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APPLICATION FOR GRANTS
UNDER THE

Indian Education Discretionary Grant Programs—Native Youth Community Program

CFDA # 84.299A

PR/Award # S299A220009

Grants.gov Tracking#: GRANT13596444

OMB No. 1810-0722, Expiration Date: 06/30/2023

Closing Date: Apr 19, 2022

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2022

Abstract

Stilwell Public Schools serves 1,350 high-need students in the small town of Stilwell, Oklahoma, “The Most Cherokee Community in the USA” and the poorest township in the state. **Cherokee Roots** will promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity in a community where the Census Bureau’s Small Income and Poverty Estimates show 40.5% of youth live in poverty. New choices offered for families and students will include:

- New Opportunities to enroll in a Cultural Heritage and Preservation STEM class
- New Opportunities to Study Cherokee Language and Culture for College Credit
- New Opportunities to enroll in STEM courses building relevant workforce skills
- New opportunities to explore the STEM workforce and Cherokee Culture workforce
- Ongoing Assessments to Inform Instruction /Identify Students Needing Support
- Expanded Focus on College Preparation and Parental Inclusion
- Expanded extracurricular programming focused on STEM and the Cherokee culture

Lead Applicant Stilwell Public Schools receives funding from the Bureau of Indian Education and is eligible to participate in the Demonstration Grants program under Competitive Preference Priorities 1 and 3. The **overall goal** of the **Cherokee Roots** is to prepare Stilwell students for post-secondary success. **Cherokee Roots** will place an additional four experienced, fully certified, in-field, and effective educators in Stilwell Public Schools, including STEM Career Teacher, Cherokee Language, and Culture Teacher, Cherokee STEM Teacher, and College Success Coach. **Cherokee Roots** program components, designed to reflect gaps and weaknesses identified through formal Needs Assessment efforts, will be offered to all Stilwell Middle School and Stilwell High School students. Against all measurements, Stilwell youth are underrepresented. **Cherokee Roots** was designed to address these disadvantages, providing new opportunities for students to connect with the histories and traditions of their Cherokee culture, and prepare for a future career.

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Absolute Priority: Native Youth Community Projects

Defined Local Area: Stilwell, Oklahoma, “The Most Cherokee Community in the USA.”

Goal: The **overall goal** of the **Cherokee Roots** is to prepare Stilwell students for post-secondary success.

Evidence: Needs Assessment was completed in December 2021, reviewing barriers (in and out of school), local community resources and opportunities, and beneficial local policies/practices/providers that could support efforts to prepare Stilwell students for post-secondary success.

Focused on Barriers / Opportunities with Community-Based Strategy and Measurable Objectives:

Strategies have been aligned directly to local needs and will tangibly link classroom learning with cultural expectations and workforce opportunities. Six Objectives and 11 Measurable Outcomes have been identified.

Partnership: Stilwell Public Schools receives funding from the BIE and will serve as the lead, in partnership with the Cherokee Nation, Boys & Girls Clubs of Adair County, Carl Albert State College, and Northeastern State University. Stilwell Public Schools is an experienced grantee.

Competitive Preference Priority 1: Tribal Lead Applicants (0 or 5 points)

Lead Applicant Stilwell Public Schools receives funding from the Bureau of Indian Education and is eligible to participate in the Demonstration Grants program.

Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Equity (0 to 7 points)

Stilwell Public Schools serves 1,350 high-need students in the small town of Stilwell, Oklahoma, “The Most Cherokee Community in the USA” and the poorest township in the state.¹ **Cherokee Roots** will promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity in a community where the Census Bureau’s Small Income and Poverty Estimates show 40.5% of youth live in poverty. New choices offered for families and students will include:

- New Opportunities to enroll in a Cultural Heritage and Preservation STEM class

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- New Opportunities to Study Cherokee Language and Culture for College Credit
- New Opportunities to enroll in STEM courses building relevant workforce skills
- New opportunities to explore the STEM workforce and Cherokee Culture workforce
- Ongoing Assessments to Inform Instruction /Identify Students Needing Support
- Expanded Focus on College Preparation and Parental Inclusion
- Expanded extracurricular programming focused on STEM and the Cherokee culture

Settings: Middle School, High School, Out-of-School-Time

Cherokee Roots will place an additional four experienced, fully certified, in-field, and effective educators in Stilwell Public Schools, including STEM Career Teacher, Cherokee Language, and Culture Teacher, Cherokee STEM Teacher, and College Success Coach. Job listings will be posted through multiple venues in English, Cherokee, and Spanish to reach a wide audience of potentially qualified applicants, including postings online, in area banks and community centers, in local newspapers, at local colleges, and through online job posting sites. Mentors, tutors, teachers, and adult role models that have overcome barriers similar to those that the students they serve are facing are frequently able to make a stronger connection and promote a more lasting impact. To this end, Stilwell Public Schools encourages applications from local professionals with a Native American or low-income background. This policy further supports Stilwell’s commitment to hiring individuals that exemplify the qualities that are promoted among students, including overcoming poverty, pursuing higher education, and giving back to the community. When recruiting staff and volunteers, Stilwell administrators describe in detail the purpose and objectives of the initiative, including challenges, barriers, and gaps in services that are targeted through planned programming. It is anticipated that this comprehensive description will draw in more significant numbers of individuals that have faced obstacles similar to those described, invigorated by the opportunity to give back to their community in a format that puts their unique experiences to

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positive use. Applicants for positions that come from areas beyond the targeted rural community will also be considered as appropriate, with the understanding that new faces diversify the community, refresh programming, and bring new ideas that enrich all involved. Due to the geographic rurality of the Stilwell community, and the unique skills needed to teach Cherokee culture and the Tsalagi language, it is not anticipated that non-residents will apply for open positions. Competitive candidates for both the Cherokee Language and Culture Teacher and the Cherokee STEM Teacher will have life experience with Cherokee culture and the Tsalagi language. Importantly, **Cherokee Roots** will continue and advance the comprehensive culture and language program offered for secondary students, taking the “next logical step” by offering new opportunities for advanced high school students to teach introductory Tsalagi language to elementary students enrolled in nearby school districts that border the Cherokee Nation but do not currently offer culture and language-specific instruction due to a lack of qualified educators. Students from neighboring districts are regularly bussed to Stilwell facilities for band, sports, agriculture, and extracurriculars. A new Tsalagi language internship course, offered in coordination with Northeastern State University, will doubly benefit the region, expanding the reach of introductory Tsalagi language instruction while enhancing the relevance of striving for Tsalagi fluency, expanding the credibility of Cherokee-focused coursework, increasing cultural pride, and building a pipeline of future Cherokee educators at Stilwell High School.

