



# COUNCIL OF THE CHEROKEE NATION

## EXECUTIVE & FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Reporting Month: **March 2020**

Dept: **Financial Resources**

Contact: **Tralynna Sherrill Scott, Treasurer**

[tralynna-scott@cherokee.org](mailto:tralynna-scott@cherokee.org) | ext. 5052



### Accounts Payable checks disbursed

Current Month	3,199
Year to Date	22,352



### Timecards processed

Current Month	8,256
Year to Date	47,417



### Reqs. approved for processing

Current Month	1,208
Year to Date	9,787



### Purchase orders issued

Current Month	1,263
Year to Date	9,311



### Travel expense statements processed

Current Month	324
Year to Date	2,177



### Files received for storage

Current Month	972
Year to Date	3,842



### Number of internal billings

Current Month	35
Year to Date	477



### Grant reports submitted

Current Month	14
Year to Date	230



### Grant applications

Current Month	20
Year to Date	55



### Deposits

Current Month	450
Year to Date	3,564

### Departmental Goals

- 1 Complete FY19 Audit  
*100% complete - Audit completed on March 27, 2020*
- 2 Obtain Unmodified Audit Opinion  
*100% complete - Audit completed on March 27, 2020*
- 3 No Material Weaknesses on Single Audit  
*90% complete - Expected completion date of the Single Audit is April 30, 2020*
- 4 Reporting requirements completed & submitted for March 2020  
*100% completion - All required reports were submitted timely in March*

### Accomplishments

- 1 Staff attended 13 webinars/trainings in March

### Upcoming Events

- 1 Staff is scheduled to attend 6 webinars/trainings in April
- 2 8 grant proposals, totaling more than \$4.6 million, will be submitted in April

### Compliance

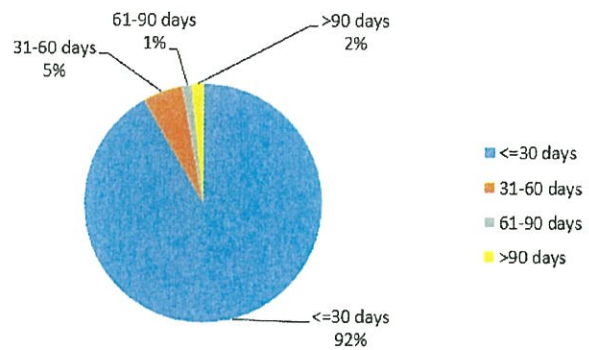
- 1 No outstanding borrowings on \$5M Bank of America line of credit

Cherokee Nation Acquisition Management Year-To- Date Bid Report Over \$5,000 Transactions FY 2020		% of sub-total - TERO vendor submitted Bid
Award to TERO Vendor	\$ 5,662,546.79	94.19%
Award to non-TERO Vendor	\$ 349,327.76	5.81%
<b>Sub-total bids with a TERO vendor participating</b>	<b>\$ 6,011,874.55</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Bid - no bids submitted by TERO Vendors	\$ 3,482,446.87	

