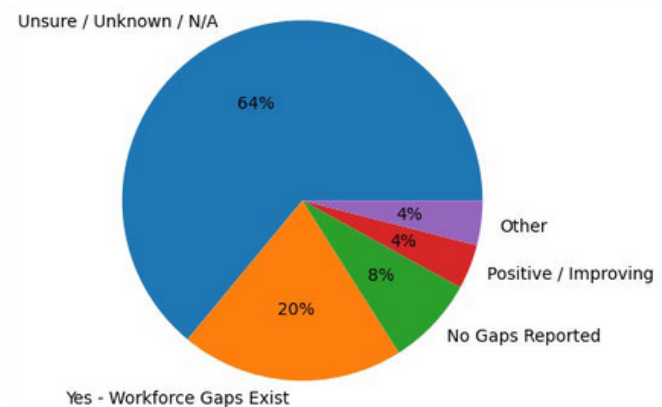
16. In your experience, how valuable are these workers with organizations (e.g., Career Services, Gadugi Corps)?

Extremely valuable	15
Somewhat valuable	2
Not valuable	0
Unsure	8



17. Are there any gaps in workforce availability that limit organization effectiveness?

25  
Responses



18. In your view, are organizations generally aligned with the broader mission of the Cherokee Nation?

Blue	16
Orange	0
Green	6
Red	3

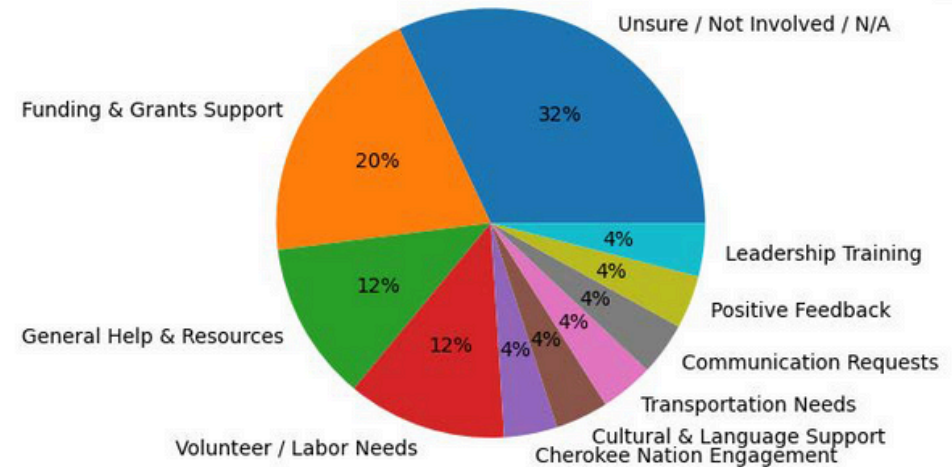


19. Do you believe most organizations are aware of each other's work and collaborate effectively?



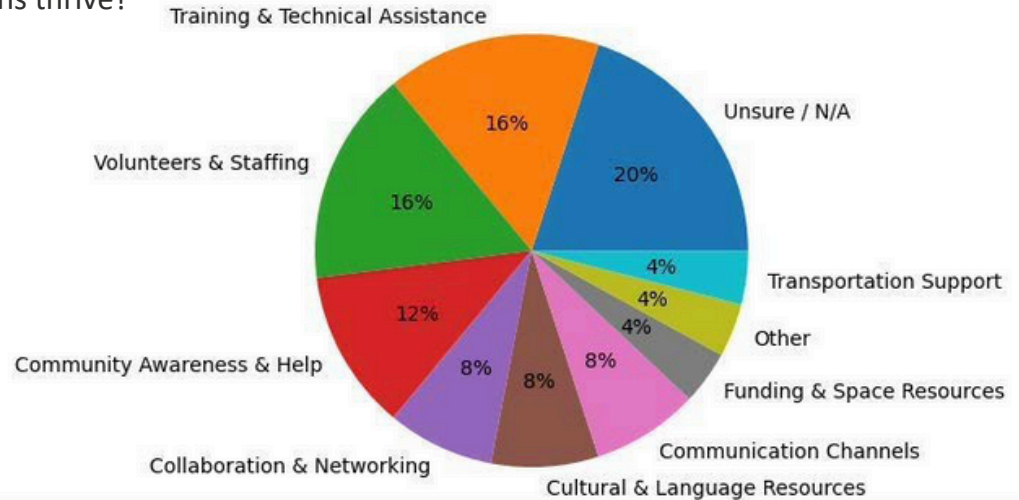
20. What are the most common requests or feedback you receive from organizations?

