



**EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS
SENIOR CITIZENS PROGRAM POLICY**

**West Center
145 Tsali Manor St
Cherokee NC 28719**

Effective as of October 1st, 2024

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

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Other important numbers (828):

Boys Club – 359-5550

CDOT – 359-6530

Dispatch – 497-4131

Family Safety – 359-1520

Family Support Services – 359-6092

HELP – 359-6638

Mountain Community Propane – 226-6752

Sanitation – 359-6140

Transit – 359-6300

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Welcome to the Cherokee Senior Citizens Program. We take immense pride in our center and are glad to have new clients join us.

This information packet will help you become acquainted with our program and the services we provide. As a participant, we expect you to read and become familiar with this Cherokee Senior Citizen Program Policy.

This document contains a copy of the policies, code of conduct, and information about our services, applications, and activities. It is designed to guide your participation here at the Cherokee Senior Center.

Sincerely,

Senior Citizens Center Staff

Sec. 1.00 MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to create a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive environment where senior citizens thrive by providing opportunities for social engagement, lifelong learning, health and wellness activities, and personalized support services.

Sec. 2.00 VISION STATEMENT

To foster a strong sense of community, ensuring that every senior feels valued, respected, and empowered to lead a fulfilling life.

Sec. 3.00 HOURS OF OPERATION

Senior Citizens Center is open from 7:45 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday. Lunch is served 5 days a week, beginning at 11:30 a.m. unless stated otherwise (in example potluck, outings, etc.).

Sec. 4.00 INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

The Cherokee Senior Citizens program will follow the EBCI's inclement weather schedule.

A. Two-Hour Delay (open at 9:45 AM)

If the EBCI is on a two-hour delay, homebound meals will be delivered provided roads are in good condition and meals will be served in the dining room. Congregates are to call in or have signed in on the previous day. The center will open at 9:45 AM.

B. Severe or Prolonged Weather

Homebound clients will be contacted to assess their needs and arrange meal delivery.

Sec. 5.00 CONFIDENTIALITY

All information supplied to our program by participants and their records will be kept in the strictest of confidence. No information will be given from these records without prior approval from the participant.

Sec. 6.00 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE SENIOR CITIZENS PROGRAM

- Confidentiality of private personal matters will be maintained.
- All persons shall be treated equally, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, or sex.
- Courtesy and politeness toward other clients, staff, and visitors will be observed. Interruptions and/or harassment will not be tolerated.
 - Arguing with other participants in an abusive manner or gossiping that disrupts the environment is considered unacceptable behavior.
- Loud and boisterous conduct which is upsetting to others may discourage people from attending and will not be tolerated.
- Smoking is prohibited inside the building.
 - Spitting in trash cans, sinks, or water coolers is prohibited.
- Using foul language or cursing is not conducive to a pleasant atmosphere and will not be tolerated.
 - Physical abuse of other individuals, including staff, will be grounds for immediate expulsion.
- There is no designated seating. Any participant may sit anywhere they choose.
- Due to health and safety reasons, children should not attend the center regularly.
- While you may have a guest occasionally, anyone under 59½ years of age is discouraged from attending regularly.
 - Failure to comply with this code of conduct will result in suspension from the congregate services for an undetermined period.
- Appeals may be made to the Manager.

Sec. 7.00 CONGREGATE MEAL POLICIES

A. Eligibility for Elderly Nutrition Congregate Meals

- Congregate nutrition services shall be available to persons ages 59½ or older. Volunteers at the Senior Center, under the age of 59½, may be served a meal when it does not restrict the participation of an older person.

- All individuals must complete a client intake form when receiving services per our grant funding guidelines.
- Preference will be given to providing services to older individuals with the greatest economic or social needs, with particular attention to low-income minority individuals.
 - Our grants require that preference be given to people who are health impaired, and who need nutritional support or those older people whose independent living arrangements lack proper facilities for meal preparation.
- Self, friend, neighbor, or community resources may refer participants to the services.
- Each participant is required to sign in daily on the sign-in sheet and mark in the appropriate place if they plan to attend the next day.
 - If a participant is unable to sign in for any reason but plans to attend, they must call the center before 10:00 a.m. to have their name added to that day's meal count.

B. Cost-Sharing / Contributions

While there is no meal charge for any person 59½ or older and their spouse, we do ask that you contribute to the service received. Donation cups are available for donations, please feel free to use them. We do appreciate any contribution made and it will be used to expand our meal program. All contributions are confidential.

C. Guest Meals

All visitors and guests under the age of 59½ may purchase a meal ticket for the price posted in the dining area. All visitors/guests under the age of 59½ must wait until all participants are served and then must present their meal ticket to the kitchen staff upon receiving a meal.

