



# Community Approaches to Improving Healthy Lifestyles Among Native Americans: Southern Plains REACH US

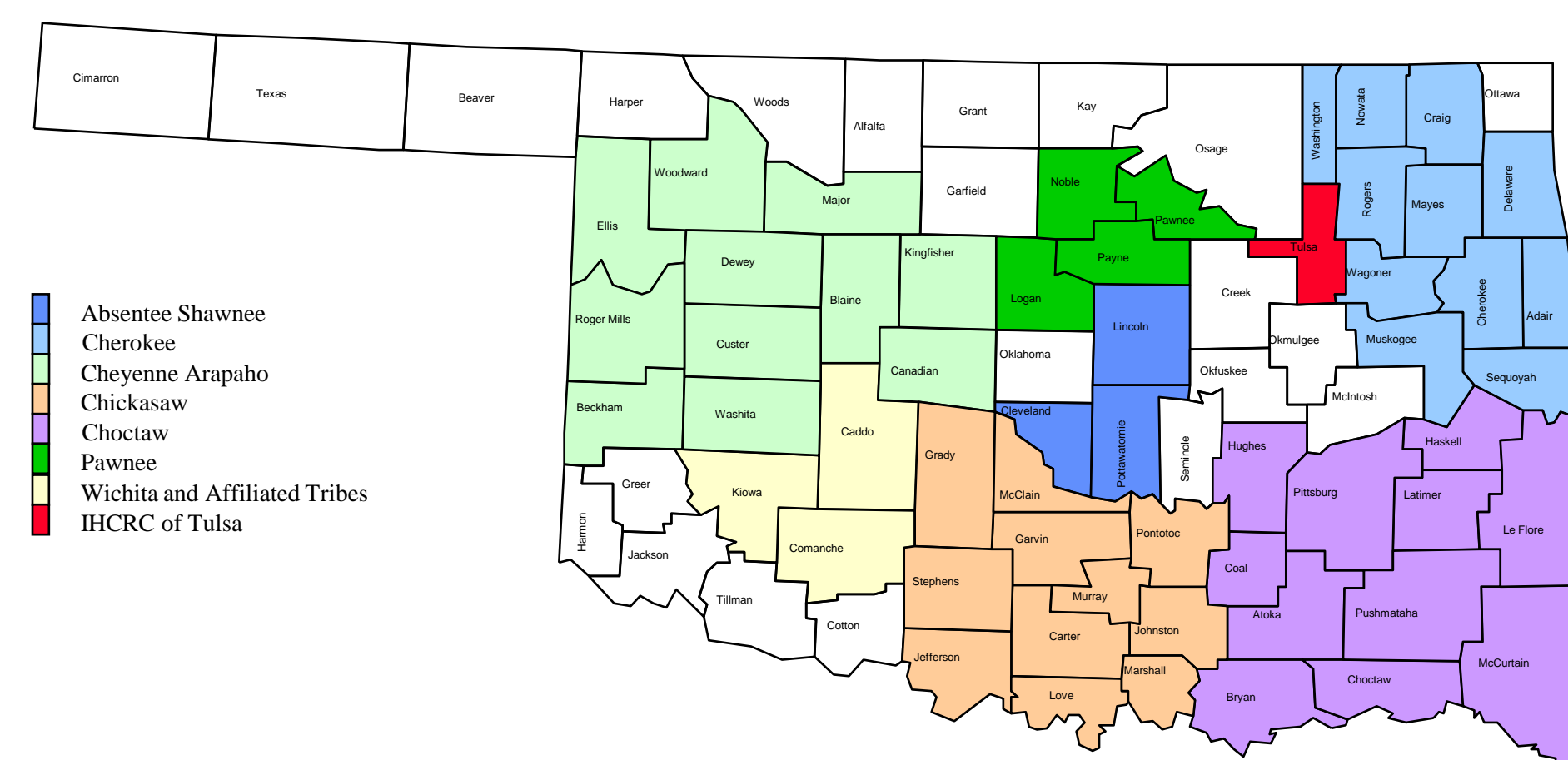
The Southern Plains REACH US grant is designed to expand opportunities for Native American people to reduce their risks for obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and commercial tobacco use. The Southern Plains REACH program began with a REACH 2010 grant in 2001, and now is a REACH US CEED grantee – Centers of Excellence in the Elimination of Disparities. The Southern Plains REACH US project consists of the Oklahoma State Department of Health, OU Health Sciences Center, seven Indian tribes, and one urban Indian clinic. REACH US is a five-year, nation-wide program funded by the Centers for Disease Control.

