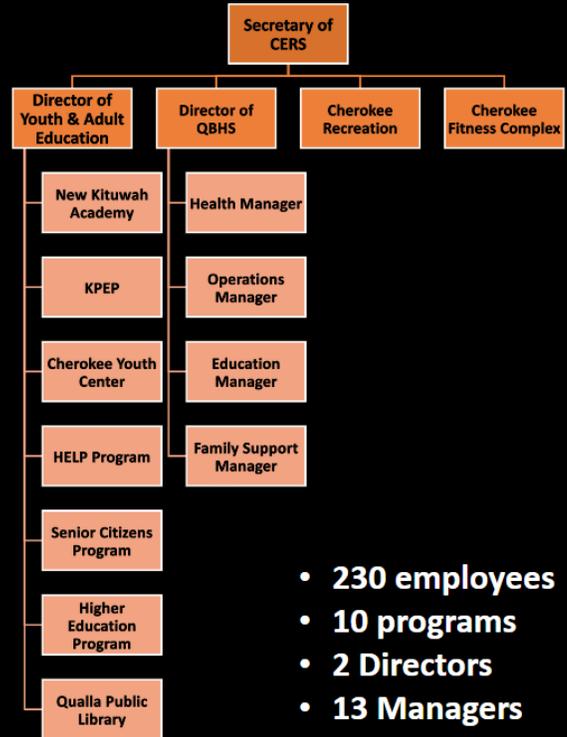




2025

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY, EDUCATION  
& RECREATION SERVICES (CERS)

# Division of Community, Education and Recreation Services (CERS)



- 230 employees
- 10 programs
- 2 Directors
- 13 Managers

## Division of Community, Education & Recreations Services (CERS)

The Division of CERS consists of 10 programs and 230 employees that work hard to provide tribal services directly to our tribal members. Our amazing staff work so hard to plan and implement meaningful programming and services to all ages throughout the year. Please find the division programs listed below.

1. **Qualla Boundary Head Start** – Dora Reed Center & Big Cove Center
2. **New Kituwah Academy**- 1-year olds-6<sup>th</sup> grade language immersion school
3. **Cherokee Youth Center**- 5-18-year-old after school and educational program
4. **Kituwah Preservation & Education Program (KPEP)**- Adult Language Program
5. **EBCI Seniors Citizens Center**- Senior Citizens Programming for 59 ½ and above
6. **Handicapped & Elderly Living Program (HELP)**- Emergency Repair, maintenance, and lawn services for 59 ½ and above.
7. **Cherokee Recreation** – Sports services and support for all ages
8. **Cherokee Fitness Complex** - Wellness gym for ages 5 and up.
9. **EBCI Higher Education Program** – College funding assistance for enrolled members ages 18 and up.
10. **Qualla Public Library** – Public resource center for all crafts, computer access, books and more.

## BUDGET OVERVIEW

Program	Budgeted	Actual
Cherokee Youth Center	\$2,320,284	\$1,463,521
New Kituwah Academy	4,421,622	3,927,996
Cherokee Fitness Complex	\$146,185.50	+\$157,572.75
Qualla Boundary Head Start	\$1,927,748.00	\$1,265,887.44
Cherokee Recreation	\$3,458,529.00	\$2,805,146.39
Higher Education Program	\$15,334,271	\$12,142,849
Qualla Boundary Public Library	\$334,258	\$381,729.64
Senior Citizens Program	\$2,537,953.00	\$2,226,082.18
H.E.L.P Program	\$4,399,161.00	\$4,381,341.51
KPEP	4,063,840.00	2,387,688.17

## DIVISION SUCCESSES

**30,000+**

Meals served to tribal Elders by the Senior Citizens Program

**50,000+**

Minutes of Logged Reading at the Qualla Public Library

**45,000+**

Membership Check Ins at the Cherokee Fitness Complex

**14,000+**

Visitors Logged at our Cherokee Recreation Facilities

**2500+**

Emergency Service Calls Complete for Elders by the HELP Program

**\$80,000+**

In Grant Funds obtained by the Cherokee Youth Center

**1100+**

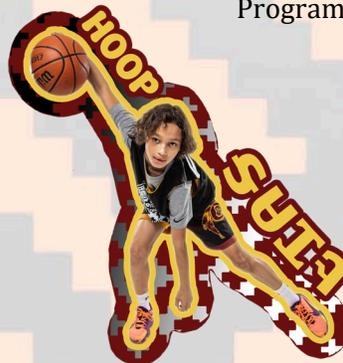
Elders provided with Heating Assistance by the Senior Citizens Program