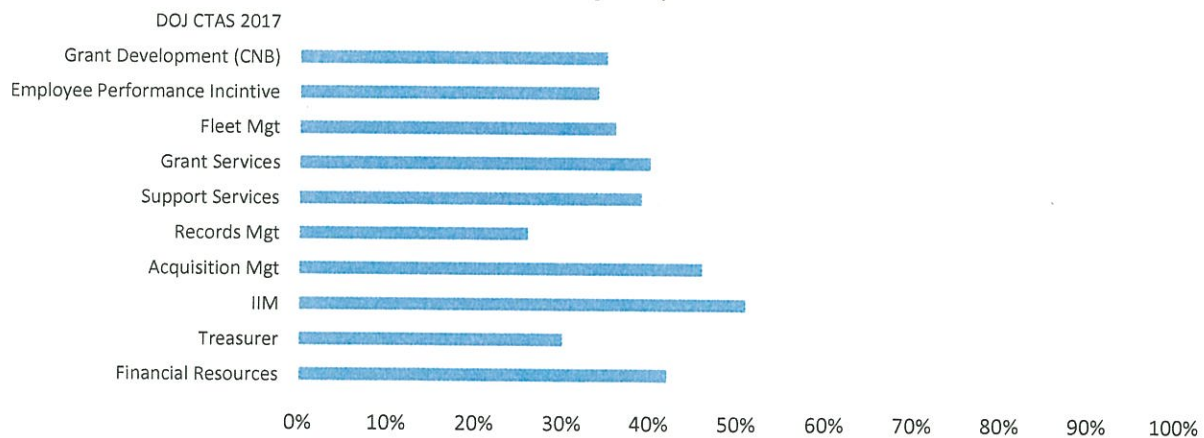
October 1, 2019 through March 31, 2020

Row Labels	APP-INVOICE-2	APP-TRAN-PMT-AMT-7
<=30 days	50,404	79,223,869.60
31-60 days	3,003	13,424,504.90
61-90 days	692	2,962,713.37
>90 days	910	4,019,624.07
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>55,009</b>	<b>99,630,711.94</b>

**Timeliness of Paid Invoices**



**YTD Budget Spend**



**Executive & Finance Committee**  
**Career Services**  
**April Monthly Report**  
**Diane Kelley, Executive Director**

**Summary:** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Cherokee Nation Career Services department will be operating with minimal staff until further notice. All field offices are currently closed to the public. Closure notices with contact information has been placed at all entry points and calls are being routed through the Tahlequah office in the Tribal Complex. Currently, all staff members are working from home or have been placed on administrative leave. Administrative staff are planning for the return to staffing offices and taking steps to ensure both staff and clients are following guidelines to ensure everyone's health.

Career Services Management Team had a conference call Monday, April 20, 2020, and one of the issues discussed was how to best assist participants in these times. The following process was determined necessary:

**Unemployment Insurance** – Assisting participants apply for Unemployment Insurance (UI) and the new Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program. For individuals who qualify for UI, they will receive whatever amount of UI PLUS an additional \$600 per week. Individuals who do NOT qualify for UI will still qualify for PUA and they will receive \$600 per week. All Career Services employees have been advised to take the time to read up on both so they can answer questions participants or other individuals may have.

Unfortunately, because so many people have lost their jobs, Workforce offices have been overrun. It's next to impossible to get someone on the phone. The best way to apply for UI/PUA benefits is online. Not all of our participants have access to Internet, however. Therefore, Career Services employees are assisting individuals in applying.

The following updates are from within all areas of Cherokee Nation Career Services:

- **Administration** – S. Diane Kelley, Executive Director, is in charge of Career Service and Talking Leaves Job Corps, and is working remotely from her home office.
  - S. Diane Kelley can be reached on her landline **918-686-7584**, her mobile phone **918-822-2587**, or via email [diane-kelley@cherokeemnation.com](mailto:diane-kelley@cherokeemnation.com).
- **Grants & Compliance** – Kim Carroll, Director, and Isaac Barnowski, Compliance Supervisor, are working remotely from home. The grants team is continuing to submit requested reports and maintaining contact with other Career Services staff answering questions and providing compliance guidance. All other staff are currently on Administrative Leave.
  - Two Reentry grant applications were submitted in April, in addition to one that had been submitted in addition to one submitted in February:
    - February 25th – CTAS Reentry – DOJ
    - April 15th – Pathway Home – DOL
    - April 27th – CAREERRS – DOJ