(a) Need for project (10 points).

(1) Gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities (Up to 4 points)

Stilwell Public Schools serves 1,350 high-need students in the small town of Stilwell, “The Most Cherokee Community in the USA,” and the most impoverished township in the State of Oklahoma. It is critical that school-based services prepare students for gainful employment and fulfilling careers in the community, with options that students perceive as **relevant, culturally respectful, and enticing**. A

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district reshaping, which began with the appointment of Superintendent [REDACTED] in 2011, has decreased the dropout rate, reported at 25.4% in 2010, to just 6.3% in 2020. Despite this progress, Stilwell students continue to struggle academically and routinely lament a perceived disconnect between classroom learning and the “real world.” Annually, more than 53% of Stilwell’s college enrollees are required to take at least one remedial course in Math, English, Science, or Reading – compared to a state average of 39% of College Freshmen. This contributes to the equally high college drop-out rate among Stilwell graduates, who are forced to pay for non-credit bearing instruction and run out of financial aid before graduation.

Cherokee Roots program components, designed to reflect gaps and weaknesses identified through formal Needs Assessment efforts, will be offered to all Stilwell Middle School and Stilwell High School students. All Stilwell students are rural. SPS has universal Free Lunch eligibility at all schools. Approximately 74% of students are of Cherokee descent, and another 10% of students are Hispanic. Over 28% of Stilwell students receive Special Education Services. More than one-in-four Stilwell students live at home with parents who have not earned a high school diploma. Against all measurements, Stilwell youth are underrepresented. **Cherokee Roots** was designed to address these disadvantages, providing new opportunities for students to connect with the histories and traditions of their Cherokee culture, and prepare for a future career.

Stilwell youth are underserved and without appropriate opportunities to “connect their two worlds.” Effective education for Native American students focuses on the effective blending of Indigenous and Western knowledge, enhancing student connection to content, boosting social and academic outcomes, and supporting whole-child instruction that allows younger generations to seize their inherent potential. Designed in direct coordination with the Cherokee Nation and Northeastern University to embrace evidence-based best practices, **Cherokee Roots** will blend Indigenous and Western knowledge systems

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within Stilwell Middle and High Schools, embracing a balanced, comprehensive, and culturally aligned curricular framework that adapts to local circumstances and drastically improves outcomes for youth.

Opportunities	Rationale for Inclusion of Service Choice
<p>Cherokee Heritage and Preservation STEM</p>	<p>SPS will hire a full-time Cultural STEM teacher, supported by contractual partner Sevenstar Spatial Media Lab who will host the virtual server and provide VR support. The Cherokee Nation will provide support for cultural alignment. This course will blend local histories and traditions with cutting-edge STEM technologies, breathing new relevance into classroom learning while building student pride and resilience related to their heritage.</p> <p>Needs / Gaps / Weaknesses Addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Improve Science and Math competencies *Increase student resilience and pride *Strengthen perceived connection between classroom learning and culture
<p>Cherokee Language and Culture</p>	<p>SPS will hire a full-time Cherokee Language teacher to implement a vertically aligned four-year Cherokee Lifeways and Language curriculum that will result in transferrable college credit upon graduation. The Cherokee Nation will provide support for cultural alignment. These courses will embrace the Tsalagi language, building a new generation of speakers. It will also provide college credits to students wishing to pursue post-secondary classes, and internship opportunities as advanced students teach Introductory Tsalagi to local elementary students.</p> <p>Needs / Gaps / Weaknesses Addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Improve English Language Arts competencies *Increase student resilience and pride

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	*Strengthen perceived connection between classroom learning and culture
STEM Career Teacher	<p>Stilwell Public Schools will add hands-on STEM elective coursework for middle and high school students. Aligned directly to local workforce applications, STEM courses will support students as they explore drone piloting; PC building/repair/soldering / electrical circuit repair; Computer Assisted Design; and Ecology. Courses offer relevant, high-interest STEM content aligned directly with local workforce demand, boosting student motivation and enrollment in challenging coursework.</p> <p>Needs / Gaps / Weaknesses Addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Improve Science and Math competencies *Increase student resilience, pride, and employability
College Success Coach	<p>Stilwell Public Schools will staff the College & Career Resource Center with a full-time College and Career Coach to provide small group and one-on-one guidance as students search for post-secondary programs, apply for admission, pursue scholarships, build resumes, and prepare to take necessary standard examinations.</p> <p>Needs / Gaps / Weaknesses Addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Support students as they consider multiple post-secondary options *Increase affordability of post-secondary opportunities *Increase post-secondary enrollment (vocational, college, university)
Family Night Cultural Enrichment	<p>Stilwell Public Schools will coordinate with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Adair County and the Cherokee Nation to offer evening cultural programming for youth and families to engage in together, in a traditional multi-generational format. Family Night will place a spotlight on Cherokee heritage, creating fun and engaging opportunities to embrace the traditional local culture for students, parents, staff, and community</p>

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	representatives.
	Needs / Gaps / Weaknesses Addressed:
	*Strengthen home and school connections. *Build student resilience and pride.