**2,500+**

Language Materials distributed to the community by New Kituwah Academy & KPEP

**100%**

of enrolled children were provided vision, hearing & dental screenings at Qualla Boundary Head Start



**520+**

College students funded by the Higher Education Program

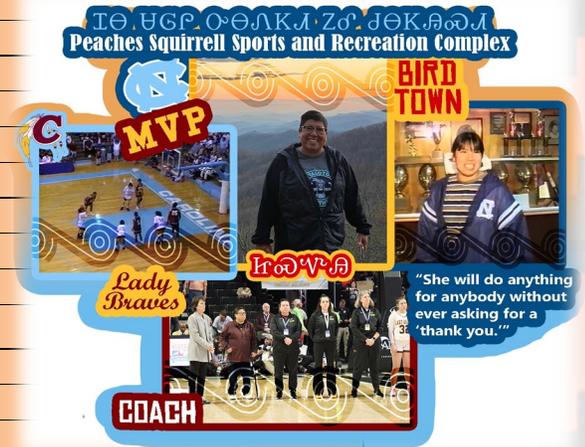
## DIVISION HIGHLIGHTS

**The Qualla Public Library** offers community services including audiobooks, a Makers space for crafting, Cherokee language classes, youth literacy programs, and computer assistance. Library events reached over **1800** individuals this year, and staff distributed more than **1000 books**. The Orange Shirt Day Walk was an event that had over 350 attendees.

**The Cherokee Recreation Program** installed new flooring, outdoor signs, photo displays, playground equipment, and dehumidifiers in several gyms this year. Plans for more improvements at the John Crowe Complex are underway for next year. The program served over 600 youth in sports and over 180 participants in senior games.

Our program also partnered with Casey Reagan and Smokey Mountain Judo to help build a new Youth Wrestling Program that is impactful.

Program	Participants
Senior Games Local Games	180
Senior Games National Qualifiers Des Moines Iowa	97
Special Olympic Summer Games	27
Youth Basketball	225
Youth Baseball	137
Youth Football	116
Youth Cheer	60
Youth Wrestling	51
Summer Day Camp	43
Facility	Usage
PSSRC	5942
PTCCG	3826
DKQG	1943
Big Cove	425
Big Y	1769



**The Cherokee Fitness Complex** has introduced several new amenities, including hydromassage chairs, a sauna, and a trampoline class. This year, we achieved record product sales, increasing our revenue to over \$18,000. Additionally, our staff are implementing a new gym management software, “Gym Master,” which will provide members with online access to all services.

**The HELP Program**—This year, our staff completed more than 2,500 service calls, primarily addressing plumbing concerns and general maintenance for the homes of elderly clients. The program also processed 153 major home repairs, including numerous HVAC installations and accessible walk-in showers. In addition, our team provided lawn care services to 422 clients, with an average of 26 cuts per season, and supported 55 clients with plowing services.

**The Cherokee Youth Center** has reduced its waitlist twice and added 70 children over two years, now serving a record number of attendees. We have also partnered to bring in mental health professionals twice a week for staff and children, and nearly 2,000 community members have participated in our events and activities this year.

**New Kituwah Academy** has upgraded the building this year with new playground equipment, flooring, furniture, cabinets, and an HVAC system in key areas. Staff have also completed over 26 training courses, including weekly language classes for both staff and parents.

**Kituwah Preservation & Education Program (KPEP)** now provides three years of adult language learning, supported by over 20 fluent speakers. This year, we have expanded planning for language certifications and recognitions and will honor second language learners who achieve ATFAL Standard levels 3, 5, or Advanced (8). KPEP has also translated hundreds of community materials, including speeches, books, word lists, and curriculum for all ages.

**Qualla Boundary Head Start** - We have provided vision, hearing, and dental services to all enrolled children. To boost recruitment, we're partnering with EBCI Communications for a recruitment video and other efforts. Our staff

and families will gain more cultural knowledge and language training. QBHS turnover dropped by 10% last year—a major achievement.

Program	Service	Total Screened	Early Need	Urgent Need	Referred for Exam	Referral Made
HS	Dental	63	8	1		
EHS	Dental	43	1	1		
HS	Vision	68			17	
EHS	Vision	49			3	
HS	Hearing	63				1
EHS	Hearing	43				0

**EBCI Higher Education Program** updated funding policies to better support our **527** students' housing needs due to shortages at many schools. We also collaborated with finance to offer extra resources via student trust funds. This year, the program had 95 graduates and **153** new students.

