



GWYD DBF

CHEROKEE NATION®
HUMAN SERVICES

TRIBAL COUNCIL
MONTHLY REPORT

April 2021

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EMPLOYEES	392.5
VACANCIES	92
VOLUNTEERS	31



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CHEROKEE NATION®
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CHEROKEE FIRST

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER – JANELL SMITH

PROGRAMS:

Community Youth

Community Adult

EMPLOYEES 6

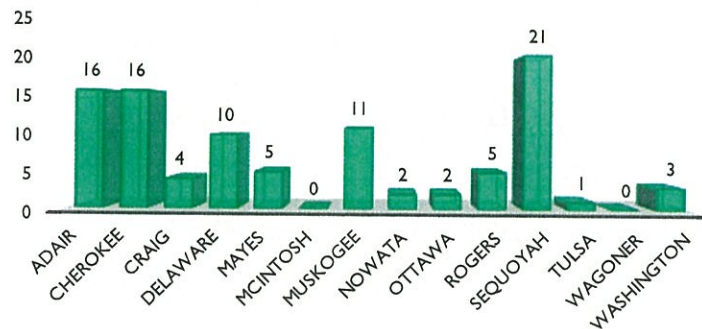
VACANCIES 1

VOLUNTEERS 0

Total Amount Distributed This Month: \$22,000

Community Youth

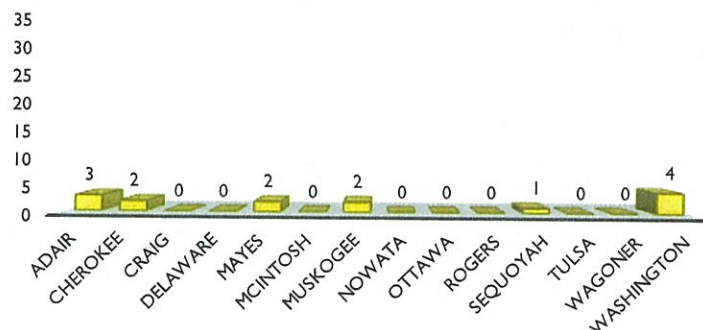
Community Youth Applications by County



Total Number of Youth Clients: 96

Community Adult

Community Adult Applications by County



Total Number of Adult Clients: 14

CHILD CARE & DEVELOPMENT

SENIOR DIRECTOR – TRICIA PEOPLES

PROGRAMS:

Child Care Development Centers

Subsidy

Resource & Referral

Licensing & Monitoring

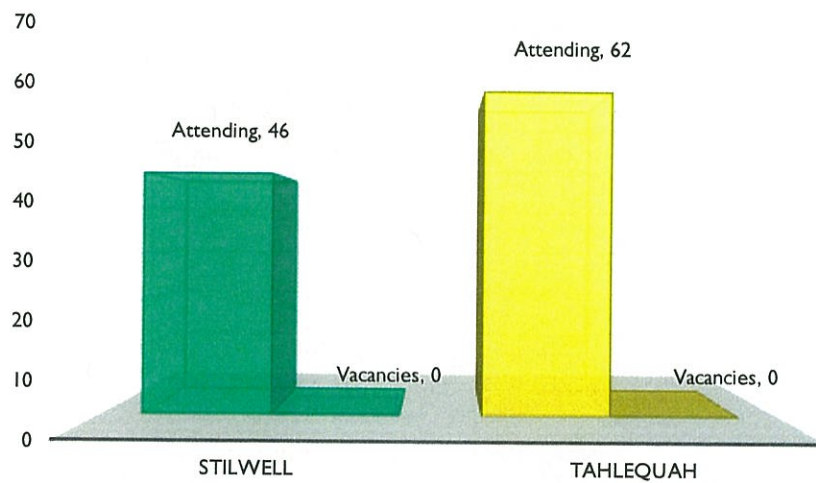
Home Visiting

EMPLOYEES 116

VACANCIES 21

VOLUNTEERS 0

Child Care Development Centers



Subsidy

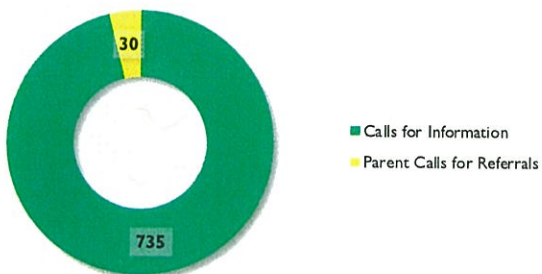
Children Receiving	1,903
Amount Distributed	\$1,508,144
Average Distribution Per Child	\$792.51

Resource & Referral

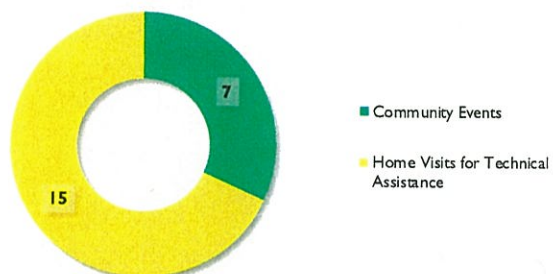


Children Receiving Home Visits 10
Trainings for the Month 24

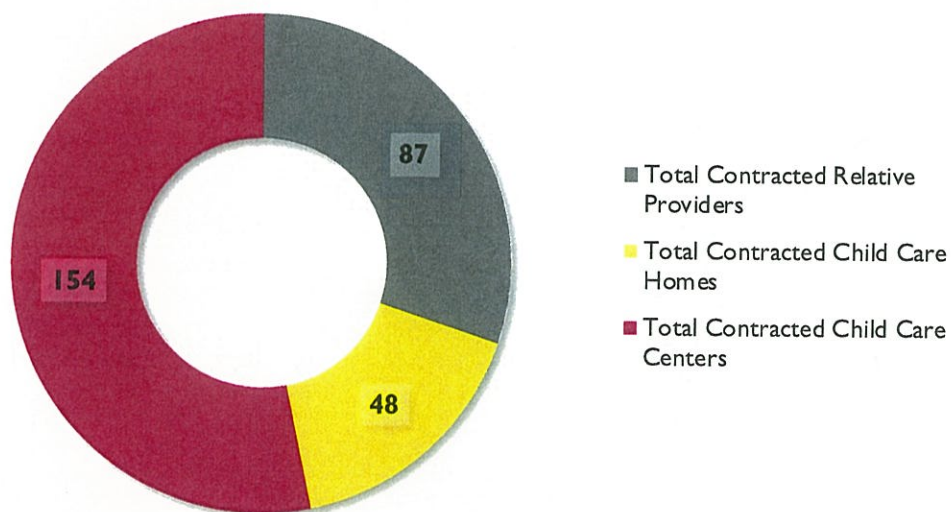
Calls Received



Program Efforts



Licensing & Monitoring



Home Visiting

○ Home Visits	34
Total Clients	9
New Clients	1
Total Number of Graduates	1
Total Enrolled Overall	9

Department Updates

Stilwell: On April 12, 2021, a full licensing and partial STARS visit was conducted. There were no deficiencies found. We celebrated Week of the Young Child. We also celebrated combining the staff after one year of working Covid shifts. All drills were conducted successfully.

Tahlequah: Signing of proclamation for child abuse awareness.

○ Subsidy: 112 parent applications (100 approved, 12 denied), 1,684 contacts (1,050 client, 226 provider, 408 agency contacts), 14 providers received phone orientation.

Resource & Referral: Continued TA and resource deliveries for HV and Providers, 108 COVID Grants processed, Child Abuse Prevention Proclamation, mail Blue Ribbon for trees, online meetings, webinars, trainings, OCCRRA meetings, Conscious Discipline, Rogers Co conference meeting, Steve Spangler conference meeting, Learn to Grow deliver plants in 9 counties, training topics: active supervision, CPR & First Aid, Child Growth & Dev., ELG, Music & Fingerplays in EC, Infection Control, Sensory Play, Community Resources, Full STEAM Ahead.