(2) The magnitude of the need for services. (Up to 3 points)

Stilwell Schools are among the lowest-performing in Oklahoma. All campuses have been identified through the Elementary Secondary Education Act as being “In Need of Improvement”. In 2018-2019, Stilwell Middle and Stilwell High were assigned an Overall Grade of “D”. Stilwell Elementary earned a “C”. Encompassed within the “School Turnaround” category of the Office of School Support, all Stilwell campuses have designed School Improvement Plans to identify the specific gaps and weaknesses in current offerings and design action steps to create sustainable change. Our young people are at risk of educational failure – 51% of high school students failed one or more End-of-Course exams required for graduation in 2018. Intensive efforts are underway to promote better outcomes for students, but much work remains to prepare Stilwell youth for post-secondary success.

(3) Services / address the needs of students at risk of educational failure. (Up to 3 points)

Cherokee Roots will bring desperately needed service options to Stilwell Middle and High School students, addressing the need to fully embrace Cherokee heritage and traditions to enhance academic opportunities in a meaningful way. Programming has been designed to showcase the deep histories and traditions of the Cherokee people, building pride and resilience through increased exposure to both language and culture. Students and their families will have the opportunity to enroll in these new service choices, which will be delivered largely by Stilwell Public Schools with support from outside experts. Specific needs to be addressed include:

Opportunities	Needs Addressed
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Cherokee Heritage and Preservation STEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Improve Math and Science competencies *Increase student resilience and pride *Strengthen perceived connection between classroom learning and culture
Cherokee Language and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Improve English Language Arts competencies *Increase student resilience and pride *Strengthen perceived connection between classroom learning and culture
STEM Career Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Improve Science and Math competencies *Strengthened perceived relevance of classroom instruction *Increase student resilience, pride, and employability
College Success Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Support students as they consider multiple post-secondary options *Increase affordability of post-secondary opportunities *Increase post-secondary enrollment (vocational, college, university)
Family Night Cultural Enrichment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Strengthen home and school connection. *Build student resilience and pride.

(b) Quality of project design (37 points).

(1) Design for implementing and evaluating will result in information to guide possible replication of project, including information about the effectiveness of the approach. (Up to 10 points)

Stilwell Public Schools will contract with a professional External Evaluator. Dr. [REDACTED] is a PhD-level, published researcher with extensive evaluation experience working with Native American student populations, and a long history of successful collaboration with Stilwell Public Schools. The Project Director will submit monthly qualitative and quantitative data sets, and the External Evaluator will create Quarterly Progress Reports that showcase movement toward goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes. Quarterly Progress Reports will enable the **Cherokee Roots** Advisory Council to leverage

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real-time data to drive the continuous performance feedback loop. All data, including student level, grade level, and school-level results will be coded for anonymity. In addition to project staff and Stilwell administrators, members of the **Cherokee Roots** Advisory Council will include representatives from the following groups/agencies: teachers, parents, students, the Cherokee Nation, Northeastern University, and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Adair County. All Quarterly Progress Reports will become the basis for evaluating performance feedback to refine, strengthen, and improve the project approach as appropriate. School-based members of the Advisory Council will meet monthly, with the full Advisory Council meeting quarterly.

Across the nation, school districts struggle to promote high levels of achievement among Native American student populations. All Quarterly Progress Reports, action plans resulting from Advisory Council meetings, and annual reports will be compiled into a Project Blueprint for widespread dissemination. The Project Blueprint will showcase lessons learned, project impact, and the specific strategies undertaken to achieve documented results. It will be made available for download on the Stilwell Public Schools website and shared throughout the region to support knowledge exchange among the Tribes of America’s Midwest.

(2) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (Up to 5 points)

The **overall goal** of the **Cherokee Roots** is to prepare Stilwell students for post-secondary success.

Measurable Outcomes will be monitored to ensure appropriate progress each quarter, providing ample opportunity for the Advisory Council to adjust and modify program implementation processes based on real-time data.

Objective	Measurable outcomes
Objective #1: Strengthen	1a. Enroll at least 125 students in the new Cherokee Heritage STEM

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<p>local capacity to infuse academic instruction with culturally relevant curricular elements</p>	<p>course annually (a curriculum that features hands-on and applied mathematics and science concepts).</p> <p>1b. Enroll at least 125 students in Cherokee Language and Cherokee Lifeways culture courses annually, including the new Advanced Tsaligi with internship opportunities.</p>
<p>Related Data: Course enrollment numbers, student attendance, course grades, satisfaction surveys</p>	
<p>Objective #2: Increase the percentage of Stilwell students who meet or exceed proficiency standards in science on standardized assessments.</p>	<p>2a. Enroll at least 125 students in the new Cherokee Heritage and Preservation STEM courses annually (a curriculum that features hands-on and applied mathematics and science concepts).</p> <p>2b. Enroll at least 125 students in the new STEM Workforce courses annually (featuring drone piloting; PC building/repair/soldering / electrical circuit repair; Computer Assisted Design; and Ecology)</p> <p>2c. The number of Stilwell students who meet or exceed proficiency standards in science, as measured by standardized assessments, will increase by 3% during each year of the project when compared to 2020-2021 baseline data.</p>
<p>Related Data: Course enrollment numbers, student attendance, course grades, state assessments</p>	
<p>Objective #3: Increase the percentage of students who meet or exceed proficiency standards in reading on standardized assessments</p>	<p>3a. Enroll at least 125 students in Cherokee Language and Culture courses annually (an engaging curriculum that features literacy).</p> <p>3b. The number of students who meet or exceed proficiency standards in reading, as measured by standardized assessments, will increase by 3% during each year of the project when compared to 2020-2021 baseline data.</p>

