
Choctaw Nation Promise Zone Initiative

In November 2013, the Choctaw Nation and partners applied for a multi-agency-sponsored initiative, which included the United States Departments of Agriculture, Education, Justice and Housing, awarding special Tribal Promise Zone designation to areas showing great need for revitalizing high-poverty communities. On January 7, 2014, the Choctaw Nation and partners were designated as one of the five new Promise Zone regions. Per the Federal announcement, the goals of this initiative include attracting private investment, improving affordable housing availability, improving educational opportunities, reducing serious and violent crimes, and assisting local and tribal leaders in navigating federal programs and cutting through red tape.

According to the Federal announcement, receiving this Promise Zone designation offers access to multi-agency benefits including technical assistance, federal staff support, possible preference points, and access to other federal grants programs. When enacted, Promise Zones may also receive the Promise Zones tax credit where private businesses would receive tax incentives for hiring and investing in Promise Zones to create jobs and attract additional private investments.

The Choctaw Nation has united government officials, local leaders, school districts, universities, and economic development groups across southeast Oklahoma to serve on the **Revitalizing Our Communities Commission of Southeastern Oklahoma (ROCC)** that will work together through the Promise Zones initiative to create a long-term vision and guidance plan to best meet the needs of our communities.

The ROCC will work to implement proven strategies that result in funding of community infrastructure improvement such as water and sewer services, workforce training for skilled trades and professionals, development of after school programs to improve educational outcomes, public safety planning, and economic diversification efforts incorporating small business development, agriculture, heritage, and cultural tourism.

With the Promise Zone designation, the Nation and partners will take necessary steps toward creating a comprehensive, all inclusive revitalization plan to address the unique issues, resources, and vision of each community across the Promise Zone region.

