The Chickasaw Nation

School-to-Work Program

Policy Handbook

May 2018
Why We Exist

~Mission~

“To further enhance the overall quality of life of the Chickasaw people by providing an opportunity to empower our citizens through educational training and superior on-the-job experience.”

~Vision~

A picture of success

“To be a nation of educated and highly trained professionals who can meet the demands of today’s workforce.”
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The Chickasaw Nation School-to-Work Program Policy Handbook was written to offer an understanding of the advanced career development and job placement opportunities afforded to individual Chickasaw citizens.

I. School-to-Work/On-the-Job Training Program:
The Chickasaw Nation School-to-Work Program (STWP) was created for Chickasaw citizens who are willing to actively pursue an educational or vocational degree while performing on-the-job training. This program is available to any tribal citizen who meets the guidelines.

On-the-Job Training (OJT):
OJT is a partnership between the STWP and other departments or businesses within the Chickasaw Nation. This partnership allows the Chickasaw Nation to “grow our own” by providing students with real work experience while attending school. This helps with increased retention and the development of loyal, dedicated employees.

OJT provides students with the specific types of employment opportunities related to their course of study. While working in these OJT positions, students receive superior instruction and invaluable work experience, creating a more prepared Chickasaw to enter the corporate world.
A. Applicants:

Requirements:
1. Be a Chickasaw citizen.
2. Be a high school graduate or have passed a GED and/or HSE course and received a certificate.
3. Be willing to attend an accredited vocational school or university full-time.

An applicant is:
1. not to reapply for a period of one year, if the applicant has been previously dropped from the program for disciplinary reasons or for lack of participation as defined in the career counseling portion of this policy; and
2. recognize if/when a second attempt in the program has failed, he has exhausted all opportunities to participate in the program.

An eligible applicant may apply by: submitting an application along with requested information to the Chickasaw Nation Human Resources Division.

B. Educational Counseling:
The career counselor(s) provide(s) educational counseling, which includes information on funding, education and career exploration, enrollment assistance, OJT placement and follow-up.

1. Who is responsible:
   Career counselors work with each student to encourage active participation and educational success.

2. Steps to educational counseling include:
   a. Educational and background assessment.
   b. Determine educational path.
c. Explore, assist and obtain funding.
d. Assist with preparation and enrollment for entrance exams as required.
e. Assist with enrollment in an accredited vocational school or university.
f. Determine or identify OJT placement.

**Note:** A GED and/or HSE or high school diploma is to be obtained before entrance into post-secondary education and STWP.

C. **Career Tracking:**
Career counselors are responsible for monitoring the participation of the students, providing educational resources and OJT placement based on the individual needs of each student.

1. **Active participation:**
Students are required to actively participate in their educational goals and OJT. Any student who chooses not to participate is counseled and/or reprimanded and eventually released from the program if lack of participation continues or persists.

* Lack of participation is defined as:

a. Undue absenteeism.
b. Tardiness.
c. Poor grade performance – midterm and semester grade checks.
   i. Below required 2.0 GPA.
   ii. Below 12-hour/full-time status unless approved by career counselor.
   iii. Grades of either a D or F
d. Poor OJT performance.
**Suspensions –**

a. Students suspended from school or choosing to drop out of school are immediately released from the STWP.

Career counselors and/or appropriate managerial staff are to use the *performance improvement plan Form 08595CT* with the students.

D. Specialized Programs:
STWP students pursuing an associate’s or bachelor’s degree that requires a special application and admittance are to adhere to the following STWP guidelines:

1. while in the STWP, if a student is denied acceptance after application, the student is to pursue an alternate degree plan; or
2. work on an alternate degree plan and re-apply at the next specialized program application date. If the student is accepted he is to be allowed to continue through the STWP; or
3. if the student is denied acceptance a second time; the student is to continue pursuit of his alternate degree with no option of reapplying for the specialized programs while in the STWP.

Students suspended from specialized programs:

1. Choose an alternate degree plan with similar completion date; or
2. if unwilling to pursue an alternate degree be immediately released from the STWP.

E. Protocol for Requesting Additional Time on Campus:
Students requesting additional time on campus
outside of approved semester schedule are to complete **student request for additional time on campus Form 08595SRATC**. Students submit this form to the assigned career counselor for approval within two days of said academic request. Failure to complete form and make request two days prior to the event results in a denied request.

F. Paid Internships:
Are defined as internships awarded to current school-to-work students that pay a living allowance/stipend and require the internship to take place outside the Chickasaw Nation or somewhere other than the student’s current on-the-job training location.