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Related Data: Course enrollment numbers, student attendance, course grades, satisfaction surveys	
Objective #4: Increase the number of Stilwell students who pursue post-secondary STEM studies	<p>4a. Annually, at least 125 students will take part in college preparatory services provided through the College & Career Resource Center.</p> <p>4b. Annually, at least 95% of Grade 11 and Grade 12 students will take part in quarterly, mandatory College & Career Resource Center visits (parents invited).</p> <p>4c. In Year One, at least 10 Stilwell students will indicate their intent to pursue post-secondary STEM studies (15 in Year Two and 20 in Year Three) when completing Future Aspiration Surveys.</p>
Related Data: Student attendance, Future Aspiration Surveys, C&CRC sign-in sheets/staff logs	
Objective #5: Expand cultural and educational options for rural and isolated youth	<p>3a. Annually, at least 650 Stilwell students will participate in additional programming options.</p>
Related Data: Student attendance, student satisfaction surveys, behavioral data	
Objective #6: Strengthen the family and school connection	<p>4a. Annually, at least 200 youth will participate in Family Night activities with members of their household.</p> <p>4b. Annually, at least 85% of parents will indicate the quality of learning and program options offered to meet their children’s needs, based on Satisfaction Surveys.</p>
Related Data: Student / Family attendance, parent, and student satisfaction surveys	

(3) Thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation, and the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives. (Up to 7 points)

Literature Review – Evidence Base for Cherokee Roots

Culturally Relevant Courses: In terms of strong theory, a large and growing body of research from diverse cultural settings documents the academic benefits of approaches that systematically include home and community cultural practices integral to the school curriculum. In the most comprehensive review to



date of the research on improving Native American / Native Alaskan students’ academic performance, William Demmert, the first deputy commissioner for the U.S. Office of Indian education, noted the importance of Native cultural programs “in motivating students, promoting a positive sense of identity and self, stimulating positive attitudes about school and others...and supporting

improved academic performance.”ⁱⁱ A review of multiple studies found strong empirical evidence that cultural connections enhance students’ academic and behavioral outcomes.ⁱⁱⁱ Native American children achieve greater success when schools are perceived to be culturally relevant places.^{iv} Bringing Cherokee Language instructional opportunities will strengthen this impact. Learning a foreign language correlates with higher academic achievement on standardized tests.^v

STEM Workforce: SPS will bring inquiry-based learning in the sciences, seamlessly combining math and science skills into Project-Based Learning opportunities that truly connect with students, bringing the “real world” to their studies, integrating virtual reality, 3D printing, computer coding, and programming, and unique drone flight, ecology, and CAD opportunities.^{vi} Stilwell will include all elements of the Gold Standard PBL, as established by the NEA.^{vii}

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College Preparation: Quarterly meetings with Grade 11 and 12 students and their families will support Best Practices in promoting college enrollment and successful graduation.^{viii}

☛ **College Matching:** Counseling students to research, apply to, and attend schools that are a good match for them academically, socially, and financially, and have high graduation rates and strong support structures in place for first-generation, low-income students

☛ **Financial Aid and Scholarships:** Engaging students and families, from as early as middle school, with information and tools that position them to be active participants in searching for and acquiring financial aid and scholarship resources for their college experience

Research shows it is critical for low-income, potential first-generation college students to receive structured, formal support from their high school counselors to promote prepared enrollment leading to a viable career pathway.^{ix}

Implementation Plan

Cherokee Roots will prepare Stilwell students for post-secondary success. Strategies will include:

- Hiring a full-time Cultural STEM educator to lead Cherokee Heritage and Preservation STEM courses, reaching at least 125 students annually with unique coursework that blends applied math and science concepts with Cherokee culture as students navigate the virtual reality server to create a historic Cherokee village in the digital realm.
- Hiring a full-time Cherokee Language educator to lead a new vertically aligned four-year Cherokee Lifeways and Language curriculum that will result in transferrable college credit upon graduation. Courses will build a new generation of speakers, providing college credits, creating internship opportunities, and leveraging student skills to expand Introductory Tsalagi to nearby school districts. Services will reach at least 125 students annually and strengthen a new pipeline of future Tsalagi language instructors.

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- Hiring a full-time STEM educator to lead new STEM elective coursework at the middle and high school aligned to local workforce applications, including drone piloting, PC building/repair/soldering /electrical circuit repair, Computer Assisted Design, and Ecology, reaching at least 125 students annually.
- Hiring a full-time College Success Coach to expand offerings in the College & Career Resource Center will lead small group and one-on-one guidance, as well as regular post-secondary preparation meetings with students and families, supporting career search/college and vocational training search/admissions/scholarships/resumes /standardized assessment preparation and tasks.
- Implementing quarterly Family Night Cultural Enrichment events, in coordination with the Cherokee Nation and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Adair County, to offer cultural programming in a multi-generational format as families engage in and embrace traditional local culture.

A project timeline follows where requested, please cross-reference for further implementation plans.

Methodological Tools

Stilwell Public Schools adheres to a continuous improvement feedback loop model for all grant-funded programs. This includes monthly data submissions for qualitative and quantitative measures related to long-term objectives, and Quarterly Progress Reports compiled by an External Evaluator to showcase benchmark attainment and movement towards project goals. The formative assessment process provides real-time data that informs the continuous improvement feedback loop, proactively identifying challenges, gaps and weaknesses and preparing the Advisory Council to nimbly adjust to support full attainment of stated goals and objectives both on time and within budget.

(4) Rationale (as defined in this notice). (Up to 10 points)

Logic Model
Goal: Prepare Stilwell students for post-secondary success.

