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## Onboarding Program Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians - Site Overview

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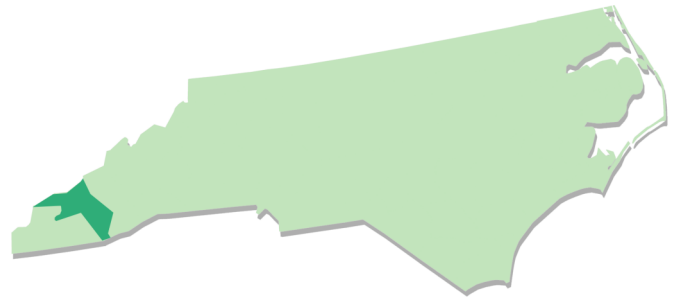
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# Onboarding Program

## EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS FAMILY SAFETY PROGRAM

The federally-recognized Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) administers the Division of Public Health and Human Services (PHHS), a multi-service agency. PHHS is led by a Secretary who reports directly to the Tribe's governing Council. PHHS consists of two Departments, each led by a Director. The Tribe's child welfare agency is the Family Safety Program (FSP), and it sits within the PHHS Department of Human Services under the leadership of a Manager. Human Resources is a separate tribal division and is directed by a Secretary who is appointed by the Chief. Individual programs have discretion of hiring and manage the writing of job descriptions and the selection process of new employees.



In 2013, the EBCI Tribal Council authorized the Tribe to reorganize existing social service programs, which historically had been housed in different divisions of the Tribal Programs or managed by state or county agencies. This reorganization pulled all of the relevant social service programs into the newly formed PHHS Division. The mission of PHHS is: HONORING, our Cherokee community by PROVIDING excellent care, safe health and SERVING families in a culturally respectful way. The vision of PHHS is: Seven generations of wellness with families strong in mind, body and spirit.

On October 1, 2015, with the approval of the Administration of Children and Families, EBCI opened FSP, a direct IV-E funded tribal agency. Previously, child welfare was managed by county agencies, with a tribal representative involved in Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) cases for children enrolled in the tribe. The need to ensure culturally competent and trauma-informed child welfare practice was an important guiding factor in the design of Family Safety Program philosophy and practices. FSP has one office, located in Cherokee, NC, that serves all tribal trust lands and enrolled members of the tribe regardless of location through ICWA.

A supervisor leads each of the five units within FSP: Intake/Investigations, Family Integrity Preservation (FIP), Integrated Child Welfare Team (ICWT), ICWA, and Adult Protective Services (APS). FSP also has a team of dedicated behavioral health staff (employees of



Cherokee Indian Hospital) that are co-housed with the program and serve families involved with FSP. In 2017, FSP employed approximately 20 social workers, who provide direct service to children and families. The number of social workers in each unit varies from approximately seven for Intake/Investigations and ICWT to four or fewer in the remaining units.

### QIC-WD Project Overview

The QIC-WD worked with an implementation team to develop and implement an onboarding program for new social workers. The 5-week onboarding program was designed for new hires to address role clarity, social

integration, and understanding of Cherokee history and culture. All social workers hired after the development of the onboarding curriculum participated in the intervention.

### Turnover

Based on information provided in EBCI's initial QIC-WD application in 2017, only two of the original FSP staff members had resigned. Persistent vacancies were of greater concern than turnover. In October 2017, seven of the 25 allocated social worker positions were vacant, resulting in a 28% vacancy rate for frontline staff.