D. Policy on Leftover Food

- Senior Citizens Center is a Nutrition Program and since the program cannot assure the safety of food taken home by participants for reasons including unknown length of ride home, and inability to control when the meal is eaten or stored. The

following is the policy the program will follow regarding leftover food.

- When there are extra meals available, the program should have a list of people who meet the program guidelines and could be called on short notice to eat a meal.
- Second helpings are encouraged.
- Only the following items may be taken from the center: whole fresh fruits with the skin or peel intact, bread such as rolls, biscuits, or cornbread.
- These items must be wrapped in tinfoil or plastic wrap for protective covering.

Sec. 7.00 SERVICE DENIAL OR SUSPENSION

There may be circumstances, occasionally, where services must be denied, suspended, or terminated for those seeking assistance. To be consistently fair and reasonable with clients and families, the following is adopted as a guide:

A. Service Denial

Occasionally, there may be circumstances where services may be denied, suspended, or terminated. To be consistently fair and reasonable with clients and families, the following serves as a guide:

- Failure to provide required documentation. A client who does not provide adequate information or refuses to cooperate with the staff in determining eligibility for programs or services.
- The client does not meet the eligibility criteria for a specific program, or programs based upon their declared statements of information.
- When a client's unmanageable behavior is blatantly disturbing, profane, and threatening to other clients or Senior Citizen's staff.
- Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct.

B. Service Suspension or Denial

- Observation and knowledge gained by the staff indicate that a client does not meet the essential eligibility requirements.

- The client's needs are met, and the service is no longer needed. Hopefully, this observation is made by mutual agreement with the client, but at times, termination of service can be at the discretion of the center if adequately documented.
- An assessment of the client establishes the need for the client to move on to higher levels of care due to the inability to adequately take care of themselves without direct supervision or assistance, and /or to avoid the risk of injury.
- The client does not comply repeatedly with the code of conduct, the policies, or guidelines of the center.
- Food, including desserts, salads, and milk is taken out of the building.

C. Procedure

- The Social Work Supervisor of the center can authorize person(s), under this policy, to deny, suspend, or terminate participation in a program or service at the center.
- Staff, clients, or volunteers who believe that a client's participation should be denied or restricted should report in writing details of the incidents that warrant an investigation.
- The Social Work Supervisor is to collect all relevant information, including discussing the situation with the client and/or family member before deciding. If participation is restricted in any way, the client will be notified in writing. Written documentation will be maintained in the center. Clients or family members who feel restricted from participation unjustly may appeal to the Manager.

Sec. 8.00 PHONE AND COMPUTER USE AT CENTER

- Clients may receive/place phone calls at the center and utilize a public access computer and a printer at the center.

Usage and access to public computers will follow all EBCI Information Technology policies. A copy of said policy will be provided upon request. Misuse of tribal resources may result in clients being denied use of the phone or public access computers.

Sec. 9.00 HOME DELIVERED MEAL POLICIES

- A person must be age 59½ or older to receive a home-delivered meal. Referrals can be made to the Outreach Worker by medical personnel/primary care providers only. Upon receipt of the written referral from a medical doctor, meal deliveries may begin. The Outreach Worker will make a home visit to make certain the homebound person desires the service and understands the following:
- A written referral from a medical provider familiar with the homebound person must be sent to the Outreach Worker before receiving the meal services.
- The homebound person must be homebound who does not leave home except for health-related reasons.
- A meal will be delivered each day, Monday through Friday. If a meal is delivered two (2) days in a row and no one is at home, the services will cease until a response is made to request meals again.
- The recipient must ensure the safety of the worker delivering meals by containing any aggressive animals and ensure that the home environment is free from any unsafe circumstances. If a safety concern is identified by the worker, meals will be STOPPED until safety measures are taken by the client.
- Meals may be left if a clean cooler that is placed outside indicating a homebound person is home and can retrieve the meal. If a cooler is not available and there is no answer at the door, meals will not be left.
- Every attempt should be made to inform the Senior Center with as much notice as possible when the homebound person will not be at home.
- There must not be an adult living in the home that is willing to prepare a homebound person's meals.
- The homebound person must be unable to participate in the congregate nutrition program at the Senior Center because of physical, mental, or emotional issues.
- The homebound person must be physically or emotionally unable to obtain food or prepare meals.
- The homebound person must reside in a home setting.

Per grant guidelines, all homebound people will be reassessed every 6 months or as needed.

*The outreach worker has five (5) business days once the referral has been received to make a home visit to verify that the individual desires the service and agrees to the policy.

Food Safety - If the meal is not consumed immediately, please store your meal properly in the refrigerator. This is for your safety, and to prevent illness from improper temperatures.