- **Special Projects** – The Special Projects team is supporting the COVID-19 remotely, all working from home. They are compiling reports for administration, routing incoming phone calls and emails, implementing business continuity plans, and organizing the departments elder food distribution volunteers.
  - For projects related inquiries, Taryn Taylor can be reached on her mobile phone **918-316-1722** or via email [taryn-taylor@cherokee.org](mailto:taryn-taylor@cherokee.org).
- **Finance** – The Finance team continues to process participant payroll, invoices, supportive services, NRPs, TANF payments to clients, preparing the grant budgets/budget narratives for new submission/grant applications.
  - The team is checking the mail, taking phone calls, and Tribal Training Payouts as needed and regularly on Friday to the participants working at the emergency food bank and the health clinic.
  - Also, working with DOL in regards to the Talking Leaves contract and modifications, as well as working for the close out from previous years.
  - Finance team has been in contact on a regular basis to accomplish the goals and objectives of everyday processes.
  - Researching the cost comparison between buying already built sneeze guards and if we made them ourselves. So that we can create a plexi glass barrier between the clients and the staff.
  - Debra Lack, Director of Finance, can be reached on her mobile phone at **918-316-1112** or via email [debra-lack@cherokeemission.com](mailto:debra-lack@cherokeemission.com).
- **National Health Emergency Opioid Grant (NHE-HOPE)** – Ashawna Miles, Program Manager, and team members are working from home or utilizing administrative leave.
  - **Work Experience** - HOPE team is continuing to take program participants during this pandemic. Each client is assessed for eligibility and pending specific need(s) it is determined if we can assist them right now. If we are unable to assist (worksites closed, vocational schools closed) their application is then placed on hold. Currently we have 111 work experience participants.
  - **OJT** - We are working with Keller Ventures (Amazon) to determine eligibility for individuals and determining if we can assist them with OJT placement.
  - **Client Contact** - The team has been tasked with making weekly contact with each program participant. A phone call is the first point of contact, and if the participant can't be reached by phone we will then send a text message. Conversations are noted via weekly contact sheets. Ensuring this will help us possibly prevent some of our clients from relapse and or going backwards in treatment.
- **Trade and Economic Transition (TET)** – Josh Drywater, Program Manager, and team members are working from home or utilizing administrative leave.
  - Work experience participants on TET account for a huge portion of the Quality Care Team at the clinic and hospital. They are truly the front line for the health system. They are actively taking temperatures, accessing individuals who come

in, and providing Wayfinder duties. Some have been sent home by the hospital staff at different stages due to fevers, etc, but, to date, they have been allowed to return to work with no lasting symptoms.

- Work Experience participants who do not wish to work at the hospital have been asked to work and help with the food drive. TET employee, Courtney Donkor, is volunteering, as well.
- There are new OJT contracts with Keller Ventures (an Amazon contractor), Bison Metals in Shawnee, and soon a contract with an entity of Refresco in Ft. Gibson. As lay-offs are affecting employment, a lot of the retail industry is now needing employees, which is a flip of what our grant was initially based on.
- AXH Coolers and the TET team are still actively planning their incumbent worker training program that was discussed a month ago. The TET team and Kim Carrol are working to develop the format for presentation and MOU, but everything is coming together.
- **Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) –** All team members are working from home or utilizing administrative leave. Josh Drywater is backup for DEI. Jon Crittenden is backup for VR. Brenda Fitzgerald, Director of TANF and VR is working remotely from her home office.
  - All counseling staff have contacted all of their clients to update them of the situation, as it relates to COVID-19, to ensure that they have their cell phone numbers and email address for remote work and to check on how they are doing.
  - The team has been conducting business but not as usual. Applications are taken on-line and the applicants are sending supportive documentation via cell phone/camera (for example: Tribal Membership, Social Security, Driver's License, etc.). VR Counseling staff have taken new applications over the phone/email for the initial interview. The team is fielding questions from potential new clients and working with the state DRS Counselors (who are also working remote).
  - The future plans include the purchase of laptops for all staff, including Wi-Fi and VPN (but don't yet know if the budgets can handle the expense).
  - TANF staff are in contact with their clients, as well. They have been making phone calls to update clients about their cash assistance payments, and/or hard checks that have been mailed out tomorrow (cash assistance payments for 220+ clients). They are fielding calls, keeping in touch with their clients, as well as updating client information via main Finance using VPN remotely. Staff are also working together with other Career Service counselors to update client information, as needed. TANF staff are also working remotely with Eagle Sun, to update forms and write reports that will be needed when submitting the mandatory reports required by the Administration for Children and Families.
  - All staff have worked with CN IT to install Cisco Jabber either on their work computer or their personal computer at home. Some of our clerical staff are creating documents for GSA car check-out and/or a calendar for staff to post

“in/out”, once we return to work in the office. Our more creative clerical staff are helping to design word puzzles and children games that we hope to incorporate into a new TANF Coloring Book.