 <p>Western Carolina University - 67 students currently.</p>	 <p>Southwestern Community College - 76 students currently.</p>
 <p>University of Tennessee Knoxville - 15 students currently.</p>	 <p>East Tennessee State University - 14 students currently.</p>

## Schools with highest number of EBCI member students

Photo by Renissa Mclaughlin

**EBCI Senior Citizens Program** assisted our elder's group in traveling to the Bahamas for their annual trip and have provided more than 50 activities including crafts, field trips, outdoor activities and more. Our program received the Noah Powell Soar Award for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row.

### 2026 DIVISION PRIORITIES

- Acknowledge adult language learners who achieve advanced proficiency levels and share results within the community in 2026.
- Begin construction on capital projects including updates to the John Crowe Complex and additions to work out and sensory gym areas at the Cherokee Fitness Complex in 2026.
- Establish a Makers Space aligned with priority needs identified through community feedback in 2026.
- The CERS division will continue efforts to enhance and upgrade facility features throughout 2026.
- Programs will gather data from the community via surveys and other methods to assess opportunities for service expansion and improvement during 2026-27.
- The CERS Division plans to increase language usage, cultural initiatives, and mental health awareness among staff and program participants during 2026-27.

## STAFF TRAININGS

<b>Training/Conferences Attended in 2025</b>
NC Science standards conference
Responsibility centered discipline-WRESA
Behavioral interventions that work-WRESA
Engaging your kindergarten and early elementary students
Reading Foundations training
Math running Records
Book studies started
The Educator Summit
Leading Through a trusting culture
A school leader's guide to reclaiming purpose
NC Science teachers' association annual conference
SCC Child Care Summit (held Annually)
Resources for Resiliency @ Cherokee Choices
CERS gathering- EC and ELEM staff
NCRLAP TRAINING
SPEAKER'S GATHERINGS
Autism Training
Training for Early Literacy Practices
Lillio Curriculum Training
Quarterly Director's Meeting
Strategic Planning -Administration
Autism Training provided by Hope Center at NKA
Behavioral/child mental health Training provided by Emily Moore of Ananelisgi at NKA
Director's Meeting
Pathways to the Stars
Parks and Recreation Professional
Special Olympics Local Program Accreditation
Senior Games Local Program Accreditation
CPR, First Aid, and AED Training Grant
Autism Training QBHS
SONC Coaches Training
Senior Games Management Training
NC Parks and Recreation Conference
NCSU Leadership Training
Parks and Recreation Professional
Special Olympics Local Program Accreditation
Senior Games Local Program Accreditation
CPR, First Aid, and AED Training Grant
Enrolled in Higher Education
ASSIST Training
Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museum Conference
Association of Rural and Small Libraries Conference
Emergency Management Training
CPR/AED/First Aid/Epi Pen certification
Fire Prevention training
Safe Serve Certification
B&GCA National Conference - Programing, Policy, and Procedures
Basic Microsoft Office Skills Certification
NC Alliance of B&GC - Executive and Supervisor training



Cherokee Language Classes
Safe Assist Suicide prevention

## DIVISION STAFF

<b>Secretary of CERS- Sky Sampson</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office: 828-359-6651</li> <li>Mobile: 828-736-5586</li> </ul>	<b>Director of Youth &amp; Adult Education –Renissa McLaughlin</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office: 828-359-6649</li> <li>Mobile: 828-736-6084</li> </ul>
<b>Director of Qualla Boundary Head Start- Ernestine Driver</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office:828-359-6592</li> </ul>	<b>New Kituwah Academy Manager- Kylie Shular</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office: 828-359-6414</li> <li>Mobile: 828-788-6357</li> </ul>
<b>Manager of Cherokee Recreation – Kamiyo Lanning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office:828-359-6891</li> <li>Mobile:828-788-2953</li> </ul>	<b>Cherokee Youth Center Manager – Matt Hollifield</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office:828-359-6279</li> <li>Mobile:828-2269-2510</li> </ul>
<b>Manager of Cherokee Fitness Complex – Damian Solis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office:828-359-6497</li> <li>Mobile:828-788-3178</li> </ul>	<b>Senior Citizens Program Manager- Monica Wildcatt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office:828-359-6291</li> <li>Mobile:828-736-2548</li> </ul>
<b>Health Manager of QBHS – Laura Davis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office: 828-359-2210</li> </ul>	<b>H.E.L.P Program Manager- Jeremy Hyatt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office:828-359-6925</li> <li>Mobile:828-736-2564</li> </ul>
<b>Education Manager of QBHS –Amy Boyer</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office: 828-359-3009</li> <li>Mobile: 1563-271-7332</li> </ul>	<b>Qualla Public Library Manager- Chi Shipman</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office: 828-359-6728</li> <li>Mobile: 828-551-5203</li> </ul>
<b>Family Coordinator Manager – Candy Ross</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office: 828-359-2203</li> <li>Mobile: 828-788-1761</li> </ul>	<b>Higher Education Program Manager- Brittany Beck</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office: 828-359-6662</li> <li>Mobile: 828-508-3153</li> </ul>
<b>Operations Manager- Vacant</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office:</li> <li>Mobile:</li> </ul>	<b>Kituwah Preservation &amp; Education Program Manager- Bo Lossiah</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office: 828-359-6408</li> <li>Mobile: 828-508-1781</li> </ul>