Sec. 10.00 ACTIVITIES

A. Crafts/Activities

The activities area is a place to let creativity flourish. Projects include holiday themes, home décor, floral, traditional crafts, etc. Many different crafting mediums are used. Craft time is designed to promote creativity, hand, and mind stimulation. These are all essential to senior citizens' well-being. All clients are encouraged to participate in any craft classes offered. Activities will be announced in advance and a signup sheet will be available. Activity time begins at 10:00 AM. Special hobby classes or workshops are offered in the afternoon as they may be more advanced and require more time.

Sec. 11.00 NEWSLETTER/CALENDARS

Monthly newsletters and calendars will be available for clients to keep informed of times and dates of upcoming events that could include day trips, shopping, beauty school visits, and other outings.

Throughout the month, the center hosts educational presentations to give clients information about programs and resources available in the community. Health presentations that affect seniors will be offered along with health screens on occasion.

Sec. 12.00 SAFETY PLANS

A. Disaster Plan

During a tribal disaster, the Principal Chief will call the Secretary and Director of the division who will deem it safe and necessary for the staff to report to work. If needed, staff will report to work and contact all clients to assess safety. If clients need assistance, staff will contact the proper authorities.

B. Injury Plan

Designated staff are First-Aid and CPR certified. In case of an accident or injury, the staff will use the proper procedure and provide care. If further assistance is needed Emergency Management Services (EMS) will be contacted and staff will continue care until assistance arrives on scene. An injury report will be completed and provided to EBCI Risk Management.

C. Fire Evacuation Plan

In case of a fire during congregate mealtime, the Manager or one staff member will call 911. Staff will check the area they are currently in, close windows, and doors, and usher clients to the closest exit.

The Manager/Supervisor and a designated staff person will check the bathrooms and dining room if safety permits. A designated staff person will check the lobby and office area if safety permits.

The Outreach Worker will check the activities area. All other staff will exit with clients and remain with them. At no time will anyone be allowed to re-enter the building until it is declared safe by emergency personnel.

Fire drills are practiced quarterly (or more often if deemed necessary).
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D. Tornado and Other Natural Disasters

If a tornado or other natural disaster occurs while clients are in the center, staff will direct the clients away from the open areas into the closed areas to interior walls. A tornado or earthquake safety position will be directed. The manager/supervisor will call 911.

Sec. 13.00 ENSURE (Supplemental meal)

If you reside in Cherokee County or Graham County, please reach out to their offices.

A. Ensure Assistance (supplemental meal)

Senior Citizens Program recognizes chronically ill individuals unable to fulfill at least two (2) of the following daily activities: bathing, eating, toileting, and dressing. These individuals require substantial supervision and assistance to protect themselves against health and safety threats because of physical impairment. This is a supplemental program and is based on availability. As a supplemental program, a maximum of 2 cases per month will be given.

B. Qualifications for Ensure (supplemental meal)

1. The individual must be 59½ years of age.
2. Must have a chronic diagnosis.
3. Must have a prescription from a medical provider.
4. Must be an enrolled member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.
5. Must live in the three (3) county service area that includes Swain, Jackson, and Haywood.

Sec. 14.00 HEATING ASSISTANCE

The heating assistance program helps to maintain safe temperatures, typically, through heating sources. Notice of heating assistance application availability will be placed in local newspapers. The general dates for heating assistance begin no later than September 15th and end on the last business day in January.

A. Qualifications for heating assistance:

- The individual must be 59½ years of age.

- Must be an enrolled member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.
- Must live in the three (3) county service area that includes Swain, Jackson, and Haywood.
- The address where the fuel will be delivered must be the primary residence.
- Only one (1) service per residence.
- Only one (1) type of fuel will be delivered to the residence.
- Must reapply every year beginning in September.
- To receive a gas tank, the gas must be the primary heating source. These tanks may be leased instead of purchased.
- If the recipient owns a tank, they will not receive another one under this program.
- If a gas tank is purchased under this program, the primary heat cannot be changed for five (5) years.
- Clients are not permitted to change heating sources mid-year.
- All applicants must have no past due amounts before any new funding will be applied for the new heating season.
- It is the client's responsibility to pay for any power bill or fuel that is delivered over the budgeted amount, which is currently one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) per season.
- Propane must be the primary heating source to receive a gas tank purchase.

Sec. 15.00 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Emergency assistance exists to help when the unexpected happens. To maintain the program's integrity, fairness, and equity in the distribution of those funds, the following serves as a guide:

1. The amount allotted for each appliance is \$800 for refrigerators, \$600 for stoves, \$600 for washing machines, and \$600 for dryers. Upgrades above the allotted amount are the client's responsibility.
2. Emergency Assistance is not available in June and December of each calendar year.
3. The individual must be 59½ years of age.