Students who apply for and are awarded paid internships are to:

1. Notify assigned career counselor and provide a copy of award letter within one week of being awarded internship.
2. Be in good academic and school-to-work program standing.
   a. Semester and overall GPA above minimum 2.0.
   b. No performance improvement plans (PIP) for academic, professional or OJT worksite performance.
   c. If approved, the student may accept such internship only once while in the school-to-work program and is to agree to the guidelines of such internship.
3. Students approved to participate in a paid internship:
   a. Receive full pay and benefits. This internship is viewed as a temporary change in OJT location.
b. Paid internships vary and are reviewed on an individual basis with relevance to academic major and professional career, location and length of internship being major factors in approval or denial.

**NOTE:** All decisions regarding approval or denial of Internships by school-to-work administration are final and cannot be appealed.

**G. Funding:**
Students in the STWP are to utilize funding from federal or state grants, Chickasaw Nation Higher Education grants and scholarships to cover educational cost and expenses.

1. Educational expenses are defined as:
   a. books
   b. tuition
   c. fees
   d. supplies

Once all documented awarded funds have been used for approved educational expenses and there is an additional financial need for educational expenses as determined by the STWP, the program may award funds to cover the unmet educational expenses.

To receive *education assistance*, **student completes** [Form 08595EAA](#).

This form is the EAA/Educational Assistance Application, and is to be submitted with required documentation to the student’s assigned career counselor.

The STWP assists the student only once during his academic career when placed on
academic/funding probation or suspension by either the academic institution or by the Chickasaw Nation Education Program.

If a student is placed on academic/funding probation for a second time and receives reduced funding or no funding at all from federal and state grants or from the Chickasaw Nation Education Program, the student is required to pay for any unmet need without the assistance of the STWP.

If a student fails to meet the application deadline for federal or state grants (if eligible) and/or from the Chickasaw Nation education grants and scholarships and receives no funding due to not meeting the application deadline, the student is required to pay for any unmet need without the assistance of STWP.

If the student is unable to meet this unmet financial need and is forced to drop below the 12-hour minimum or withdraw from school, the student is to be released from the STWP.

2. Loans
Students are encouraged not to apply for student loans. However, should a student apply for and accept a student loan, funds from the loan are to be used in determining the student’s unmet financial need by the STWP department.

3. STWP students applying for Chickasaw Nation Education Program grants and scholarships are to utilize the grants, programs and scholarships application – full-time Chickasaw STWP Employees Option Form 04629S.
H. Pre-Graduation/Job Readiness:
During the last semester before graduation, the student employee is referred to the transition coordinator who assists the student employee with developing a job readiness packet.

The job readiness packet includes:

1. Cover letter
2. Resume
3. Reference list
4. Updated Employment Center profile
5. Follow-up letter (thank you card)
6. Interviewing skills and mock interview

During the last semester of school, the student employee actively participates in the job readiness workshop series. The job readiness series provides upcoming graduates with the training necessary to enhance essential job readiness skills needed to obtain employment outside the STWP. The student employee exits the program with the essential skills needed for a professional interview and a job readiness packet.

I. Graduation:
If the student employee has not secured a job upon graduation, the transition coordinator continues assisting the student employee with identifying and securing employment opportunities outside the STWP for a period of 90 days.

If the student employee has not secured a job within the 90-day period, the student employee exits the STWP in good standing.

The student employee is notified of final date of employment by Form 08595STWP. This form
also contains information relating to the STWP graduation incentive.

J. Graduation Incentive:
Student employees completing bachelor’s degrees or vocational certification are eligible for a one-time graduation incentive in the amount of $500 from the STWP (students are ineligible to apply for the graduation incentive from the Chickasaw Nation Education Program; those who apply through the Chickasaw Nation Education Program for the graduation incentive are denied). However, all student employees who are in good academic standing and provide the necessary documentation are eligible for the STWP graduation incentive. *Additional deductions may apply.

Eligibility:

1. Graduates with a bachelor’s degree from a university or successfully completes a full-time course of study at an accredited vocational school.
2. Completes final semester with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 and no grades below a C on final grade report.
3. Current school-to-work student at time of graduation.
4. Completes all job readiness workshop activities.
5. Completes exit interview and survey before exiting the STWP.

How to Apply:
Each student submits an official copy of college transcript showing degree completed or copy of certificate of completion if graduating from a vocational school. The student submits the proper
document to his career counselor within 90 days after graduation.

K. Contact Information:

Ada
Carl Albert Service Center
1001 North Country Club Road
Ada, OK 74820
(580) 559-0815

Ardmore
2341 North Commerce
Ardmore, OK 73401
(580) 222-2839

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