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Inputs: 1.0 FTE Cultural STEM educator; 1.0 FTE Cherokee Language educator; 1.0 FTE STEM educator; 1.0 FTE College Success Coach; 0.25 FTE Project Director; Curricula (Cherokee Heritage and Preservation; Cherokee Lifeways; Cherokee Language; STEM Electives (Piloting, Computer Science, CAD, Ecology); Partnerships with the Cherokee Nation, Boys & Girls Clubs of Adair County, Northeastern University

Objectives: *Strengthen local capacity to infuse academic instruction with culturally relevant curricular elements; Enroll at least 125 students in each new opportunity (STEM Workforce, Cherokee Heritage STEM, Cherokee Lifeways and Language) *Increase the percentage of Stilwell students who meet or exceed proficiency standards in science on standardized assessments by at least 3% annually; *Increase the percentage of students who meet or exceed proficiency standards in reading on standardized assessments by at least 3% annually; *Increase the number of Stilwell students who pursue post-secondary STEM studies; Reach at least 125 youth annually with post-secondary preparation services; *Provide targeted post-secondary preparation to 95% of Grade 11 & 12 students annually

Outcomes: *Improve Science and Math competencies; *Improve English Language Arts competencies; Increase student resilience and pride; *Strengthen perceived connection between classroom learning and culture; *Support students as they consider multiple post-secondary options; *Increase affordability of post-secondary opportunities; *Increase post-secondary enrollment (vocational, college, university); *Strengthen home and school connection; *Expand cultural and educational options for rural youth.

Research-Base: *Native American children achieve greater success when schools are perceived to be culturally relevant places.^x; *Research shows it is critical for low-income, potential first-generation college students to receive structured, formal support from their high school counselors to promote prepared enrollment leading to a viable career pathway.^{xi}; STEM coursework will include all elements of the Gold Standard PBL, as established by the NEA.^{xii}

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(5) Evaluation will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible. (Up to 5 points)

As described, Stilwell Public Schools will contract with a professional External Evaluator. Dr. [REDACTED] is a PhD-level, published researcher with extensive evaluation experience working with Native American student populations, and a long history of successful collaboration with Stilwell Public Schools. The Project Director will submit monthly qualitative and quantitative data sets, and the External Evaluator will create Quarterly Progress Reports that showcase movement toward goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes. QPRs will enable the **Cherokee Roots** Advisory Council (comprised of project leaders, parents, students, and representatives from the Cherokee Nation and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Adair County), to leverage real-time data to drive the continuous performance feedback loop. All data, including student level, grade level, and school-level results will be coded for anonymity. All QPRs will become the basis for evaluating performance feedback to refine, strengthen, and improve the project approach as appropriate. School-based members of the Advisory Council will meet monthly, with the full Advisory Council meeting quarterly.

Data Set	Collection Timeline
Student Course Enrollment	Twice Annually
Student Attendance	Monthly
Course Grades	Quarterly
State Assessments (ELA, Math, Science)	Annually
Number of Stilwell students completing Tsaligi internships	Quarterly
Number of students impacted by Introductory Tsaligi classes	Monthly
College & Career Resource Center guidance schedule	Monthly
Student / Parent Attendance at C&CRC Sessions	Quarterly
Student Satisfaction Surveys, Future Aspiration Surveys	Twice Annually

Parent Satisfaction Surveys	Twice Annually
Family Night Attendance	Quarterly

(c) Quality of project personnel (12 points).

(1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented. (Up to 6 points)

Stilwell Public Schools invites and encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have been traditionally underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. This is true for school faculty, administrators, and staff, as well as for members of the Board of Education and volunteers. As appropriate, job listings will be posted through multiple venues in English, Cherokee, and Spanish in order to reach a wide audience of potentially qualified applicants, including postings online, in area banks and community centers, in local newspapers, at local colleges, and through online job posting sites.

Mentors, tutors, teachers, and adult role models that have overcome barriers like those that the students they serve are facing are frequently able to make a stronger connection and promote a more lasting impact. To this end, Stilwell Public Schools encourages applications from local professionals with a Native American or low-income background. This policy further supports Stilwell’s commitment to hiring individuals that exemplify the qualities that are promoted among students, including overcoming poverty, pursuing higher education, and giving back to the community. When recruiting staff and volunteers, Stilwell administrators describe in detail the purpose and objectives of the initiative, including challenges, barriers, and gaps in services that are targeted through planned programming. It is anticipated that this comprehensive description will draw in more significant numbers of individuals that have faced obstacles like those described, invigorated by the opportunity to give back to their community in a format that puts their unique experiences to positive use. Applicants for positions that come from areas beyond

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the targeted rural community will also be considered appropriate, with the understanding that new faces diversify the community, refresh programming, and bring new ideas that enrich all involved. Due to the geographic rurality and the unique skills needed to teach Tsalagi language and culture, it is not anticipated that non-residents will apply for open positions.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator. (Up to 3 points)

Key personnel (for those hired) and minimum qualifications for those to be hired are described below.

Please Note: All persons working with youth will have to pass a thorough background and sex offender registry check and fingerprinting.

Project Director: Cherokee Roots will be led by **Project Director** [REDACTED] – the Stilwell High School Principal with the proven organizational and outreach skills necessary to oversee a project of this size and magnitude. A dedicated educator, [REDACTED] has overseen Stilwell’s grant initiatives for the past three years. [REDACTED] has proven to be adept at planning and organizing school-based events, making him a logical choice to serve as **Project Director** for this initiative. Resume appended as required.

(3) Qualifications, relevant training and experience, of key project personnel. (Up to 3 points)

Superintendent: Superintendent [REDACTED] will work alongside Dr. [REDACTED], the External Evaluator. Superintendent [REDACTED] oversees Federal programs districtwide, including the Johnson-O’Malley Program, Title VII, Native American Children in Schools, and Cherokee Nation Tag Money reporting. Resumes are appended as required.

Cherokee Language and Culture Teacher: This position will be filled upon award notification. At minimum, the successful candidate will be a fluent speaker of the Cherokee language with a valid teaching certification with no less than two years of experience with Cherokee middle and high school

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students. In alignment with Section 7(b) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, SPS will give Indian preference to the greatest extent feasible.

