

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

The Seminole Nation currently has a Tribal Court system functions as the Judicial arm of the Seminole Nation and provides court services to tribal members and non-members in the tribal jurisdiction. The Seminole Nation Tribal Court has an unmet need for mentoring of juveniles in the court system. The Seminole Nation Tribal Court currently has 26 open cases involving tribal youth, 16 involving neglect, 6 involving neglect and physical abuse, and 4 involving neglect, physical and sexual abuse. All cases have originated during investigations of allegations made during guardian hearings. Additionally, the Tribal Court routinely is contacted by Seminole families seeking advice on communicating with their children. Some drive to the courthouse and drop their children off, expecting the tribal court personnel to special with their children for trouble at school, excessive truancy, or staying out late at night.

The Seminole Nation proposes to establish the Seminole Nation Foster Grandparent Program to provide mentoring to children in the Tribal Court system to address the need of not only children in the court system, but also as a preventative measure for at-risk Seminole children. And estimated 20 Foster Grandparent volunteers will serve under this program. Some of their activities will include providing in-school and afterschool tutoring, cultural activities, and guidance. The primary focus areas of this project is to provide a strong support network of Foster Grandparents to children in the court system and at-risk children. At the end of the three-year grant, at least 20 children and 20 volunteers will have participated in the program. The CNCS federal investment of \$247,936 per year will be supplemented by \$28,393 in tribal in-kind match per year.

## Strengthening Communities

Most of Seminole County, except for a small sliver in the eastern part of the county in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation jurisdiction, makes up the Seminole Nation jurisdiction. The Seminole Nation headquarters facility is located in Wewoka, Oklahoma which is also the County Seat and situated in the east central part of the county. This jurisdiction covers 633 square miles, approximately 97% of Seminole County. The county is a checkerboard of tribal trust property, Indian allotments, fee simple properties, restricted Indian lands, and Indian communities.

The geographic service area of the Seminole Nation jurisdiction is located approximately 60 miles southeast of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The Seminole Nation headquarters is located in Wewoka, OK which is also the County Seat and is situated in the east central part of the county. The Seminole Nation jurisdiction encompasses most of Seminole county and is classified as rural area, with a

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population density of 39 people per square mile.

Most of Seminole County resides in rural areas with 8 cities scattered through the county and, according to the US Census 2010 demographic profile, has a population of 25,482 people of which 24.6%, or 5,687 have identified as Native American only or one or more races including Native American. The youth population under the age of 18, is 25.4%.

According to the Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Justice, the Seminole Nation youth are getting involved in the Court System as early as 9 years old. In 2014, the Seminole Nation Tribal Court had 214 individual tribal youth involved in the court system, which is down from 2013 where the number of tribal youth involved in the court system was 266. Although the number of juveniles in the court system was down for 2014, the number of referrals and number of offenses has increased. For years 2013 and 2014, we have an average of 240 tribal youth per year involved in the court system. On a weekly basis, parents and guardians contact the Tribal Court for preventative counseling resources for at-risk children for school related or curfew issues.

To reach the children in the court system or in-need of preventative services, the Seminole Nation Foster Grandparent Program (SNFGP) will conduct service activities within the tribal jurisdiction. The program will provide school-based mentoring at two schools with five FGPs to assist with increasing attendance. The program will also provide community-based mentoring at 5 community sites, such as parks, community centers, libraries, and conference rooms with 15 FGPs. The FGPs will provide assistance with tutoring, cultural guidance, and encouragement.

SNFGP staff will conduct data collection to determine attendance, recruitment, and retention. This will be conducted through sign-in sheets for each Foster Grandparent/Child interaction. The program will also monitor periodically participant hours, grade averages, attendance, and/or school behaviors. For school-based mentoring, the Volunteer Coordinator will request attendance records from the child's teacher or school counselor. For community-based mentoring, attendance logs will be collected. The Volunteer Coordinator will ensure that data collection is measured, collected and managed. The information will be compiled and reviewed regularly to determine successes and areas to provide more guidance to strengthen.

### **Recruitment and Development**

The Seminole Nation Foster Grandparent Program Volunteer Coordinator will contact local schools, libraries, community centers, and conference rooms to develop quality volunteer assignments. The Seminole Nation currently has a relationship established with Seminole and Konawa Public Schools, which are two of the highest populated schools for Seminole children. The Volunteer Coordinator will

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contact those schools and provide information about the SNFGP to the school counselors and establish a procedure for identifying students in need of SNFGP mentoring. Staff will also establish relationships with additional schools in the jurisdiction and provide information on the SNFGP. Staff will also develop orientation and training information for volunteers. Orientation will occur at the beginning of the program for FGPs and monthly in-service training will provide opportunities to share experiences, abilities, and skills to improve the Seminole Nation community. FGPs will receive awards averaging about \$10 each for FGP volunteers to assist with retention. Items could include shirts, hats, gift baskets, gift cards, bags, cultural jewelry, keychains, or similar items. FGPs will be asked to provide an example of success during the month or provide guidance for other FGPs that are new or having issues.

Training will be provided by the Volunteer Coordinator and assisted by Tribal Court staff. Orientation training will occur at the beginning of the project and if FGPs are new for the month. Monthly in-service training will be mandatory and take place at a facility in the tribal jurisdiction. In-service will include program updates and staff will also include presenters to better equip FGPs with necessary skills for dealing with at-risk children, such as child development, gang awareness, identifying abuse, cultural sensitivity, or utilizing academic tools.