- **Tribal Economic Development (Career Readiness Act)** – Hunter Palmer, Program Managers, and all team members are working from home or utilizing administrative leave.
  - There are several clients that are on the Tribal On-the-Job (OJT) program and they continue to work for the companies they were hired on at. We have monthly reimbursement paperwork to take care of.
  - For the past month, new Tribal OJT or Tribal Vocational client applications have been placed on hold. They are being referred to federally funded programs. In addition to other program referrals, we are also telling anyone that has been laid off or lost their job due to COVID-19 to take advantage of the new unemployment benefits.
  - There are several partnering businesses calling to ask about the OJT program and wanting to hire using the program, unfortunately, tribal funds have been frozen right now. There is a possibility these businesses will qualify to partner with the federally funded grants.
- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** – Brenda Fitzgerald, Director of TANF and VR is working remotely from her home office.
  - TANF will operate on skeleton crew with 4 of 18 staff members working remotely to process payroll (Jon Crittenden, Lindsey Williams, and Lavonne Ely). All other team members are working from home or utilizing administrative leave.
  - The JOBS/Tribal TANF program will continue communication with clients and updating case information. The team is engaging in taking applications via phone and receiving documents electronically. The team will be adjusting to a recent change in personnel; this will lead to a reassignment of TANF cases in our Northern counties amongst our Career Specialists in Tulsa, Pryor, and Claremore that were previously managed by our Northern Area Coordinator.
  - Challenges with operating electronically is the response from applicants that do not have accessibility. It is about a 50/50 split of applicants that can respond and complete information. TANF specialists have all been provided a laptop and VPN access to work directly on our database from home; requirements for applications have been adjusted to provide a temporary application until normal operations can resume.
  - Currently with operations modified, constant communication is being made through phone and email with all team members to provide updates. Our timeline will be to continue processing applications, complete MER's for May 1, 2020 payments. All information is to be submitted by Tuesday April 28, 2020 for submittal to FRB on April 29th and disbursement on May 1, 2020.
  - Once normal business can resume, all temporary applicants will be contacted to come in and complete the remainder of their application. Currently with

operations still functioning, team staff have been diligently working from home; there are three team members volunteering at the elder food bank.

- **Coming Home Reentry Program** – Matt Lamont, Program Manager, is managing program progress remotely and reporting to the Jay office as needed. All team members are working from home or utilizing administrative leave.
  - **Details** - New participant calls are taken by the Reentry Program Manager, assessed for immediate emergency needs – referred if needed/possible, and assigned to a reentry counselor based on geographic location. Assigned reentry counselors then contact and do our, more in-depth, intake process by phone to identify other needs and make additional referrals as needed. All new contacts are being informed of our current situation and are being contacted and followed up with on a weekly basis at minimum. Program participants who were already enrolled previous to the suspension of services, are being contacted and updated weekly as to our status.
  - **Challenges/Successes** - It is often difficult for our specific clientele to reintegrate under perfect conditions, so the extreme situation we are currently in, and our inability to have in-person time to assess them, amplifies this. A positive of the situation is that we are becoming better counselors. By not having access to our financial resources, we have adjusted our focus and are better counselors by having more in depth conversations and utilizing outside resources to their fullest extent. Also staff are utilizing many online training opportunities dealing with justice involved citizens.
- **Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO), Building Trades, and Fire Program** – Willard Mounce, Manager of TERO Administrative Services, and Tammy Hooper, Special Projects Officer, are reporting to the TERO office on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.
  - Both the Building Trades Class and the Fire Program staff are currently working with the elder food Program. Currently there are 3 employees and 4 Building Trades participants working at the Elder food Program.
  - Return to business should be fairly simple. Willard is keeping the invoicing up to date for the compliance officers. However, they will need to catchup on their site monitoring. All other employees will work from home or utilize administrative leave until that point in time.

Larry Vance, Manager of TERO Construction Services, has provided the following update:

- Hard Rock Casino Exterior Project is ongoing. Tomahawk, CPF, CPR are all still working and sending weekly labor forms. No meetings are being held at this time.
- Hard Rock Tower Interior Project work has been postponed.
- OSU College of Osteopathic Medicine has suspended work as of April 1, 2020. Vendors have been in contact.

