



Cherokee Language Teacher Training Scholarship Program 2026

Program Overview

The Cherokee Language Teacher Training Scholarship Program is designed to create certified Cherokee language teachers. Applicants must be attending Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, OK pursuing a bachelor of arts in education in Cherokee Education in the Department of Cherokee and Indigenous Studies. After completing the first semester of the Program, the students will sign a contract committing their services after graduation to the Cherokee Nation Language Department or at one of the Cherokee Nation's cooperative programs in public schools.

A Selection Committee consisting of Cherokee Language Department staff will choose scholarship recipients. In addition to attending their classes at Northeastern State University, the students will spend a total of fifteen (15) hours per week engaged in active Cherokee language learning. This can include, but is not limited to, scheduled time in classrooms at the Cherokee Nation Immersion School, formal instructional time with Cherokee Language Department staff, and other Cherokee Nation or community language related events. Upon successful completion of the Cherokee Language Teacher Training Program and receiving a degree in bachelor of arts in education in Cherokee Education, these students will have the necessary skills to become certified Cherokee language teachers in a classroom setting.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Cherokee Nation Language Program - Attn: Sarah Oosahwee, P.O. Box 948, Tahlequah, OK 74464. Phone: 918-316-4968 or sarah-oosahwee@cherokee.org

Criteria

- Must have a strong passion for Cherokee language revitalization
- Must have a strong desire to teach Cherokee language
- Must be a Cherokee Nation Citizen
- Must be a student accepted into Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, OK.
- Must reside in the contiguous fourteen county jurisdictional area of the Cherokee Nation. Proof of residency required.
- Must understand participation in the program is a contractual, long-term commitment.

Scholarship Award

- Tuition (Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, OK in-state rate)
- Required Books
- Required Fees
- Room/Board Allowance (If applicable)
- Laptop to be provided (subject to equipment loan agreement)
- Total final amount of award will be adjusted to reflect hours enrolled and/or prior agreement between place of employment.

Application Process

- Applicants will be required to write an essay between 500 to 1,000 words about why they want to participate in the program.
- Application will require Cherokee Language Proficiency Test from Cherokee Language Department (testing can be scheduled by calling 918-316-4968 or by emailing sarah-oosahwee@cherokee.org).
- Official high school and/or college transcript
- Résumé/Related work history
- Applicants are required to submit fully completed applications by June 15, 2026 5pm Central Standard Time. Applications can be sent by email, delivered in person, or mailed (must be postmarked by deadline date). Scholarship will begin for the Fall 2026 term.
- Applications that are not complete will not be considered.
- Applicants who submitted complete applications by deadline will be interviewed by Selection Committee.
- Applicants must agree to a full background check as part of application process.

Selection Process

- Selection Committee will consist of staff from the Cherokee Language Department.
- Participant selection will be based on a combination of factors and attributes, including knowledge of Cherokee language, enthusiasm for the Cherokee language, ability to complete long term goals and tasks, and relevant experience (for example, specific involvement and leadership in a tribal community, volunteer service, related job history, and other extra curricular activities related to Cherokee language, etc.).
- Selection decisions made by the Selection Committee will be final.

Participant Requirements

- Participants will be required to work a total of fifteen (15) hours per week in the program. This can include, but is not limited to, scheduled time in classrooms at the Cherokee Nation Immersion School, formal instructional time with Cherokee Language Department staff, and other Cherokee Nation or community language related events. Program coordinator has full discretion to determine what is acceptable for the 15 hours.
- Must submit official transcripts at the end of each semester.
- The participants will have one academic year as a Trial Period to decide if they want to continue with the program. If participants agree to continue after the Trial Period, they will be required to sign a contract stating that upon graduation they will commit to services at the Cherokee Nation Language Department or at one of the Cherokee Nation's cooperative programs in public schools.
- Failure to fulfill the terms set forth in the contract will result in participants having to repay the scholarship amount incurred after the Trial Period (extenuating circumstances will be judged on a case by case basis).
- Each year participants will be tested to demonstrate improvement of Cherokee language skills to the Selection Panel.
 - If sufficient improvement is not demonstrated via test results, counseling for participants will be given to alter study habits, work conditions, etc. to increase Cherokee proficiency.
 - If after counseling, sufficient improvement is not demonstrated, participants will forfeit further program participation and will be under no further obligation to the Program.
 - Evaluation will be done by Cherokee Language Department Staff.

Cherokee Language Department Responsibilities

- Provide supervision, mentorship and assistance to the participants as they learn Cherokee:
- Provide training and tech support for Cherokee language technology including fonts, keyboard layouts, and software support.
- Provide supervision, mentorship, and assistance to the participants as they learn Cherokee.
- Help participants learn appropriate vocabulary for classroom use and interaction.