## Program Design

- The Oklahoma State Department of Health is the Central Coordinating Office for the REACH US grant.
- Through cooperative agreements with the coalition partners, REACH maintains a presence in 39 communities in Oklahoma.
- Each coalition partner has a work plan specific to the population being served. Programs are in place to increase physical activity, improve healthy eating habits, and prevention/cessation programs for commercial tobacco use.
- The REACH coalition meets monthly to share work projects and plan for future activities. Efforts are being made to operate at community, state, tribal, and national levels to implement change directed at systems change, environmental change and public policy that will enhance the health of all people.
- The Southern Plains REACH US Project's regional area for providing leadership and mentorship encompasses Oklahoma, Texas and Kansas.

## Legacy Projects

- Legacy projects are an innovative means of expanding the scope of work and outreach currently in place
- In grant years two through five, between two and four Native American Legacy projects will be awarded a one-year grant.
- Each Legacy grantee will present a work plan that identifies the primary focus area for their activities.
- Current REACH US coalition members will mentor the Legacy projects through lessons learned, so they can sustain successful community interventions.



**Southern Plains REACH US Coalition**

- Absentee Shawnee Tribe
- Cherokee Nation
- Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes
- Chickasaw Nation
- Choctaw Nation
- Pawnee Nation
- Wichita and Affiliated Tribes
- Indian Health Care Resource Center of Tulsa
- Oklahoma State Department of Health
- University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center

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## Success Stories

- Absentee Shawnee Tribe: Designed and distributed a culturally appropriate media campaign focusing on tobacco cessation and increasing fruits and vegetables
- Cherokee Nation: In 2007 passed legislation declaring all Cherokee Nation government buildings and property smoke and tobacco free
- Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes: In 2008 updated personnel policies that allows employees Wellness Leave of one hour per day, 3 days per week
- Chickasaw Nation supports healthy babies through a breastfeeding policy that provides for breastfeeding lounges in various buildings
- Choctaw Nation: Developed a comprehensive employee wellness program including BMI, labs, exercise & nutrition counseling, and fitness testing
- Pawnee Nation: REACH is the first program to implement a commercial tobacco prevention program
- Wichita and Affiliated Tribes: Has become one of the area's leading mentor and advisory programs for many of the seven major tribes in Southwestern Oklahoma
- Indian Health Care Resource Center of Tulsa: Each year offer HEALTHY Training – "Harnessing Experiential and Active Learning for Today's Healthy Youth" to tribes in our 3-state service area
- These are just a few of our program successes. For more, visit the website [www.ok.gov/strongandhealthy/documents/SuccessStories.pdf](http://www.ok.gov/strongandhealthy/documents/SuccessStories.pdf)

## Program Evaluation

- Number of new, sustainable youth wellness programs created (i.e., CATCH)
- Number of policy and environmental changes made related to physical activity and nutrition
- Number of policy based worksite wellness programs created in the Southern Plains Region
  - This will be accomplished by monitoring the Healthy Business Certification
  - Follow up with businesses and assess barriers to adopting worksite wellness polices
- Number of policies related to commercial tobacco use created in the Southern Plains Region
- Increase in community access to smoking cessation classes due to REACH programmatic efforts
- Increase in the number of 24/7 tobacco free schools in Tribal communities in the Southern Plains
- Promotion of tobacco helpline and calling data
- Evaluate the capacity of Legacy grantees to sustain their programs after the one-year funding period
- Evaluate the amount and success of technical assistance and consultation provided to the Legacies during and 3 years after their funding period ends.