Licensing: All Licensing Caseworkers have returned to the field to conduct monitoring visits and complete Cherokee Nation passport trainings.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE

INTERIM DIRECTOR – JENNIFER KIRBY

PROGRAMS:

Food Distribution

BIA Social Services

Burial Assistance

Elder Services

LIHEAP

NAHASDA

Tribal Emergency Assistance

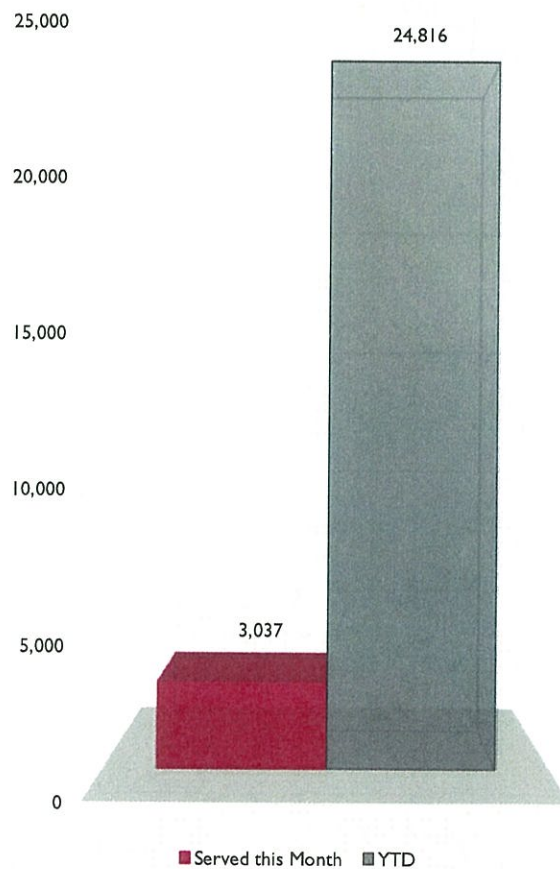
School Clothing Assistance

EMPLOYEES 119

VACANCIES 4

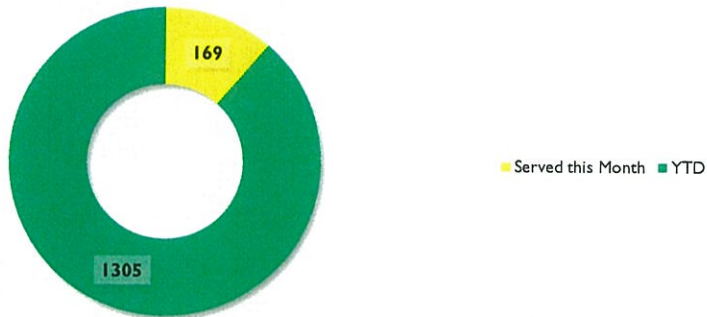
VOLUNTEERS 31

Food Distribution

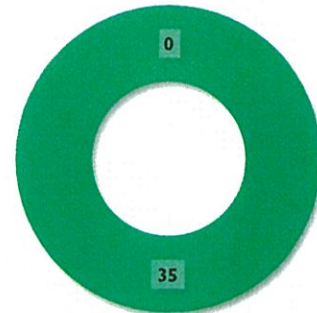


BIA Social Services

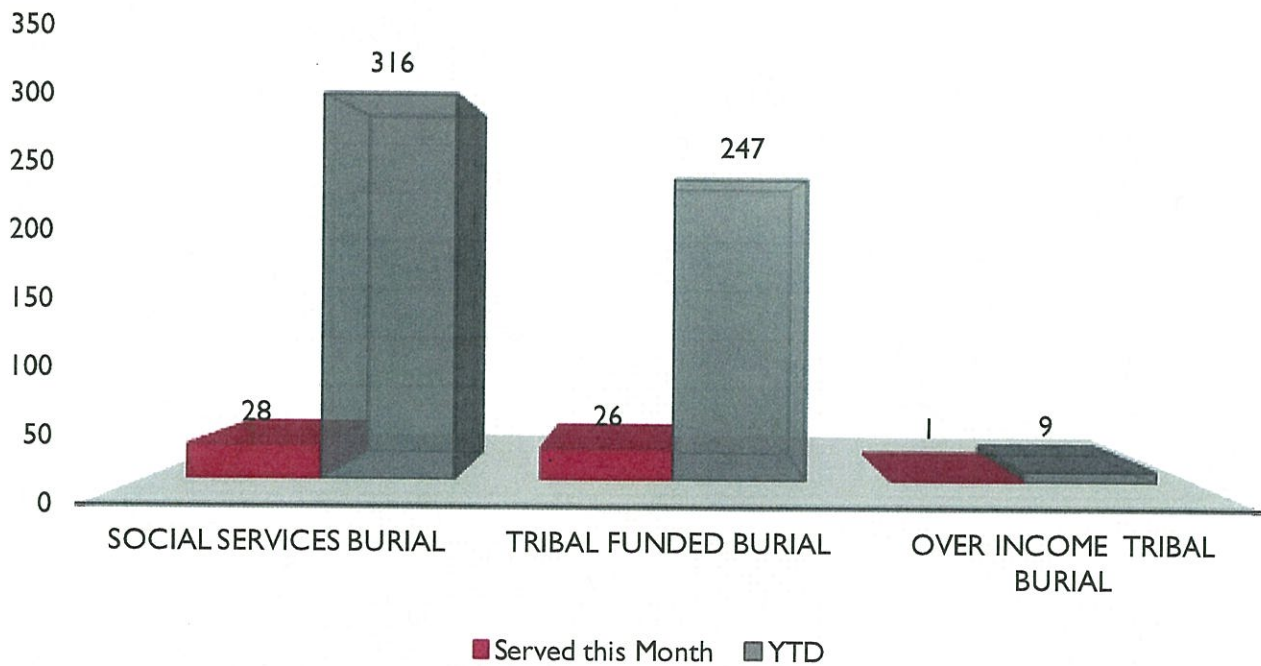
General Assistance



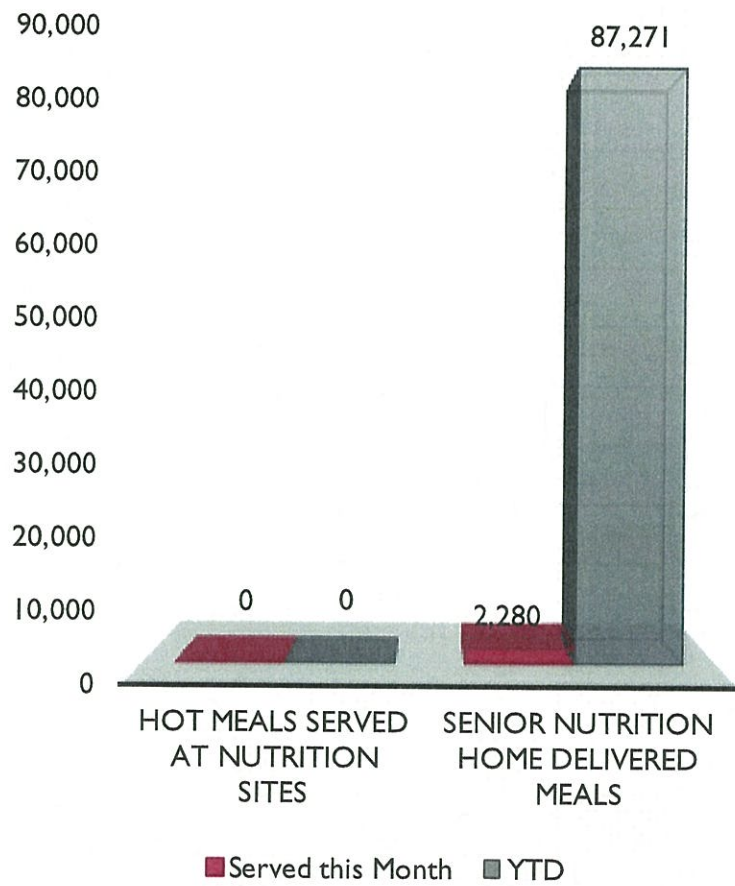
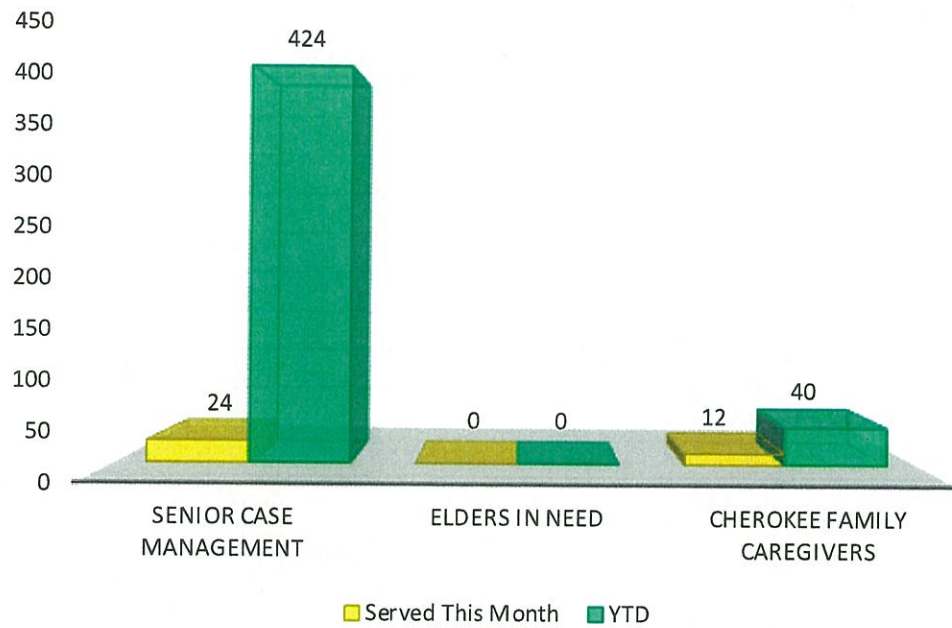
Emergency Assistance



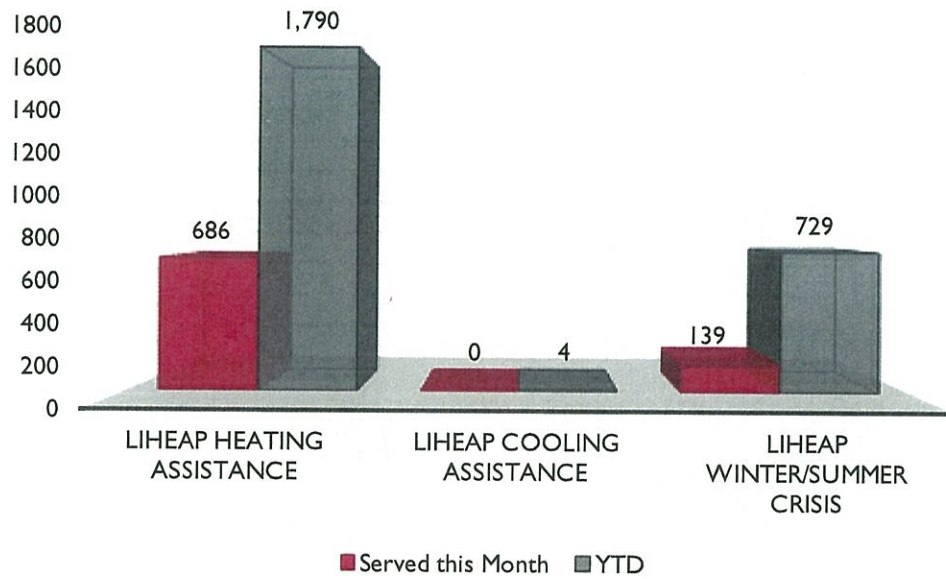
Burial Assistance



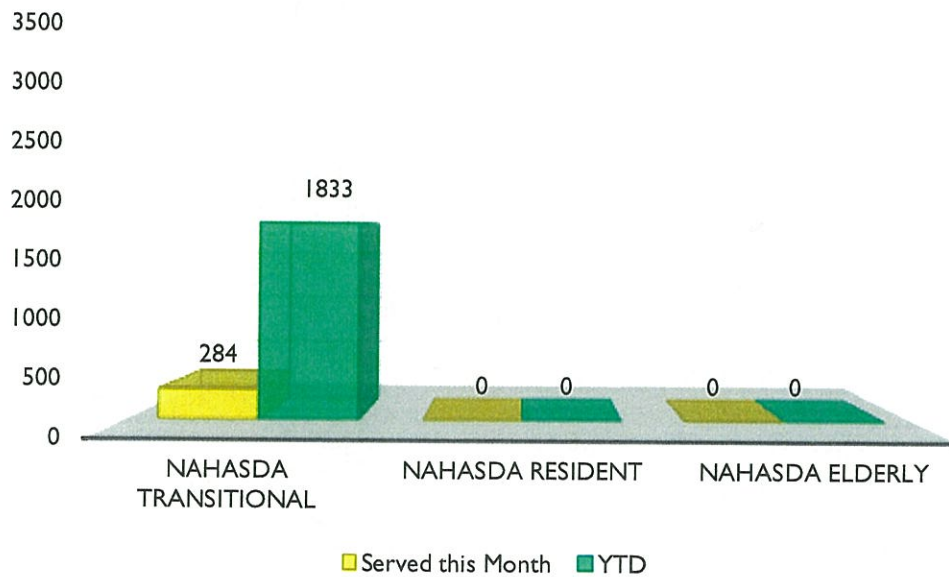
Elder Services



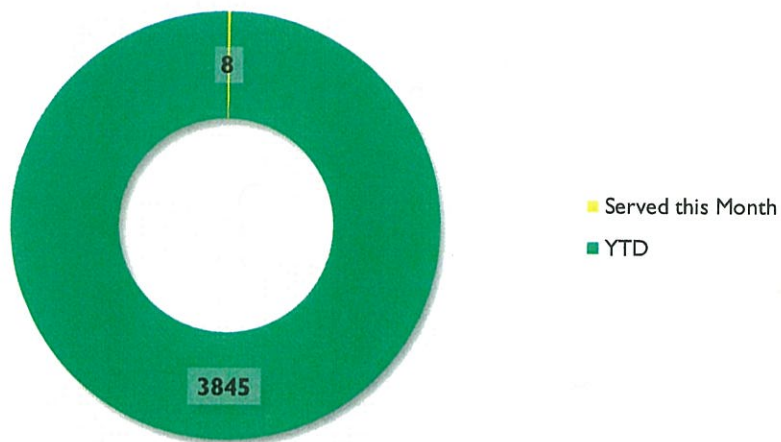
LIHEAP



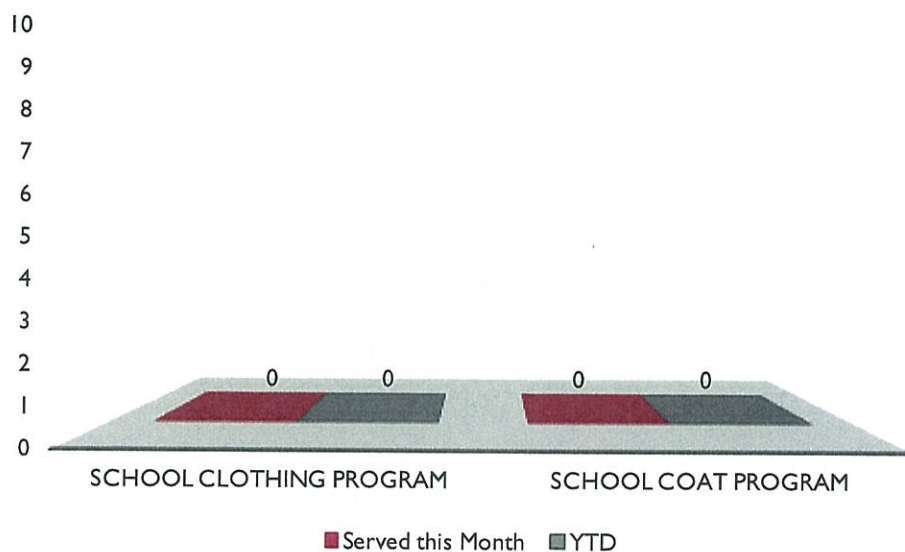
NAHASDA



Tribal Emergency Assistance



School Clothing Assistance



Department Updates

Majority of the focus shifted to COVID 19 starting on March 16, 2020. All Elder Nutrition Sites remain closed. Nahasda payments made were 380, clients assisted were 284 for the month of April.

INDIAN CHILD WELFARE

SENIOR DIRECTOR – LOU STRETCH

PROGRAMS:

Programs with Court Interaction	EMPLOYEES	101
Eligibility Notices, Prevention, & Intervention	VACANCIES	59
Child Protective Services	VOLUNTEERS	0
Certification & Placement Services	SELECTIONS PROCESSING/ POSITIONS BEING ADVERTISED	24

Programs with Court Interaction

OCAPS: Out-Of-District Court Advocacy and Permanency Services

- Involved in child welfare cases in non-jurisdiction counties in Oklahoma and all 50 states.
- Most work is done telephonically or electronically.
- Emphasis on education about the Indian Child Welfare Act and ensuring States comply with it.

SCAPS: State Court Advocacy and Permanency Services

- Involved in child welfare cases inside the 14 counties of which all or part are within the jurisdiction of the Nation.
- Emphasis on education about the Indian Child Welfare Act and ensuring OKDHS compliance, and sometimes provide Tribal Foster Homes.
- Provides services to the families when OKDHS fails to do so or as an alternative to OK DHS services.

TCAPS: Tribal Court Advocacy and Permanency Services

- Involved in child welfare cases which are wholly under the jurisdiction of the Nation and OKDHS is not involved.
- These cases originate on Indian Country or are transferred in from State district courts. Hearings are held at our Tribal Court House. Tribal Foster Homes are fully utilized.

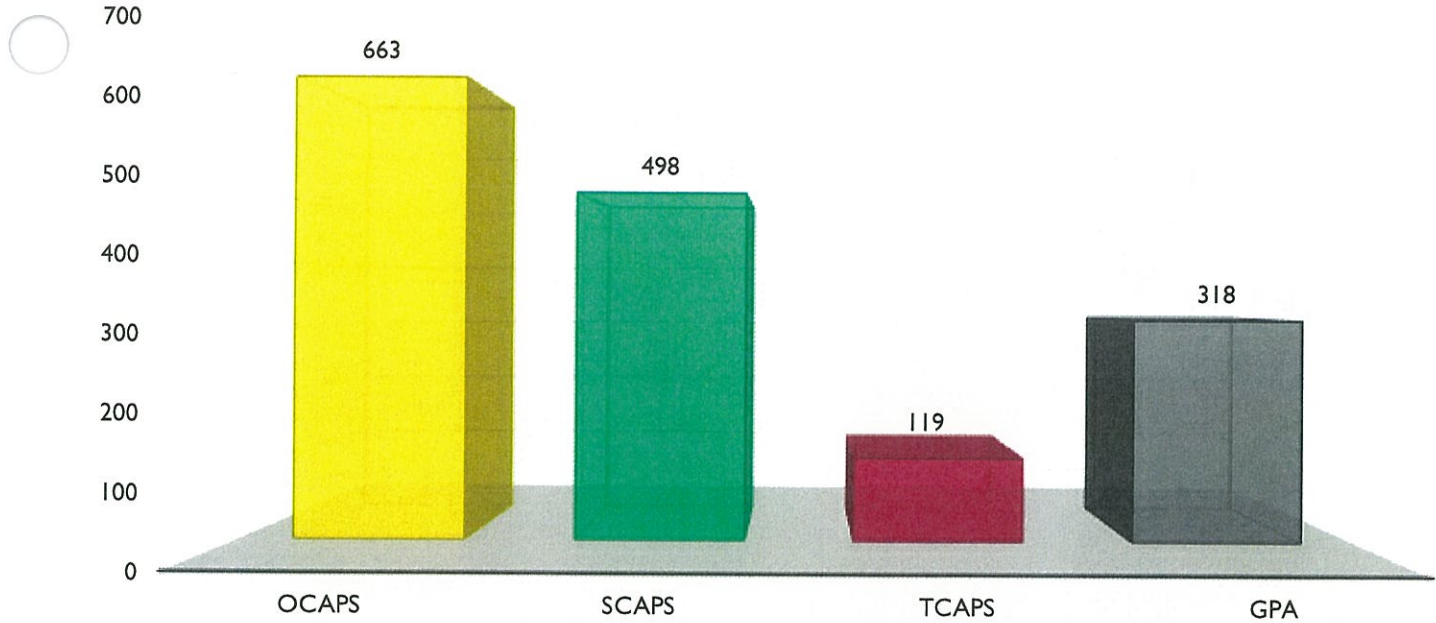
GPA: Guardianships and Private Adoptions

- Involved in civil adoption cases to include voluntary adoption, involuntary adoption and birth parent adoptions.
- Monitors Guardianships and Private Adoptions for compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act and the best interests of children.
- Serves Cherokee children and their families in Tribal Courts and State Courts throughout the United States.

CPS: Child Protective Services

- Receives referrals involving allegations of maltreatment of Cherokee children.
- Investigates allegations of child maltreatment in Indian Country and co-investigates with DHS in some counties when Cherokee children are involved.

1,598 Children with Assigned ICW Workers

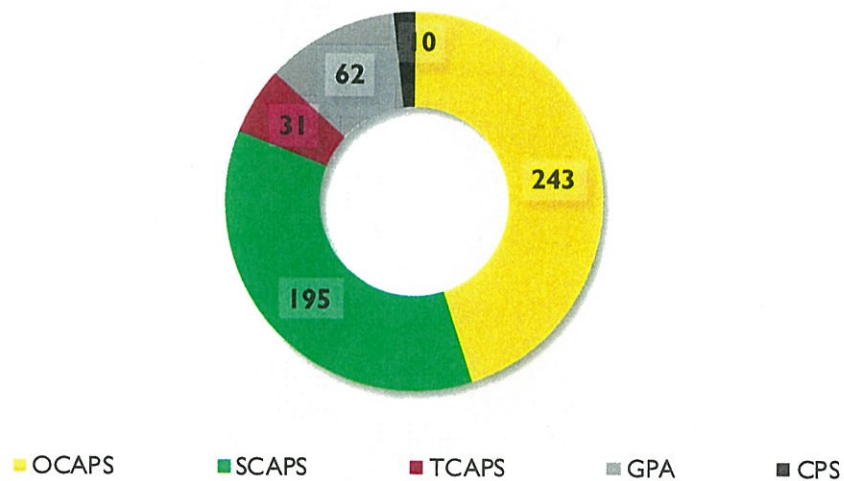


In April

Indian Child Welfare workers went to court 541 times on behalf of Cherokee children and families.

Indian Child Welfare staff worked on cases in 32 states.

Court Appearances



Eligibility Notices, Prevention, & Intervention

When a county or state's child welfare agency gets involved in the life of a family that they suspect to be Cherokee, they are required by the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) to send notice to the tribe. The tribe must then reply to confirm or deny whether the children are members of (or eligible to become members of) the tribe.

Currently, with 6 case workers processing approximately 200-300 pieces of mail per month, response times may vary due to vacancies and depending on the amount of mail received. The tribe has a goal of responding between 45-60 days.

In April

Cherokee Nation received:

595 notices involving 1,075 children from the State of Oklahoma.

675 notices involving 1,129 children from locations outside of Oklahoma.

1,270 notices involving 2,204 children in total.

The average response-to-notice time this month was 93 days.

Indian Child Welfare Family Protection Services Unit (FPS) assists families in need of hands-on training to correct the conditions that lead to children being removed from their home. These services often include completing a 28-week parenting program that discusses topics like discipline, nutrition, budgeting, and housekeeping. We primarily assist all our tribal CAPS cases but can assist in state cases when a request is made. This helps ensure that families have the tools they need to be reunited. We have also added the Triple P Parenting curriculum to our program.

In April

FPS served 20 children and 12 families.

Child Protective Services

In April

Child Protective Services (CPS) received 433 referrals of child abuse/neglect.

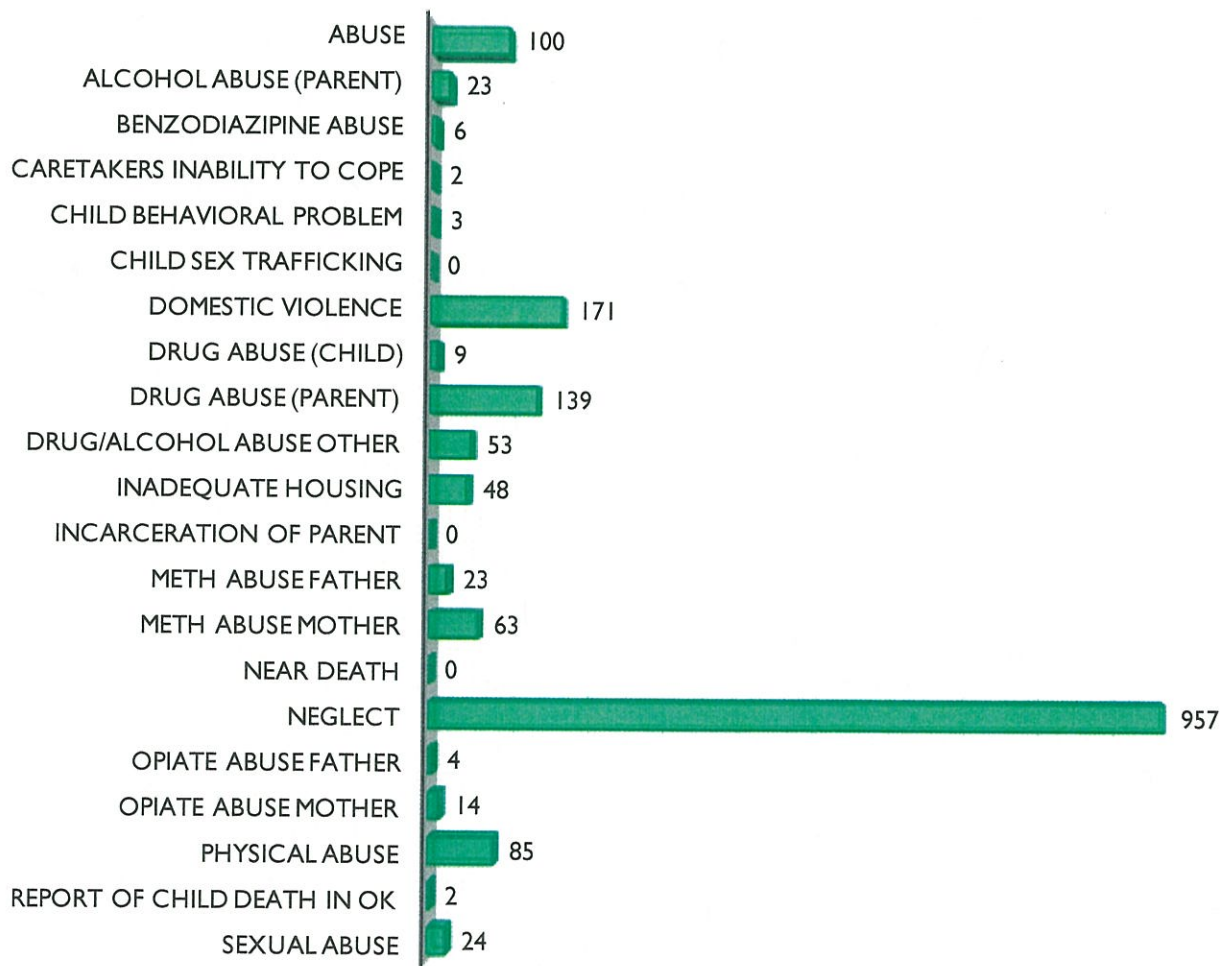
433 referrals involved 794 children.

0 of the 433 were co-investigated by OKDHS and CPS.

9 of the 433 were investigated by CPS in Indian Country.

11 Cherokee child(ren) were removed from tribal land due to confirmed abuse/neglect

Types of Abuse/Neglect Reported



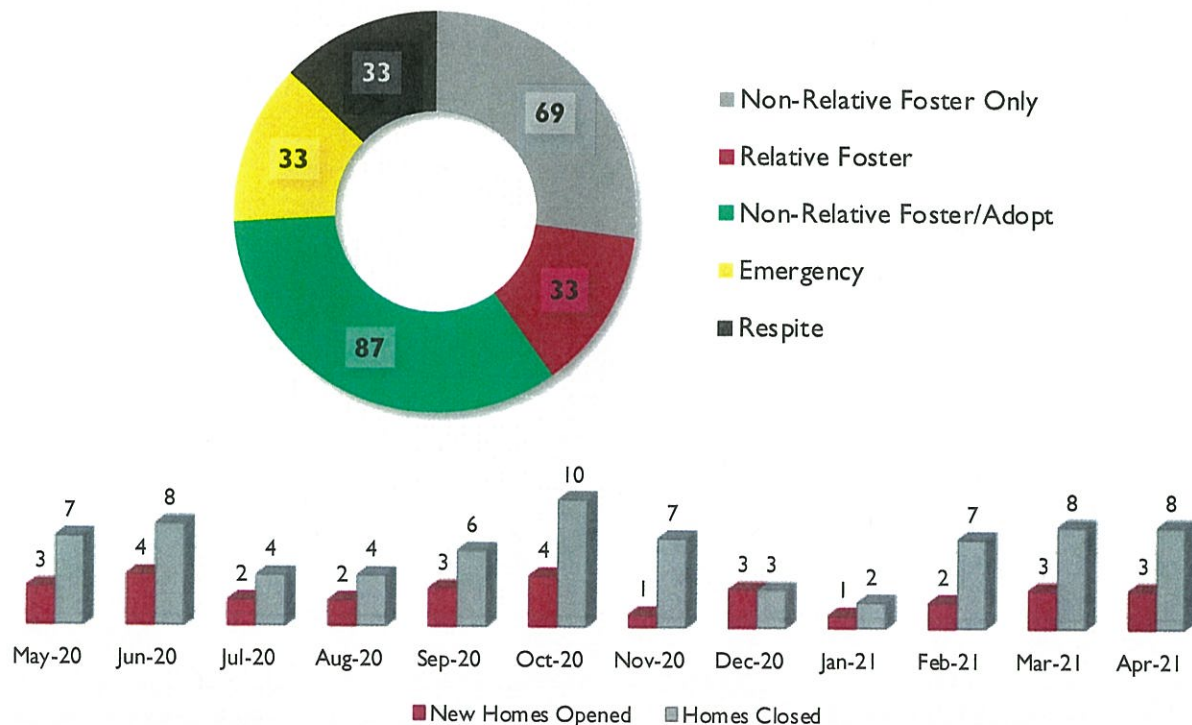
Certification & Placement Services

(Foster & Adoptive Homes)

Types of Certified Placement Resource Homes

- Non-Relative Foster: Families who are willing to take in children they do not know on a temporary basis, but may last years. These families usually do not adopt children.
- Relative Foster: Families who are related to the children and are fostering them. They do not take in children they are not related to.
- Non-Relative Adoptive: Families who hope to adopt children when the children's parents' rights are terminated. These homes take placements of children who are legally free for adoption.
- Emergency: Homes that take placement on an emergency basis not to exceed 48 hours.
- Respite: Homes that take placement on a temporary basis, not to exceed 10 days.

Homes by Type



Department Updates

The DOJ Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) Criminal Justice Information Systems (CJIS) System Agency (CSA) conducted an Audit of the Cherokee Nation/Social Services with ICW employee Julie Cox. In this audit, Julie Cox was required to complete the Next Generation Identification(NGI) Online Questionnaire and submit evidence of compliance. The audit of the Cherokee Nation/Social Services was found compliant; therefore, requires no further corrective action or response.

Cherokee Nation ICW is the first tribe to successfully submit AFCARS.

Below are all of the foster care month recruitment initiatives. Some of them have already occurred and some are planned to happen before the end of the month. If you have any questions or ideas about ways to reach people to become foster homes, we sure do welcome those ideas. Wado for your encouragement and support.

Foster Care Month Recruitment Initiatives

Scavenger hunt- This is an event held in 4 locations throughout the reservation. All of the locations were selected based on the hub of those areas that citizens frequent for business. Some of the locations are obscure and done on purpose so people could put the hunt into "scavenger hunt." Other locations are obvious and easy to find. The object of the scavenger hunt is for people to take a picture with various informational signs about foster care, indicating they found each sign. All signs feature the theme this year for foster care awareness "Support the child, support the family, support the tribe." Each week, there will be 1st thru 3rd place winners. Once the contest commences, Carpool Karaoke – Brad and Carney record a fun video inserting a little bit of singing and discuss Carney's journey as a foster parent. The video will be posted on our Facebook page.

Foster Care Proclamation

Tribal Council & Chief's cabinet Information- informational cards will be given to the Tribal Council and the Chief's cabinet about our foster care statistics. They will also receive a t—shirt to help us recruit by wearing.

Weekly Facebook postings of FC month

Cherokee Phoenix Podcast- interview with Sally Wilson, recruitment/ training supervisor and Assistant Attorney General, Chrissy Nimmo. This episode focused on the Indian Child Welfare Act as well as the Cherokee Nation Indian Child Welfare department. Discussed were the Cherokee Nation's efforts in defending ICWA and why its defense is so important to tribal sovereignty and Cherokee Nation citizens. Also discussed was the need for foster and adoptive families within its ICW system and other ways citizens can help the tribe's ICW efforts.

Chief Chat column- Chief Hoskin wrote a commentary on the need for Cherokee Nation foster homes. This was sent out via e-mail to subscribers and was posted in Anadisgoi. It was also picked up by various publications/ syndications. The focus was on fostering to assist in family reunification.

Billboards

Tahlequah City Vipers Semi-Pro Football announcement- Brad is the announcer for these games and takes the opportunity to announce the need for Cherokee Nation foster homes. He also announced the scavenger hunt.

Visual example of homes vs. children- We are preparing a visual example to distribute to the Tribal council highlighting how many children are in each of their district vs. how many foster homes. We will also use this as an opportunity to gently remind them they are the ones who the Cherokee citizens in their community look to as their elected Cherokee leader. When they talk, people listen.

Flyer distribution at the Tulsa BOK

Flyer distribution throughout the Cherokee Reservation

OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT

DIRECTOR – KARA PASQUA

EMPLOYEES 32

VACANCIES 5

VOLUNTEERS 0

Total Client Contacts

2,422

Total Court Hearings

42

Total Active Efforts Cases

1,854

Total Client Interview Contacts

44

Total Applications Distributed

44

Total Cases Opened

27

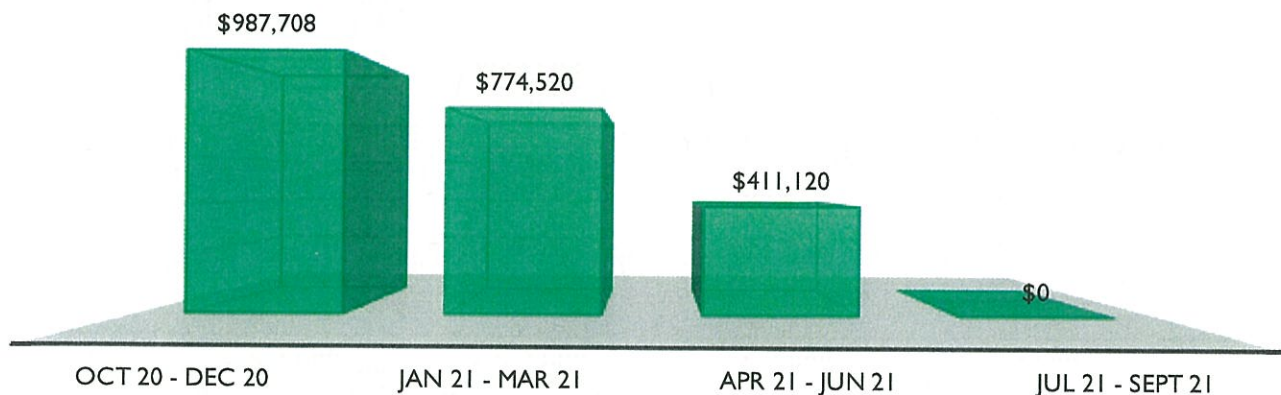
Total Referrals for Services

43

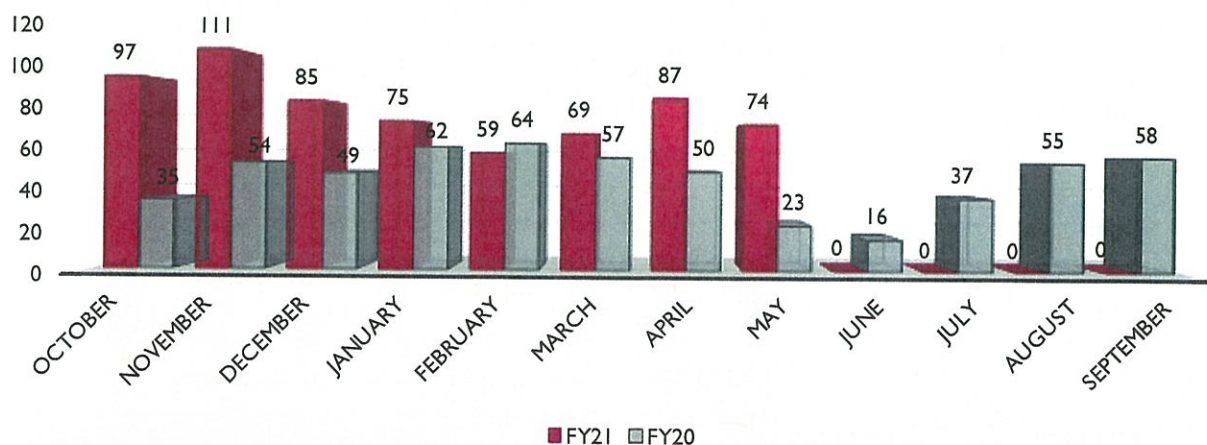
Total Collections for April

\$284,632

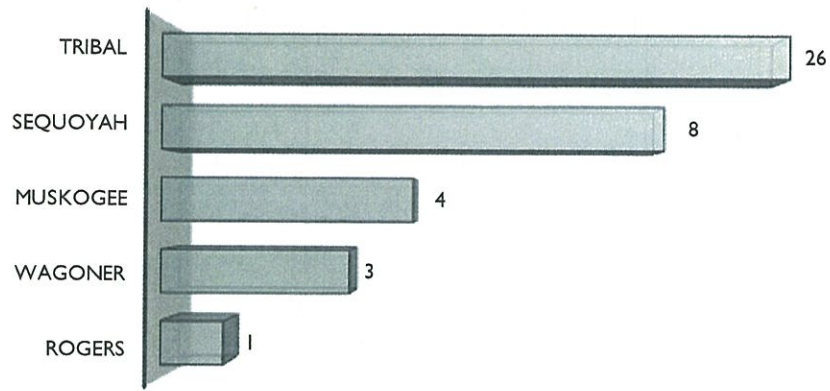
Total Quarterly Collections



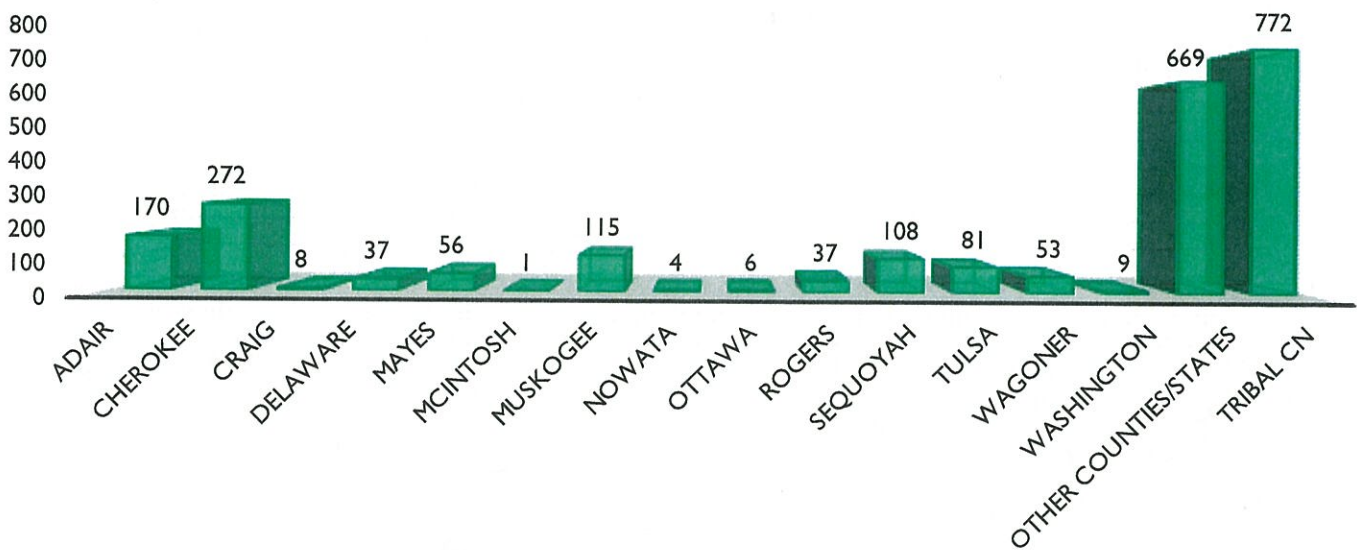
Total Applications Received



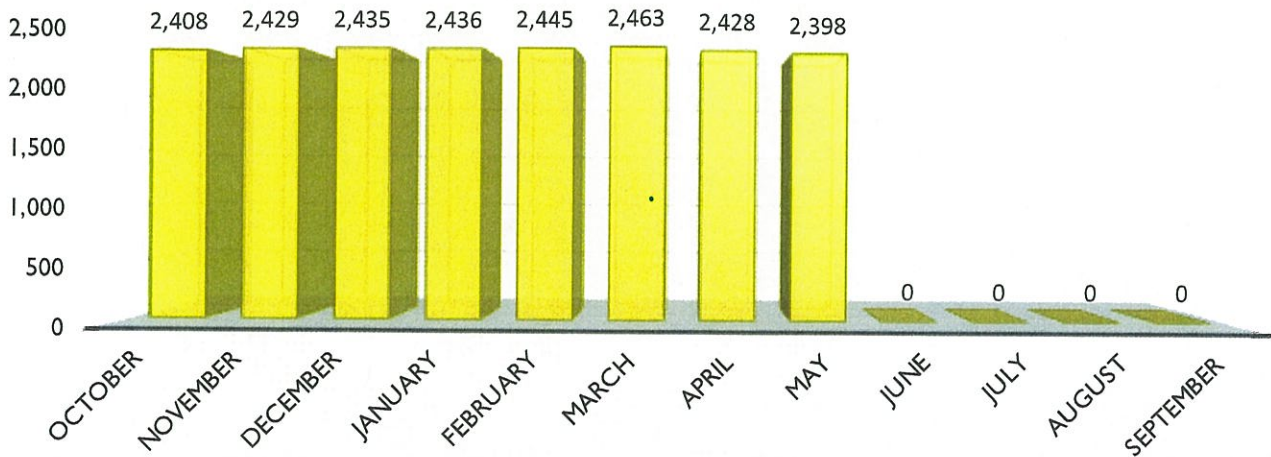
Court Docket Appearances



Case Load by County



Total Caseload by Month



Total YTD: 19,442

Department Updates

The office is maintaining normal office hour operations with all staff regularly reporting to offices. There are 32 current filled staff with 5 open positions: 1 clerical, 1 for a customer service rep, 1 legal filing clerk, and 2 child support specialist positions. The program recently welcomed new employee Bethany Sanders to the program. She will be working in the Special Collection Case Management unit and is currently attending necessary training sessions. Ms. Sanders is from the Sequoyah County area of the CN reservation.

The program staff are always available to be reached by phone at (918) 453-5444 or email at childsupport1@cherokee.org for any visitor/client questions. The program has full time staff to assist with child support matters in the Catoosa, Pryor, and Sallisaw Human Services office.

With the opening of the new office in Stilwell, the program is working towards having a full-time employee there by the end of 2021. In the meantime, the program does have a staff person there every Wednesday. The program distributed 44 applications via walk-ins, mail outs, email, or downloaded through our child support website and received 74 new applications for services in April. The program's website address: <https://childsupport.cherokee.org> has continued to see regular activity on their website page and in April there were 1,967 unique views to the child support website page.

Current active cases as of May 13, 2021: 2,398. The program will continue working on finalizing the Digital Marketing Grant initiatives by finalizing the data collection results of the text message services certain staff are utilizing through the Digital Marketing Grant program to see if it makes an impact on improved communication between the parties and the office.

The program continues to have success stories due to the great work of the front line staff! One of the case managers reported on a client who successfully reunified with their children in addition to paying all balances owed on child support; assisted an elder non-custodial party in obtaining additional services needed as well as working with them on paying off their child support balances.

The program continues to effectively collaborate with the CN TANF program as well as the Child Care program by sharing resources for clients and developing a specific plan with child care on revising the child support resource booklet we provide to all clients. The Resource booklet is a great tool for any Cherokee citizen needing a booklet with resource contacts for services that may assist children and families within CN. The goal is to have the updated booklet completed by Labor Day weekend.

"Strong Parents, Strong Families, Strong Foundations"

YOUTH SERVICES & SPECIAL PROJECTS

DIRECTOR – LINDA VANN

PROGRAMS:

John A. Ketcher Youth Services Center
Youth Services

EMPLOYEES	18.5
VACANCIES	2
VOLUNTEERS	0

John A. Ketcher Youth Services Center

Young People Served

9

Admissions

5

Youth Services

Total Clients Served

6

Total Community Events & Presentations

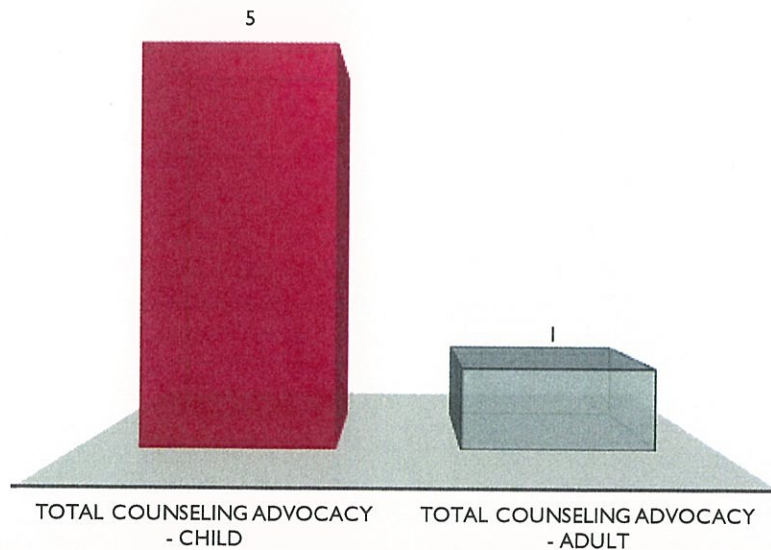
0

Crisis Calls

0

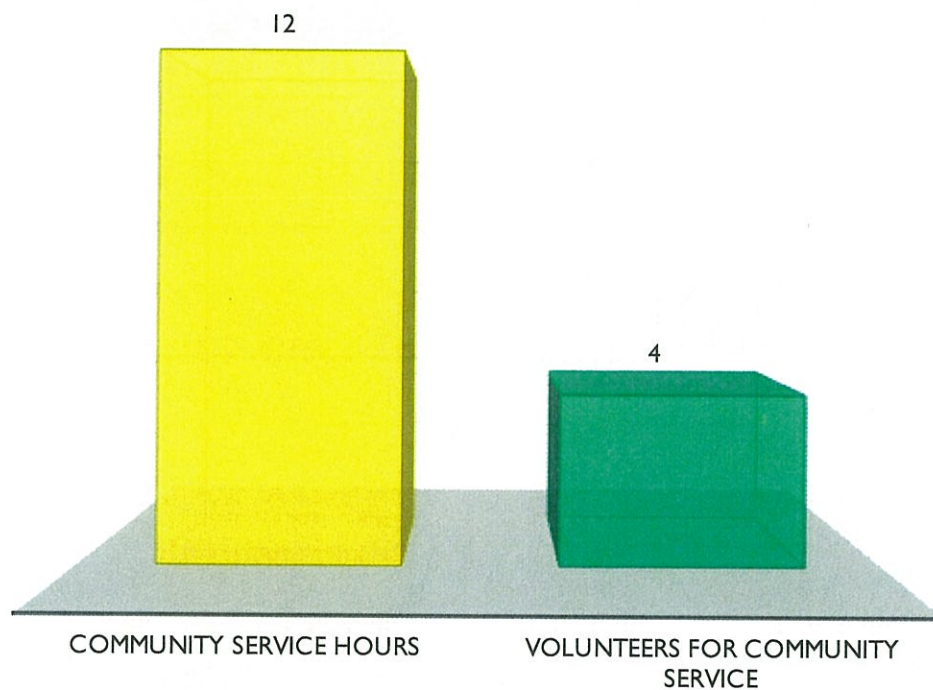
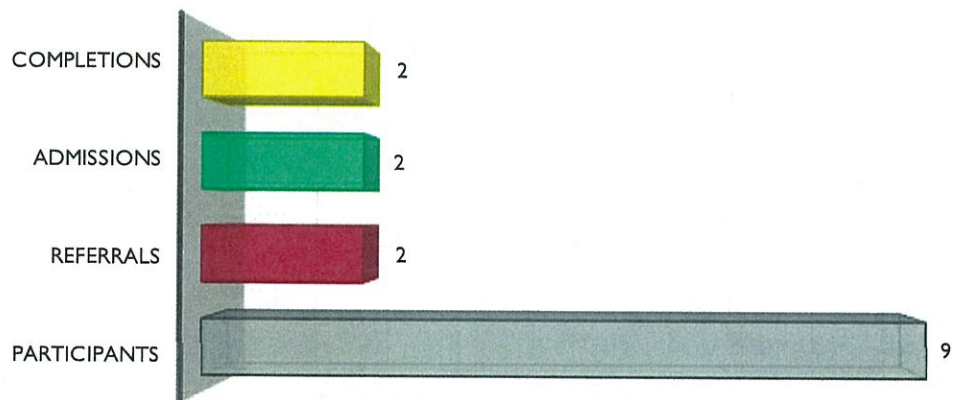
Participants in Presentations

0



Youth Services (continued)

Juvenile First Time Offender Program



Department Updates

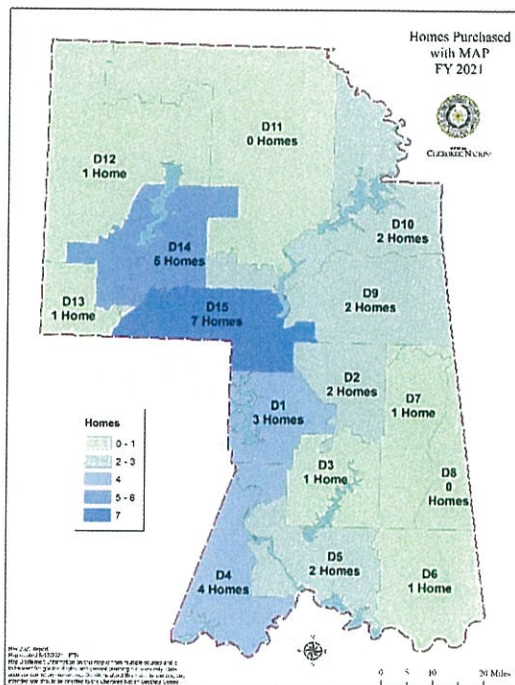
The majority of the focus shifted to COVID-19 starting March 16, 2020.

Commerce Services

Securing and enhancing the financial well-being of the Cherokee people, businesses and communities

Anna Knight, Executive Director
918-453-5532
anna-knight@cherokee.org

Asset Building



Mortgage Assistance Program

31 Families became homeowners through financial counseling and down payment assistance, four of whom used the HUD 184 Loan Program.

Since FY2009, **1,896 households** have used the Mortgage Assistance Program to invest in their family's future and purchase a home.

MAP Household Averages

Household Income	\$38,371.86
Home Price	\$113,827.41
Equity Created	20.96%

iSave

iSave is a great way for Cherokee families to update and rehab the home they own, the property does not have to be mortgage free, it just has to be in the name of the Cherokee iSave participant. This is a matched savings program, wherein income eligible families save money over a period and the iSave program matches the families' savings to build financial assets. **60 families are actively saving in iSave** for home rehabilitation and **34 families have received matching funds**.

Matching funds can be used for anything that increases the value of the primary residence, for example, a storm shelter, flooring, fencing, sidewalks, major appliance replacement, roofing, plumbing, etc.

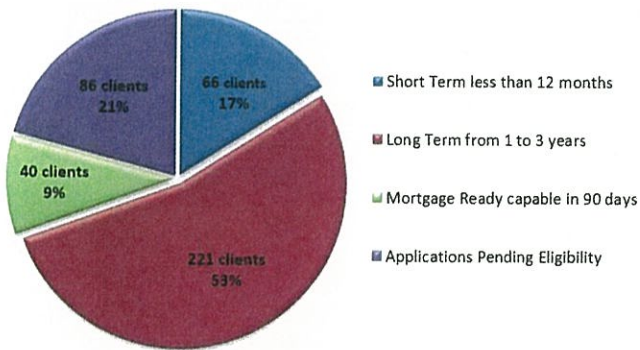
Financial Empowerment Program

This grant funded program helps HACN residents become financially prepared to leave subsidized housing and enter unsubsidized housing or homeownership. The financial coaches provide a holistic approach by helping the clients connect and access needed CN resources, such as Career Services, Education, Human Services, and Health Services. We work closely with HACN to connect with this market. *(This is the same holistic approach our financial coaches take in working with all clients.)*

Residents requiring assistance in completing Cherokee Nation or other agency applications, accessing the internet, obtaining needed documents such as social security cards or birth certificates, or accessing a computer to create or modify a resume should contact us at 918-453-5536.

Financial Coaching

MAP Applications and Financial Counseling



327 families are in the homebuyers' pipeline and are either actively participating in financial coaching or have completed financial coaching.

Since FY07, **997 families have achieved homeownership through long-term financial coaching**, after initially being unable to obtain a non-predatory mortgage.

Year to date 32 families become first-time homeowners, 12 of which finished long-term counseling to obtain a non-predatory mortgage.

100% of financial coaching participants list program benefits as:

- learning to budget
- learning to save money
- learning to pay off debt

Financial Coaching Impact

Average Debt to Income with Mortgage	30.10%
Reduction in Debt to Income Reduction	3.50%
Increase in Net Worth	\$28,294.34

1,014 consumer loans totaling \$1,237,172.82 have been made through the Small Business Assistance Center as of May 15th.

Families using MAP to purchase a home must attend a comprehensive **homeownership training**. Year to date **184 families have attended virtual classes**.

Employees and the public have the opportunity to attend financial education classes on topics ranging from creating spending plans to balancing checkbooks. Year to date, **242 people have attended community and work based financial education classes**.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

Year Prepared	Number of Returns Prepared/Filed	\$ Amount of Tax Refunds Received
2021	2,183	\$3.02 M
2020	1,962	\$2.7 M
2019	1,966	\$2.5 M
2018	1,589	\$2.3 M
2017	1,609	\$2.4 M
2016	1,799	\$2.2 M

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program provides free tax preparation and filing services for income eligible families in Cherokee Nation. **On average, people using our VITA services, save \$250 in preparation fees.**

Training Schedule

In-person classes are very limited, we are holding online Homebuyers Education and Financial Empowerment classes, which are open to at-large citizens.

Interested in participating in the class? Contact Cassandra Carter at 918-453-5536 or cassandra-carter@cherokee.org.

Workshops and Classes			
June 7	Online	11:30 am – 12:45 pm	Homebuyers Training
June 11	Online	11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Financial Empowerment
July 9	Online	11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Financial Empowerment
July 12	Online	11:30 am – 1:00 pm	Homebuyers Training
July 19	Online	6:00 pm – 7:30 pm	Homebuyers Training
August 13	Online	11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Financial Empowerment
August 16	Online	11:30 am – 12:45 pm	Homebuyers Training
August 23	Online	6:00 pm – 7:30 pm	Homebuyers Training
September 17	Online	11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Financial Empowerment

It was very beneficial to break down my budget and work on my savings. I am also excited to participate in the iSave program.

R. Bryant, Mortgage Assistance Program Recipient, Tulsa County