Cultural STEM Teacher: This position will be filled upon award notification. At a minimum, the successful candidate will be certified as a high school science teacher with no less than two years of experience with Cherokee high school students. In alignment with Section 7(b) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, SPS will give Indian preference to the greatest extent feasible.

STEM Career Teacher: This position will be filled by [REDACTED]. A veteran science teacher, [REDACTED] is a Cherokee tribal member with more than 20 years of experience working with Stilwell students. [REDACTED] is the best possible choice for this position. Resume appended.

College Success Coach: This position will be filled by [REDACTED]. A veteran science teacher at Stilwell High School, [REDACTED] is an effective educator who excels at building positive relationships with youth that leads to continued enrollment in elective science coursework. The long-time leader of the Math Club, the Science Club, and FCA, [REDACTED] is also responsible for the Stilwell Public Schools website development and student computer system. His ongoing and active involvement in numerous aspects of the STEM career field, and his longtime experience with the registrar process, make him the best possible choice for this position. Johnson's resume is appended.

(d) Quality of project services (10 points).

(1) Services involve the collaboration of appropriate partners. (Up to 5 points)

There are limited resources in Stilwell Oklahoma, and to maximize impact of new and expanded programming, it is critical that partnerships are formed and strengthened. This enhances offerings, builds community support, and promotes long-term sustainability. A partnership agreement is signed by all parties and included in the Appendix as required.

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Cherokee Nation: The Cherokee Nation will provide support for all cultural services to be expanded and offered to Stilwell students. This will include direct support for cultural teachers as well as offering culturally aligned enrichment opportunities during Parent Night activities.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Adair County: The Club will provide support for Parent Night events and will work with Stilwell Public Schools to embrace Cherokee heritage through strategic programming and activities in before and after school programming.

Northeastern State University: NSU will offer dual-credit opportunities to Stilwell students completing advanced Cherokee Language and Lifeways cultural courses.

Carl Albert State College: CASC will provide ACT Prep and practice test scenarios and financial aid workshops. CASC will also provide dual-credit to Stilwell students completing STEM courses.

(2) The extent to which the services to be offered would meet the needs of the local population, as demonstrated by an analysis of community-level data, including direct input from parents and families of Indian children and youth. (Up to 5 points)

Cherokee Roots was designed based on formal Needs Assessment results gathered in December 2021. This included the review of school-level and community-level needs from a variety of data sources. School Report Card data released by the Oklahoma Department of Education shows Stilwell youth perform below their peers statewide on standardized assessments in ELA, Math, and Science. Fewer Stilwell students graduate from high school, and among those that pursue post-secondary education, Stilwell graduates are more likely to require remedial support. Stilwell and surrounding Adair County is identified among the top 5% of “Distressed Communities” nationwide by the federal Distressed Communities Index, as needs grew from 84.7 of 100 in 2000, to 90.8 of 100 today.^{xiii} Stilwell exceeds national averages for residents without high school diplomas, poverty, adults not working, and housing

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vacancy. While these statistics show the overwhelming need of the community, local programming reflects the current and immediate needs of Stilwell parents and students.

Surveys distributed to parents and students informed program design. Middle and high school students consistently reported the perception that “classroom learning was not relevant to the real world.” Students pursuing Cherokee language and culture electives requested more advanced course offerings for future years. Students and parents at all levels K-12 sought additional opportunities for fun family events. Students consistently ranked STEM coursework with project-based learning opportunities favorably among potential electives. Parents and students alike have voiced the need for guidance and support related to post-secondary preparation, from career search through the admissions process for vocational or college opportunities and everything in-between – a significant need in a community where the vast majority of adults have not pursued post-secondary training of any kind.

Opportunities	Needs Addressed
Cherokee Heritage and Preservation STEM	*Improve Math and Science competencies *Increase student resilience and pride *Strengthen perceived connection between classroom learning and culture
Leveraging Community Resources: Stilwell Public Schools will add this course to the catalogue and schedule. The Guidance Department will encourage student enrollment. Partnership with the Cherokee Nation will support cultural relevance of course content. Coordination with Sevenstar Spatial Media Lab will provide access to virtual serve and VR support.	
Cherokee Language and Culture	*Improve English Language Arts competencies *Increase student resilience and pride *Strengthen perceived connection between classroom learning and culture
Leveraging Community Resources: Stilwell Public Schools will add this course to the catalogue and	

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<p>schedule. The Guidance Department will encourage student enrollment. Partnership with the Cherokee Nation will support cultural relevance of course content. Partnership with NSU will result in transferrable college credit opportunities. Students will gain internship experience teaching Introductory Tsalagi to local elementary students. Coordination with</p>	
STEM Career	*Improve Science and Math competencies
Teacher	*Strengthened perceived relevance of classroom instruction *Increase student resilience, pride, and employability
<p>Leveraging Community Resources: New STEM courses will be added to the catalogue and schedule. The Guidance Department will encourage student enrollment. Courses (drone piloting; PD building/repair/soldering/electrical circuit repair; CAD; and Ecology) were selected based on local workforce demands.</p>	
College Success	*Support students as they consider multiple post-secondary options
Coach	*Increase affordability of post-secondary opportunities *Increase post-secondary enrollment (vocational, college, university)
<p>Leveraging Community Resources: Northeastern State University and Carl Albert State College will support activities, offering ACT Prep and practice test scenarios and financial aid workshops.</p>	
Family Night	*Strengthen home and school connection.
Cultural Enrichment	*Build student resilience and pride.
<p>Leveraging Community Resources: The Boys & Girls Clubs of Adair County will support Family Night events, contributing staff as appropriate.</p>	

(e) Quality of the management plan (24 points).