4. Must be an enrolled member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.
5. Must live in the three (3) county service areas, that includes, Swain, Jackson, and Haywood.
6. The address where the service/appliance will be delivered must be the primary residence.
7. This assistance is provided one time a year per client.
8. Must have a “cutoff” or “disconnect” notice for power bills. Only the amount to prevent the disconnection will be paid.
9. Phone, cable, or satellite bills will NOT be paid.
10. Home appliances may be applied for every five (5) years.
Example: If a cook stove is purchased in 2019, it will be 2024 before another cook stove can be purchased through the program.
11. Home appliances will be verified that they are not repairable or working properly first.
12. If you receive an appliance from HELP (Handicapped & Elderly Living Program), you are not eligible for a new appliance for one (1) year.
13. Appliances will not be purchased for rental or leased properties. It is the landlord’s responsibility to assist with replacements and serving those units.

ALL GUIDELINES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

Sec. 16.00 ANNUAL TRIP

The annual trip is an exciting time to visit a new place or have a new experience. It is one of the best parts of being an active member of the Senior Center. We encourage everyone to take part because they are fun and a way to be active!

A. Requirements for the annual trip:

- Must be an active participant of the program who attends daily events or who attends the meal site program for, at least, twelve (12) days a month. The exceptions include clients who are employed, participate in senior games, or have illness.
- Must be an active participant in ALL scheduled fundraisers.

- New clients (someone who has recently joined the meal site program) can be eligible for the trip and must participate in all the fundraisers from the date of becoming an active participant. If all the fundraisers have been completed before the trip new clients will not be eligible.
- Must have an annual physical. The medical provider must be fully informed about the trip activities to ensure that physical ability is present. In fairness to everyone, please consider your health before committing to the trip.
- Should the staff's observation indicate the participant may not be physically able, despite the doctor's note, management may request a meeting with the participant to make a final determination.
- There are no physical requirements for day trips beyond what is required for loading, unloading, and walking to and from a facility.
- A deadline to sign up will be set. Be aware that after deposits are made there will be repayment to the program if you sign up to and do not go after the deadline. The only exception to not paying back is if a medical issue arises.
- After deposits are made and a participant fails to participate in the trip/activity, without a reason from guideline #1, they will be ineligible to participate in trips until repayment is made.
- It is not allowable to participate in trips from multiple senior centers.

B. Annual Trip Rules

- In an emergency, an emergency contact must be on hand. A list of all medications must be provided. You may have your pharmacy or primary care provider to provide a list of all medications. This does not apply to day trips. Also, list any allergies you may have.
- If you have been hospitalized or had other health issues the month before the trip, you may not be eligible for your well-being and safety. If your independence is compromised, please consider this. It is not your peer's responsibility to provide care.
- While on the trip, you must utilize the buddy system. No one should walk alone.
- Staff are responsible for everyone on the trip, cell phone numbers will be provided.

C. Procedures

- Trip announcements will be made promptly.
- Staff will evaluate the pros and cons of several destinations for accessibility of the older population. Staff will confirm the destination and details of the trip.
- A list of fundraisers will be gathered and decided upon. After the first fundraiser is held, this will confirm the list of trip travelers.
- New participants will be added to the trip list if they meet the qualifications.
- If someone must be removed from the list, they cannot promise their “seat” to another person.
- Every traveler planning to go must make a non-refundable deposit for the determined amount. The Fundraiser will take ideas and create a plan for the year’s fundraisers.
- If any fundraisers are skipped or unsold tickets are returned, you could be removed from the travel list.
- The annual trip usually takes place around the end of August. All fundraisers will be complete by mid-August.
- There will be two (2) staff per bus.
- Light snacks, drinks, and water will be provided.

The Fundraising Committee is formed by members of the congregation, they are not paid or employed by EBCI.

Sec. 17.00 CWY (TsaLaGi) Caregivers

The Caregiver program is to support and enrich individuals who provide in-home care to another individual who is 59½ years of age or older. Funds are available under the Older Americans Act, Title VI-C Family Caregiver Support Program.

Priority for services shall be given to those people with the greatest economic or social needs, with particular attention to low-income minority individuals and those meeting requirements under the frailest specifications.

A. Caregiver Eligibility

The following people are eligible for services:

1. Family Caregiver – the term family caregiver means an adult family member, or another individual, who is an informal provider of in-home and community care to an older individual who is 59½ years of age or older and who is:
 - Unable to perform at least two (2) activities of daily living (ADL) without substantial human assistance, including verbal reminders, physical cueing, or supervision, or
 - Due to cognitive or other mental impairment, it requires substantial supervision because the individual's actions pose a serious health and or safety hazard to the individual or others.
 - In this case, another individual can be a neighbor, friend, or distant family member providing most of the care for an older individual.
 - The service area is only on the Qualla Boundary for now.

2. Services Provided

- Caregiver Information
- Resources / Other services
- Counseling
- Organization
- Support Groups
- Caregiver training: nutrition, health, financial literacy, decision-making, and problem-solving about the caregiver role.
- Respite Care
- Supplemental Services