Staff will also conduct outreach at local events and at the tribal department to recruit volunteers and provide information on the program. FGP will set up a booth at tribal events, school site events, and other local events with high attendance. The Seminole Nation Older American Program provides daily lunches to tribal seniors 55 and older. The Volunteer Coordinator will develop a relationship with OAP for a recruitment schedule to present information and have a procedure for recruiting seniors from OAP. The SNFGP will also contact the Seminole Nation Veterans Affairs Department to recruit Veterans as FGPs and develop a procedure for SNVA, as well. Lastly, the Volunteer Coordinator will work with the tribal Communications department in getting press releases into the tribal newspaper and website. The SNFGP will also provide information for dissemination on the weekly tribal radio program.

To further assist with recruitment and retention, the program will host several recognition banquets and events throughout the year. A holiday event, end of school and back to school pool party, recognition banquet will provide an outlet to recognize outstanding volunteers and improvements in children participating in the program. Nominal items such as milestone monument awards, Nike N7 apparel, cultural items, plaques, and other items will be presented to volunteers and participants. Where applicable, every effort will be made to have the Foster Grandparent present the item to the

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child at each recognition event. The FGP, child and up to 3 additional guests (parent, guardian, teacher, etc) are included in the food cost for recognition. According to cultural protocol, it is customary to provide a meal to people at gatherings.

### **Program Management**

The Seminole Nation Foster Grandparent Program will conduct regular site visits with volunteer station to ensure that prohibited activities are not taking place and that volunteers are performing their assigned service activities. The Tribal Court staff will work with the SNFGPs in developing procedure that will ensure compliance with FGP program regulations. SNFGP will review volunteer stations quarterly to determine if the station is meeting the needs of the program. If it is determined the station will need to be graduated, the procedure will involve as little interruption as possible to FGP activity.

The Seminole Nation Tribal Court first identified the problem of court involved tribal youth during their administration of the Child Advocacy Program. Staff became aware of neglect, neglect and physical abuse, and neglect, physical and sexual abuse among the tribal youth during guardianship hearings. Upon further investigation, the allegations made in these guardianship cases proved to be valid, which lead to further investigation of tribal youth involved in the court system. The Tribal Court, Chief of Police, and ASAP Director formed a steering committee to discuss tribal youth in the court system and at risk tribal youth. It was apparent that there was a problem with a large number of tribal youth and that something had to be done to alleviate this problem. Through discussion, it was determined that the Seminole Nation needed to coordinate the services of the tribal programs which provided services for tribal youth. Further, the Child Advocacy Steering Committee identified goals, which include: Establish a tribal juvenile justice system Establish interventions for court-involved youth, Coordinate prevention services to influence risk factors for delinquency, Coordinate prevention programs that focus on alcohol and substance abuse, and Create youth related activities that are culturally appropriate.

The Steering Committee directed and coordinated the services of the tribal departments through a series of stakeholders meetings to define services available for tribal youth. This was a collaborative effort to provide intervention and prevention services to tribal youth. Mentoring for the tribal youth was discussed at length and determined to be a culturally appropriate platform for addressing the issues of court involved youth and at risk youth. In addition, Law Enforcement Officers are able mentor the tribal youth on a one to one basis, answering questions and advising against wrongful behavior.

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The Steering Committee members will recruited to serve as the FGP Advisory Council. The Volunteer Coordinator will ensure that FGP volunteers are placed in MOU stations and all volunteers are eligible for participation.

### Organizational Capability

The Seminole Nation constitution was ratified in 1856 and is supported with funding from tribal revenues generated from gaming, tobacco, vehicle tags, sales tax, and facility lease. Tribal revenues support the majority of tribal government operations and cash matching requirements. The Seminole Nation also provides services to its people through a trust fund settlement for the Florida lands. This settlement fund is used for burial assistance, educational assistance, school clothing and elderly assistance. The Seminole Nation also provides services to its population through three (3) contracts from Indian Health Service (IHS) and eight (8) contracts from Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The Seminole Nation receives additional support from fifteen (15) programs from the Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Department of Labor (DOL), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). The Tribe has successfully operated grants and contracts for over thirty years. It currently operates more than seventy Federal, BIA, and Tribal grants/contracts with total annual budgets exceeding \$20,000,000.

The Seminole Nation government has the last form of traditional governance in Oklahoma. Our current form of government is anchored by a Band system which is comprised of twelve (12) traditional bands and two (2) Freedman bands. The Seminole Nation General Council is comprised of two (2) representatives from each band. The twenty-eight (28) member council meets quarterly and as needed for Special Call or Emergency meetings.

The Seminole Nation has implemented by tribal ordinance policies, procedures, and a financial management system. The Seminole Nation of Oklahoma has adopted a Financial Policies and Procedures Manual designed to ensure compliance with all applicable federal grant financial management requirements with the 2 CFR Part 200, OMB Circulars, New Uniform Guidelines. The Financial Management Team, Tribal Treasurer and Fiscal Services Department staff will utilize this Financial Policies and Procedures Manual throughout the grant implementation cycle to ensure that:

- a. Proper internal controls are maintained,
- b. DOL funds are expended in accordance with the approved project budget,
- c. Project expenditures are allowable costs and supported by appropriate source documentation.

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- d. Cash management requirements are strictly adhered to.
- e. Manage capital assets such as facilities, equipment, and supplies
- f. Financial reports reflect financial results that are current, accurate and complete, and
- g. Program closeout occurs in a timely manner.

The Seminole of Oklahoma currently is using this process provided for the manual to provide for effective management of federal funds in a manner consistent with the 2 CFR Part 200, OMB Circulars, New Uniform Guidelines by December 26, 2015.

The Seminole Nation of Oklahoma is up-to-date and current with audit requirements. The most recent Tribal single audit report on file is for the Fiscal Year that ended September 30, 2013; the Tribes single audit report for the Fiscal year ended September 30, 2014 has been completed and will have been submitted by June 30, 2015 as required.

### Other

No other items to enter under Other

### PNS Amendment (if applicable)

PNS Amendment is not applicable