(1) Management Plan, Timeline. (Up to 14 points)

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YEAR ONE													
Activity	Responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Post job announcement and hire Cultural STEM Teacher; Cherokee Language and Culture Teacher (CLCT); College Success Coach; STEM Teacher, Hire candidates	Superintendent	X	X										
Order technology for Cultural STEM course and STEM electives	Project Director	X											
Advisory Council meets to review QPRs, guide program, support sustainability	Project Director	X		X			X			X			X
Design baseline surveys, collect baseline data	External Evaluator	X	X										
Submit QPR	Evaluator			X			X			X			X
Host Parent Night to introduce families to all new and upcoming Cherokee Roots services	Project Director	X											
Install new technologies for	Technology	X	X										

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Cultural STEM course, STEM electives	Department												
Students complete initial benchmark assessments	Project Director	X	X										
Enroll students in new courses (Cherokee Heritage and Preservation STEM; STEM electives; Cherokee Language and Lifeways)	Project Director	X	X										
Family Night Held, outreach through notices, email, text announcement app	PD, Project Staff, BGC Adair County			X			X		X		X		
Students lead Introductory Tsaligi classes for elementary students	CLCT			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Grade 11 and 12 students and families complete quarterly mandatory College & Career Resource Center visits	College Success Coach		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Advisory Council meets to review QPR and End of Year Report, finalize Action Plan	Project Director												X

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Year 1														
YEARS TWO – FIVE														
Activity	Responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Order updated and new technology for Cultural STEM course and STEM electives	Project Director	X												
Advisory Council meets to review QPRs, guide program, support sustainability	Project Director	X		X			X			X			X	
Design any new baseline surveys, collect baseline data	External Evaluator	X	X											
Submit QPR	Evaluator			X			X			X			X	
Host Parent Night to introduce families to all new and upcoming Cherokee Roots services	Project Director	X												
Install any new technologies for Cultural STEM course, STEM electives	Technology Department	X	X											
Students complete initial benchmark assessments	Project Director	X	X											
Enroll students in new courses (Cherokee Heritage and	Project Director	X	X											

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Preservation STEM; STEM electives; Cherokee Language and Lifeways)													
Family Night Held, outreach through notices, email, text announcement app	PD, Project Staff, BGC Adair County			X			X		X		X		
Students lead Introductory Tsaligi classes for elementary students	CLCT			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Grade 11 and 12 students and families complete quarterly mandatory College & Career Resource Center visits	College Success Coach		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Advisory Council meets to review QPR and End of Year Report, finalize Action Plan (Years 2-5)	Project Director												X
Submit Final Evaluation Report to funder	Evaluator Project Director												X

(2) A diversity of perspectives are brought to bear. (Up to 5 points)

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As described, representatives from multiple stakeholder groups will serve on the **Cherokee Roots** Advisory Council, bringing a variety of perspectives into project leadership. The full Advisory Council will meet quarterly to review Quarterly Progress Reports. In addition to project staff and Stilwell administrators, members of the **Cherokee Roots** Advisory Council will include representatives from the following groups/agencies: teachers, parents, students, the Cherokee Nation, Northeastern University, and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Adair County. Together, the Advisory Council will leverage real-time data to drive the continuous performance feedback loop. Quarterly Progress Reports will become the basis for evaluating performance feedback to refine, strengthen, and improve the project approach as appropriate. Formal meetings will provide all Advisory Council members opportunities to contribute to project management and oversight. Additionally, Quarterly Progress Reports used to drive decision-making and inform performance feedback loop will consider satisfaction surveys collected from students and parents twice each year.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance. (Up to 5 points)

Multiple strategies have been incorporated into **Cherokee Roots** to support systems-based change that will continue beyond the Federal funding period. Partnerships are crucial to success, leveraging the limited resources of the region and expanding opportunities to connect to other funding sources. The Cherokee Nation, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Adair County, Carl Albert State College, and Northeastern State University are strong partners and will continue to contribute to supporting Stilwell youth. Policy change will also be utilized, as course catalogues are updated to include new classes and opportunities. Services will be supplemental to education programs in place, and grant funding will supplement existing funding sources. These sources, however, such as Johnson O'Malley funding and BIE funding will be leveraged to support sustainability in future years. Additionally, SPS assures that the availability of funds

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for supplemental special education and related services does not affect the right of the child to receive FAPE under Part B of the IDEA or Section 504, and the respective implementing regulations.

Stilwell’s youth are underserved and without appropriate opportunities to “connect their two worlds”. Effective education for Native American students focuses on effective blending of traditional and Western knowledge, enhancing student connection to content, boosting social and academic outcomes, and supporting whole-child instruction that allows younger generations to seize their inherent potential. Designed in direct coordination with project partners, **Cherokee Roots** will drastically improve performance measures for Stilwell youth.

(f) Quality of the project evaluation (7 points).

(1) Feedback and assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (Up to 4 points)

As described, Stilwell Public Schools will partner with a contracted External Evaluator. Dr. [REDACTED] will be tasked with the formative and summative evaluation of **Cherokee Roots** and will create Quarterly Progress Reports that incorporate qualitative and quantitative data sets to demonstrate progress toward goals, outcomes, and objectives and provides real-time data necessary to drive the continuous performance feedback loop. All data, including student level, grade level, and school-level results will be coded for anonymity.

Stilwell Public Schools is committed to ensuring the delivery of the highest quality products and services and continuously improving our project approach. To that end, the multi-stakeholder Advisory Council will review QPRs as a basis for evaluating performance feedback to refine, strengthen, and improve the project approach as appropriate. School-based members of the Advisory Council will meet monthly, with the full council meeting quarterly. Quarterly Progress Reports will present preliminary findings and summarize perceived trends apparent in the data analysis. Progress reporting, consistent data analysis and review, and the commitment to using a data-driven-decision-making process to improve our

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project approach continually will be critical elements that ensure the program will accomplish its set goal, objectives, and targeted outcomes. **Please Note:** Stilwell Public Schools will participate, at the request of the Secretary, in any national evaluation of this program.