CHEROKEE RECREATION	POSITION
Kamiyo Lanning	Manager
Leslie Sneed	Office Admin
Janell Rattler	Senior Games and Special Events Coordinator
Timmy Ray Smith	Youth Sports and Events Coordinator
Dinah Grant	Recreation Supervisor
Kevin Nations	Groundskeeper Supervisor
Michael Lambert	Recreation Supervisor
Pat Hill	Recreation Supervisor
Donald Jackson	Recreation Supervisor
Ben Bradley	Recreation Supervisor
CHEROKEE FITNESS COMPLEX STAFF	POSITION
Damian Solis	Manager
Christopher Reed	Business Operations Supervisor
Karen Walter	Exercise Physiologist
Michelle Hull	Administrative Assistant
James Maney	Youth Sports Performance Coordinator
Catherine Larch	Aquatics & Recovery Services Coordinator
Levi Watkins,	Membership Services Representatives
Steven Welch	Membership Services Representatives

Calvin Ledford,	Fitness Coordinator
Isaiah Littlejohn	Fitness Coordinator
Vanessa Grant	Fitness Coordinator
(2) -Member Services Representative	Vacant
<b>CHEROKEE YOUTH CENTER STAFF</b>	<b>POSITION</b>
Matt Hollifield	Manager
Stephanie French	K-5 Supervisor
Natasha Junaluska	Pre-Teen and Teen Supervisor
Sierra Davis	Admin. Assistant
Citrus Bigwitch	Arts & Crafts Instructor
Nellie Smith	Youth Development Professional
Remy Catt	Youth Development Professional
Luci Lira	Youth Development Professional
Tiffany Cooper	Youth Development Professional
Helen Junaluska	Youth Development Professional
Dorian Reed	Youth Development Professional
Caressa Jackson	Youth Development Professional
Damon Ledford	Youth Development Professional
Rebecca Corona-Smith	Youth Development Professional
Tevy West	Youth Development Professional
Seth Ledford	Youth Development Professional
Jae Lossiah	Youth Development Professional
Justice Welch	Youth Development Professional
Keneesha Jackson	Youth Development Professional
1 Vacant position	Youth Development Professional
<b>NEW KITUWAH ACADEMY</b>	<b>POSITIONS</b>
Kylie Shuler	Super Intendent
Hollie Stover	Office Administrator
Crystal Carpenter	Principal
Hartwell Francis	NKA Curriculum Developer
Tavish Brown	Supervisor - Early Childhood
Zhana Long	Family Partnership/Lead Teacher
Tamara Sampson	Early Childhood LSA
Kaycee Lossiah	Early Childhood LSA
Donna Morgan	Early Childhood LSA
Chelsea Murphy	Early Childhood LSA
Makayla George	Early Childhood LSA
Abigail Long	Early Childhood LSA
Lydia Lossiah	Early Childhood LSA
Lana Bradley	Early Childhood LS
Carolina Oocumma	Early Childhood II
Crystal Carpenter	Principal - NKA