- Wilma P. Mankiller Expansion is still conducting de scopes and bid openings via phone. However, work has been suspended as of March 20, 2020. Letters of Recommendations are still being signed.
- Owner, Architect, and Contractors meetings are being conducted and attended via phone. Those include Wilma P. Mankiller and OSU College of Osteopathic Medicine.
- Those that are still working are sending in weekly forms but we cannot invoice at this time. Amount is upwards of \$15,000.
- **Employment Programs/Tribal Training Services (TTS)** – Jeff Vance, Director of Employment Programs, provided the following updates. All team members are working from home or utilizing administrative leave. The main task assigned to Career Specialist is answering/responding to inquiries regarding SYEP & Tribal Training. This includes inquiries on info request on the chicken plant in the Jay area by the Jay team members. Jeff Vance is approving work sites and returning all calls regarding his programs.
- **Career Services** – Both staff and program participants from all programs have been assisting in the humanitarian efforts of the Cherokee Nation. Below are participants of the Tribal Training Program:



**Program Inquiries:** In order to address any emergencies or general inquiries for Career Services Programs, please utilize the following contact information:

- Employment Programs: Jeff Vance 918-316-3676
- Vocational Programs: George Roach 918-822-2575
- Vocational Rehab: Brenda Fitzgerald 918-207-9761
- H.O.P.E. Opioid Program: Ashawna Miles 918-316-0549
- TET and DEI Programs: Josh Drywater 918-316-6556
- Tribal Training Program: Lyndon Smith 918-340-8373
- TED and Career Readiness Programs: Hunter Palmer 918-525-2524
- JOBS Tribal TANF: Jonathan Crittenden 918-525-2040
- Coming Home Re-entry Program: Matt Lamont 918-871-9387

- Alternative Education Program: Landra Alberty 918-822-2444
- Career Services Finance: Debra Lack 918-316-1112
- Grants & Compliance: Kim Carroll 918-822-2590

# 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

## Service Additions and Modifications

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As a result of COVID-19, the Commerce Services Self Sufficiency Program has modified and/or added these services

- Virtual tax preparation and filing
- Online homebuyers education
- Economic Stimulus Payment assistance
- Unemployment benefits assistance

For information about any of these services, please contact the Small Business Assistance Center at 918-453-5536.

## Asset Building

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### Mortgage Assistance Program

**37 Families became homeowners** through financial counseling and down payment assistance.

8 families used the HUD 184 Loan Program.

Since FY2009, **1,834 households** have used the Mortgage Assistance Program to invest in their family's future and purchase a home.

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### MAP Household Averages

Household Income	\$39,523.00
Home Price	\$105,378.27
Equity Created	19.88%

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## iSave

iSave is a *matched savings program* wherein income eligible families save money over a period of time and the iSave program matches the families' savings to build financial assets. **105 families are actively saving in iSave** for home rehabilitation. **45 families have received matching funds** to make home repairs or improvements.

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

The Financial Empowerment Program is a three year grant targeted at increasing the self-sufficiency of Housing Authority of Cherokee Nation residents through financial coaching, financial education, and linkage to supportive services such as GED attainment, post-secondary education, access to state and tribal benefits, improving job prospects, and much more. Two counselors are on board to provide services to the 14 county area.

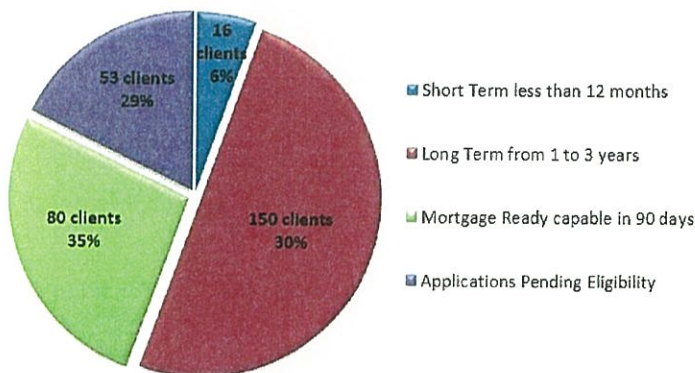
Sally Cummins, located in Tahlequah, 918-456-5482 ext. 1140, [sally-cummins@cherokee.org](mailto:sally-cummins@cherokee.org)