(2) Evaluation will share strategies suitable for replication or testing. (Up to 3 points)

Stilwell Public Schools will contract with a qualified external evaluator to provide objective summative and formative evaluation services for **Cherokee Roots**. Services will include data gathering, monitoring, fidelity checks, and audits, development of summative evaluation reports, development of the annual progress report, and establishment of the formative evaluation system. Dr. [REDACTED] will be responsible for submitting Quarterly Progress Reports, monitoring both qualitative and quantitative data sets that comprehensively illustrate the impact of project activities on all stakeholders, including students, families, staff, and partnering agencies. He will create all surveys and assessments that are project-specific, following requirements for gathering objective data through open-ended questionnaires and non-leading surveys. Project evaluation will be continuous and ongoing throughout the **Cherokee Roots** project period, providing real-time qualitative and quantitative data sets that illustrate the impact of related activities on Stilwell teachers, student sub-groups, and parents. The External Evaluator will complete all data tracking, recording, and analyzing, completing Quarterly Progress Reports that highlight **Cherokee STEM** successes as well as areas where modifications must be made to better promote attainment of objectives. Led by the **Project Director**, Advisory Council will meet quarterly to review and discuss progress and potential modifications. This strategy will result in a comprehensive **Action Plan** for dissemination – comprised of Quarterly Progress Reports and meeting notes describing proposed and accepted activity adjustments. Ultimately, the **Cherokee Roots Action Plan** will become a powerful resource available for dissemination, illustrating the full impact of project activities on low-income, Native American populations, contributing to the national community’s knowledge and understanding of

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effective strategies for this high-risk population. This will be particularly important as **Cherokee Roots** explores the impact of structured college preparation coursework, native-language instruction, high-level STEM coursework, and intensive math and science interventions – strategies that could be implemented on a wider scale if proven effective for Native populations. Quarterly Advisory Council meetings will provide structured opportunities to delve into feedback from a variety of qualitative and quantitative sources by key stakeholders and project leaders – facilitating the process of instituting project-change to promote continuous improvement.

A **Cherokee STEM Action Plan** will be created throughout the project, including Quarterly Progress Reports with analyses of both qualitative and quantitative data (divided into significant student sub-groups as appropriate), as well as meeting minutes from the Advisory Council as they determine the best course of action for project modifications as illustrated necessary by benchmark outcomes that do not align to timely objective attainment. Each QPR will include separate chapters of impact and outcome data, categorized under the major activity sets of the project, including Cherokee Heritage and Preservation STEM; Cherokee Language and Lifeways; STEM Workforce; and Post-Secondary Preparation. Combined with this narrative application, the **Action Plan** will serve as a blueprint for carrying out the **Cherokee Roots** project in any willing community. The **Cherokee Roots Action Plan** will become a powerful resource available for widespread dissemination, illustrating the full impact of project activities on low-income, Native American populations, contributing to the national community's knowledge and understanding of effective strategies for this high-risk population. The **Cherokee Roots Action Plan** will showcase lessons learned, project impact, and the specific strategies undertaken to achieve documented results. It will be made available for download on the Stilwell Public Schools website and shared throughout the region to support knowledge exchange among the Tribes of America's Midwest.



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUDGET INFORMATION
NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS**

OMB Number: 1894-0008
Expiration Date: 09/30/2023

Name of Institution/Organization

Stilwell Public Schools

Applicants requesting funding for only one year should complete the column under "Project Year 1." Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grants should complete all applicable columns. Please read all instructions before completing form.

**SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FUNDS**

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Project Year 5 (e)	Project Year 6 (f)	Project Year 7 (g)	Total (h)
1. Personnel	226,800.00	226,800.00	226,800.00	226,800.00	226,800.00			1,134,000.00
2. Fringe Benefits	43,092.00	43,092.00	43,092.00	43,092.00	43,092.00			215,460.00
3. Travel	3,500.00	3,500.00	3,500.00	0.00	0.00			10,500.00
4. Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			0.00
5. Supplies	127,270.00	127,270.00	127,270.00	130,770.00	130,770.00			643,350.00
6. Contractual	52,500.00	52,500.00	52,500.00	52,500.00	52,500.00			262,500.00
7. Construction	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			0.00
8. Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			0.00
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	453,162.00	453,162.00	453,162.00	453,162.00	453,162.00			2,265,810.00
10. Indirect Costs*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			0.00
11. Training Stipends	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			0.00
12. Total Costs (lines 9-11)	453,162.00	453,162.00	453,162.00	453,162.00	453,162.00			2,265,810.00

***Indirect Cost Information (To Be Completed by Your Business Office):** If you are requesting reimbursement for indirect costs on line 10, please answer the following questions:

- (1) Do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal government? Yes No
- (2) If yes, please provide the following information:
 Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: From: To: (mm/dd/yyyy)
 Approving Federal agency: ED Other (please specify):
 The Indirect Cost Rate is %.
- (3) If this is your first Federal grant, and you do not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement, are not a State, Local government or Indian Tribe, and are not funded under a training rate program or a restricted rate program, do you want to use the de minimis rate of 10% of MTDC? Yes No If yes, you must comply with the requirements of 2 CFR § 200.414(f).
- (4) If you do not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement, do you want to use the temporary rate of 10% of budgeted salaries and wages?
 Yes No If yes, you must submit a proposed indirect cost rate agreement within 90 days after the date your grant is awarded, as required by 34 CFR § 75.560.
- (5) For Restricted Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a restricted indirect cost rate that:
 Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement? Or, Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)? The Restricted Indirect Cost Rate is %.
- (6) For Training Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a rate that:
 Is based on the training rate of 8 percent of MTDC (See EDGAR § 75.562(c)(4))? Or, Is based on the training rate of 8 percent of MTDC (See EDGAR § 75.562(c)(4))?

PR/Award # S299A20000