Tashina Parker	Administrative Specialist
Brittany Frady	Teacher - NKA
Kelly Murphy	Elementary II
Landon French	Teacher - NKA
Nakoa Chiltoskie	Elementary II
Katlin Roberts	Teacher - NKA
Moira George	Elementary II
Julie Ferguson	Teacher - NKA
Irene Smoker	Elementary II
Jessica Metz	Teacher - NKA
Lee Ann Panther	Elementary LSA
Frances Brooks	Teacher - NKA
Joni Hill	Elementary LSA
Tagan Crowe	Teacher - NKA
Matthew Tooni	Elementary II
Iva Mills	Teacher - NKA
Jeanne Wachacha	Teacher - NKA
Madison Crowe	Teacher - NKA
Nikki Blankenship	Cook
Lena Hill	Cook
Mia Taylor	Cook Aide
Hartwell Frances	Curriculum Developer
Darius West	Facilities Coordinator
<b>KPEP</b>	<b>POSITIONS</b>
Bo Lossiah	Curriculum & Instruction Supervisor
Gabriella Thompson	Electronic Media Coordinator
Christian Gerard	Administrative Assistant
Vacant	Curriculum & Instruction Coordinator
Kayla Pheasant	Community Mobilization Coordinator
Scarlett Guy	Adult Language Education
Bo Taylor	Cultural Resource and Archive Officer
Dreyton Long	Current-Advanced Linguist Apprentice
Moira George	Current-Advanced Linguist Apprentice
Olivia Owle	Current-Advanced Linguist Apprentice
Meshay Long	Current-Advanced Linguist Apprentice
Michelle Long	Current-Advanced Linguist Apprentice
Madison Long	Current-Advanced Linguist Apprentice
Elvia Walkingstick	(Audit)
Tonya Carroll	Current-Advanced Linguist Apprentice
Dylan Lossiah	CLMAP student
Meona Feather	CLMAP student
Kohlton Neadeau	CLMAP student
Riley Crowe	CLMAP student
Steven Long	CLMAP student

Juanita Paz Chalacha	CLMAP student
Kennedy Cucumber	(Audit)
Gabriella Thompson	CLMAP student, Electronic Media Coordinator
<b>HELP PROGRAM</b>	<b>POSITIONS</b>
Jeremy L. Hyatt	Manager
Harold Smith	Lead Maintenance Tech
Nehemiah Toineeta	Lead Maintenance Tech
Robert Cooper	Maintenance Tech
Cody Driver	Maintenance Tech
Leroy Waldroup	Maintenance Tech
Daniel Myers	Maintenance Tech
Shane Ledford	Maintenance Tech
Alfred Welch	Maintenance Tech
William Dover	Maintenance Tech
Brian Thompson	Maintenance Tech
Charles Bustos	Maintenance Tech
Shyreece Williams	Office Admin
Kevin Jackson	Maintenance Tech
Tim Taylor	Maintenance Tech
Vacant	Maintenance Tech
<b>HIGHER EDUCATION</b>	<b>POSITIONS</b>
Brittany Beck	Manager
Sheean West	Education Supervisor
Amy West	Fiscal Supervisor
Paige Locust	Admin Assistant
Amanda Smoker	AP Processor 1
Kyla Teesateskie	Community College Liaison
Tammy Cagle	Education Specialist
Brittney Driver	Education Specialist
Lenny Crisp	Education Specialist
<b>QUALLA BOUNDARY HEAD START</b>	<b>POSITIONS</b>
Ernestine Driver	Director of QBHS
Amy Boyer	Health Manager
Laura Davis	Family Support Manager
Candy Ross	Operations Manager
Vacant	Supervisors
	Teachers (52)
	Teacher Assistants
Natalie Tate Sarah Beck Emily Behm	Family Support Coordinators

Amanda Bradley	
	Social Workers
Alexias Reed	Support/Office staff
Denise	Lead Cook
	Cooks
	Cook Aids
	Vacancies
	Vacancies
	Recommendations for hire
	Maintenance worker
	Cook Aide
	Procurement Coordinator
	Data Specialist
<b>QUALLA PUBLIC LIBRARY</b>	<b>POSITIONS</b>
Chi Shipman	Manager
Amber Ledford	Cultural Outreach Coordinator
Amy Postoak	Library Assistant
<b>SENIOR CITIZENS PROGRAM</b>	<b>POSITIONS</b>
Monica Wildcatt	Manager
Jamie Tranter	Admin. Asst.
Vacant as of 9/18/25	Receptionist
Vacant as of 03/2025	Social Work Supervisor
Ulela Harris	Outreach Worker 2
Krzysztof Sikorski	Food Supervisor
Justin Lee	Head Cook
Bobbi Smith	Cook

PHOTOS:



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 Wolfetown Donald "Kool Aid"  
 Gym and Recreation Center



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