25  
Responses



21. What additional resources or support do you believe would most help organizations thrive?

25  
Responses



**Attachment 1: Interim Report 8/25/25**



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918-453-5000 • [www.cherokee.org](http://www.cherokee.org)

Office of the Chief

**Chuck Hoskin Jr.**  
*Principal Chief*

**Bryan Warner**  
*Deputy Principal Chief*

August 25, 2025

TO: Chuck Hoskin Jr., Principal Chief

FR: Canaan Duncan, Deputy Secretary of State

CC: Savannah Smith, Dawnena Squirrel, Vince Feeling, Roger Graham, Brad Eubanks, Shawn Crittenden, Brooklyn Neff, Kristen Thomas, Camerin Fite-James

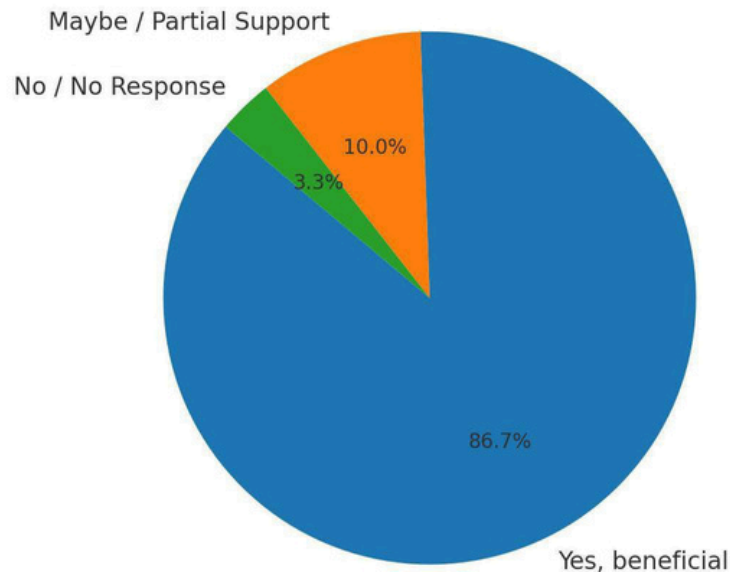
**Task Force on Community Organizing Update & Interim Report Recommendations**

Since the signing of [Executive Order 2025-01-CTH](#), the Task Force on Community Organizing has spent the vast majority of its time administering surveys and engaging in focus groups with various community leaders, with additional focus groups still to be scheduled. The prior information gathered through the focus groups and surveys has resulted in a large amount of vital information to analyze, which the task force has recruited the assistance of our Public Health Epidemiologist team to assist. With the current Task Force report deadline being extended to September 30, 2025 and the aforementioned work to be completed, the Task Force would like to provide an interim report and recommendation on a specific area that has appeared throughout a focus group held with 66 community leaders representing 65 CCO Participating Community Organizations.

In open feedback settings through the focus groups, it became abundantly clear that community leaders share excitement, appreciation and hope with the focus and investments community organizations have received through CCO, HJSCA, and PHWFA. However, with the investments and growing grass roots interest, multiple community organization leaders and members expressed their need for full time support at Cherokee Nation community building sites to better serve their communities. The data collected from the focus group surveys completed by community leaders evidenced that they feel that their organizations, who are ran by passionate Cherokees who are also employed or retired, would be able to conduct routine community activities and programs more regularly and on a greater scale if they were provided with staff to assist. Specific issues that arose were time constraints on volunteers, lack of volunteers, a desire for Cherokee Nation community liaisons, and assistance with promotional outreach. From those discussions, we surveyed the community leaders to inquire how many of their

organizations would benefit from a full-time Cherokee Nation employee being physically located at their sites. The focus group survey results demonstrated that 86.7 percent of community leaders feel that having a Cherokee Nation employee would be beneficial in carrying out more events and assisting in daily operations.

### Would Having a Paid Cherokee Nation Employee Benefit Your Organization?



### **Recommendation**

The Task Force provides the following recommendation in response to the data collected from community leaders related to the barrier discussed above:

- Cherokee Nation, through its Community and Cultural Outreach Department, provide 1 Full-time Employee (FTE) to be housed within Cherokee Nation owned Community Buildings within the Cherokee Nation Reservation.
- The FTEs' primary work responsibilities and duties will be to:
  - Work with Organization Leadership to schedule, plan, and coordinate periodic community events.
  - Liaise between the Organization and Cherokee Nation CCO and other programs and services.
  - Coordinate periodic outreach events to engage and build local participation.
  - Coordinate volunteer opportunities with the Organization and Gadugi Corps.

- Maintain operational standards for community organizations operating a Cherokee Nation owned community building in accordance to CCO Policies and Procedures
  - Be located physically at the Community Building site during normal Cherokee Nation business hours.
- With a total of 34 Cherokee Nation owned community buildings, it is recommended that a phased implementation approach that focuses on geographic equity is considered. Through the work of CCO and the Task Force, the following sites are recommended to serve sites in most need in correlation to their regional accessibility:
  - Native American Fellowship Inc., South Coffeyville
  - Cherokee Community of Catoosa, Catoosa
  - Vian Community Foundation, Vian
  - Go'I Tsunadatlisodi (Greasy), Stilwell
  - Illinois River Community Organization, Tahlequah
  - Kansas Community Organization, Kansas

The Task Force felt that while the full report is not yet finalized, the importance of the above barrier and in consideration of timing, we felt it necessary to provide this interim report. We appreciate this opportunity and we look forward to providing you with the final report by the deadline of September 30, 2025.

Wado,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Canaan Duncan', written in a cursive style.

Canaan Duncan  
Deputy Secretary of State, Cherokee Nation

## Appendices

- Appendix 1- Elected Official, Community Organization Members, Community Organization Board Members Survey
- Appendix 2- Non-Member Survey
- Appendix 3- CCO Employee Survey
- Appendix 4- Community Organizing Task Force Interim Report