

Cherokee Nation Reveals \$1 Million Incentive To Bring More Film And TV Projects To The Boundaries Of The Cherokee Nation

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Cherokee Nation Film Office

EXCLUSIVE: The Cherokee Nation Film Office has announced a \$1 million incentive geared at enticing more film and television productions to shoot within the boundaries of Cherokee Nation.

In doing so they aim to take advantage of the recent boom in film and television production in Oklahoma. The film office's mission is to increase the presence of Native Americans in every level of the film and television industries, while creating opportunities for economic development and jobs in the Cherokee Nation. Applications for the new film incentive will open on March 1, 2022.

With a yearly cap of \$1 million, this incentive will offer a base 20% cash rebate on production costs rather than a tax rebate. In order to qualify, a production's spending must take place within the boundaries of the Cherokee Nation in Northeastern Oklahoma. Oklahoma already boasts one of the top state film incentives in the country, offering projects filmed in the state a rebate of up to 38% on qualified labor, goods and services based on meeting different uplift criteria that promote economic development throughout the state. The new Cherokee Nation Film Incentive can be applied in addition to the Oklahoma State film incentive or alone. However, it is important to note that each organization's incentive is separate and has its own approval process.

"Oklahoma's television, film and production industries continue to grow at an exceptional pace. We are pleased to serve a role in helping support economic growth while furthering our mission to promote diversity, inclusion and accurate Native American representation at every level of these industries," said Jennifer Loren, director of Cherokee Nation Film Office and Original Content. "Encouraging productions to film within Cherokee Nation's many vast and beautiful locations, as well as to hire Indigenous people and utilize Native-owned businesses, offers an immense amount of opportunity for tribal citizens, families and businesses to benefit from the rapid growth of these industries within our state."

The incentive is part of a broader focus of the Cherokee Nation Film Office's mission to increase Native American representation on film and television productions, on both sides of the camera. The film office is leading the way in Oklahoma, preparing locals for jobs in the industry. They have partnered with multiple stakeholders in film education like Oklahoma State University, the University of Tulsa, the Oklahoma Film and TV Academy and local talents like special effects artist Tate Steinsiek. To remove financial barriers for its students, the tribal film office pays all tuition and fees for Native students.

The Cherokee Nation Film Office also created a first of its kind database of Native film crew professionals and actors from all Native communities. These directories help filmmakers find Native professionals to work on their film and television productions and ensure Native roles are being filled by real Natives. Meanwhile, their consultants directory helps connect productions with experts who can ensure their Native American content is historically and culturally accurate.

“Since establishing our film office, we've worked diligently alongside our state and local partners to help grow the film and television industries in Oklahoma,” said Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. “There are substantial benefits in launching this powerful economic tool within the Cherokee Nation Reservation. In addition to expanding career opportunities for Indigenous filmmakers, producers, directors, actors and behind-the-scenes crew members, this new incentive program reinforces Cherokee Nation's commitment to creating quality jobs and supporting small, family-owned businesses within our tribal communities.”

Unlike many state-run incentives that are approved on a first-come first-serve basis, the Cherokee Nation Film Incentive will be based on the merits of the project. Each submission will be judged on a variety of factors that benefit the Cherokee Nation economy and/or the quality of Native representation.

For more information about the Cherokee Nation Film Office, please visit cherokee.film or email hello@cherokee.film.