Amy Henry, located in Jay 918-456-5482 ext. 1145, [amy-henry@cherokee.org](mailto:amy-henry@cherokee.org)

Vanessa Robinson, located in Claremore, 918-342-6803, [vanessa-robinson@cherokee.org](mailto:vanessa-robinson@cherokee.org)

## Financial Counseling

MAP Applications and Financial Counseling



**299 families are in the home buyers' pipeline**, either having completed or active in financial counseling.

Since FY07, **963 families unable to obtain a non-predatory mortgage on their own** have completed self-sufficiency counseling and obtained a non-predatory mortgage.

**22 families this year have finished counseling to obtain a non-predatory mortgage.**

**678 families** have participated in financial and credit coaching this year; 286 of them are still actively pursuing their goals.

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### Financial Counseling Impact

Debt to Income with Mortgage	31.6%
Debt to Income Reduction after Counseling	2.90%
Increase in Net Worth	\$20,943.58

**1,066 consumer loans totaling \$1,239,971.62** have been made through the Small Business Assistance Center as of March 15th. Self Sufficiency staff members have helped **5 families facing foreclosure and are currently working with 1 family.**

Families purchasing a home must attend an intensive **homeownership training** class. Year to date **57 families have attended these classes**, which are held throughout the Cherokee Nation.

Financial education classes are offered at no cost. 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, **392 people have attended community and work based financial education classes.**

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### Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program provides free tax preparation and filing services for families in Cherokee Nation. **While in person VITA services have been temporarily halted, we are still able to prepare and file taxes for taxpayers virtually.** Please contact the Small Business Assistance Center at 918-453-5536 for more information.

Year	Number of Returns Prepared/Filed	\$ Amount of Tax Refunds Received
2020 YTD	1,546	Information unavailable
2019	1,966	\$2.5 M
2018	1,589	\$2.3 M
2017	1,609	\$2.4 M
2016	1,799	\$2.2 M
2015	1,652	\$1.9 M
2014	1,270	\$2.1 M
2013	1,577	\$2.0 M
2012	1,553	\$2.2 M
2011	2,681	\$3.6 M
2010	2,118	\$2.7 M

## The more you know:

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Scams are rampant right now, here are a few things to know.

**Unemployment Assistance Fraud** – if someone has used your identity to file a fraudulent unemployment claim, you need to contact the OK Employment Security Commission fraud office at [fraud@oesc.state.ok.us](mailto:fraud@oesc.state.ok.us). After contacting the OESC, the OK Attorney General's office is asking victims to complete and submit this fraud form allowing law enforcement to investigate the claims: <http://www.oag.ok.gov/Websites/oag/images/Unemployment%20Fraud%20Form.pdf>

**Economic Stimulus Payments** – the majority of individuals who qualify for this one-time payment don't have to do anything except wait for their payment to be deposited or mailed to them. The IRS will not contact you by phone, text or email to obtain your bank account information, verify social security numbers or birthdates. There is no fee to receive the stimulus payment and no person or organization can expedite the payment for you. Any information about your stimulus payment can be found by visiting the IRS website at <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus-tax-relief-and-economic-impact-payments>.

We're here to help; contact us at 918-453-5536 if you need assistance.

## Training Schedule

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In-person classes have been temporarily suspended however we are now offering **online Homebuyers Education**.

Interested in participating in the class? Contact Susan Sharp at 918-453-5536 or [susan-sharp@cherokee.org](mailto:susan-sharp@cherokee.org).

Classes			
May 18-21	Online	11:00 am -12:00 pm	Homebuyers Training

*I feel more stable and better prepared for our future; we learned more about budgeting, saving and paying down debt.*

*H. Scott, Mortgage Assistance Program Recipient,  
Mayes County*