



Office of the Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben

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MEMORANDUM

TO: All Tribal Government Employees

FROM: Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben

DATE: September 8, 2025

SUBJECT: Tribal Language Preservation and Online Dictionary Project

I want to take a moment to talk about something deeply important to our tribal community, our Choctaw tribal language, Chahta Annopa. Our language is not just a means of communication; it is the living spirit of our identity, our stories, our traditions, and our connection to the land and ancestors. Preserving the tribal language is vital to preserving who we are as a people.

With this in mind, I am announcing a renewed initiative to strengthen our efforts in teaching and speaking our tribal language within our Choctaw Tribal Schools and Early Childhood Programs, government offices, and community services. This includes the exciting launch of the online Choctaw Dictionary Project, a digital resource designed to support language learners of all levels and encourage more daily use of the Choctaw language, both in the workplace and at home. Whether you are fluent, currently learning, or just beginning, your participation matters. Tribal or non-tribal, everyone is encouraged to learn the language at their own pace and comfort level.

We fully recognize that not all tribal members speak the language, and not all employees are tribal members. This initiative is not about fluency or obligation; it's about respect, revitalization, and unity. Small efforts, like greeting each other in our language, learning key terms relevant to your work, or participating in cultural events, go a long way in keeping our language alive for future generations.

In the coming weeks, you'll hear more about language classes, cultural workshops, and creative ways to integrate our language into your daily work and interactions. Everyone is encouraged to engage in a way that honors both our Choctaw heritage and the diversity of our tribal government workforce.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the Department of Chahta Immi and the Tribal Language Program for their dedication and leadership in supporting this initiative, which made the online Choctaw dictionary project possible.

If you have any questions or suggestions on how to support this effort, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Choctaw Tribal Language Program at (601) 650-7440.

Chahta annopa oklah kil ittibá ikkana! (Let's learn the Choctaw language together!)

Yakokih,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cyrus Ben", is written over a horizontal line.

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben