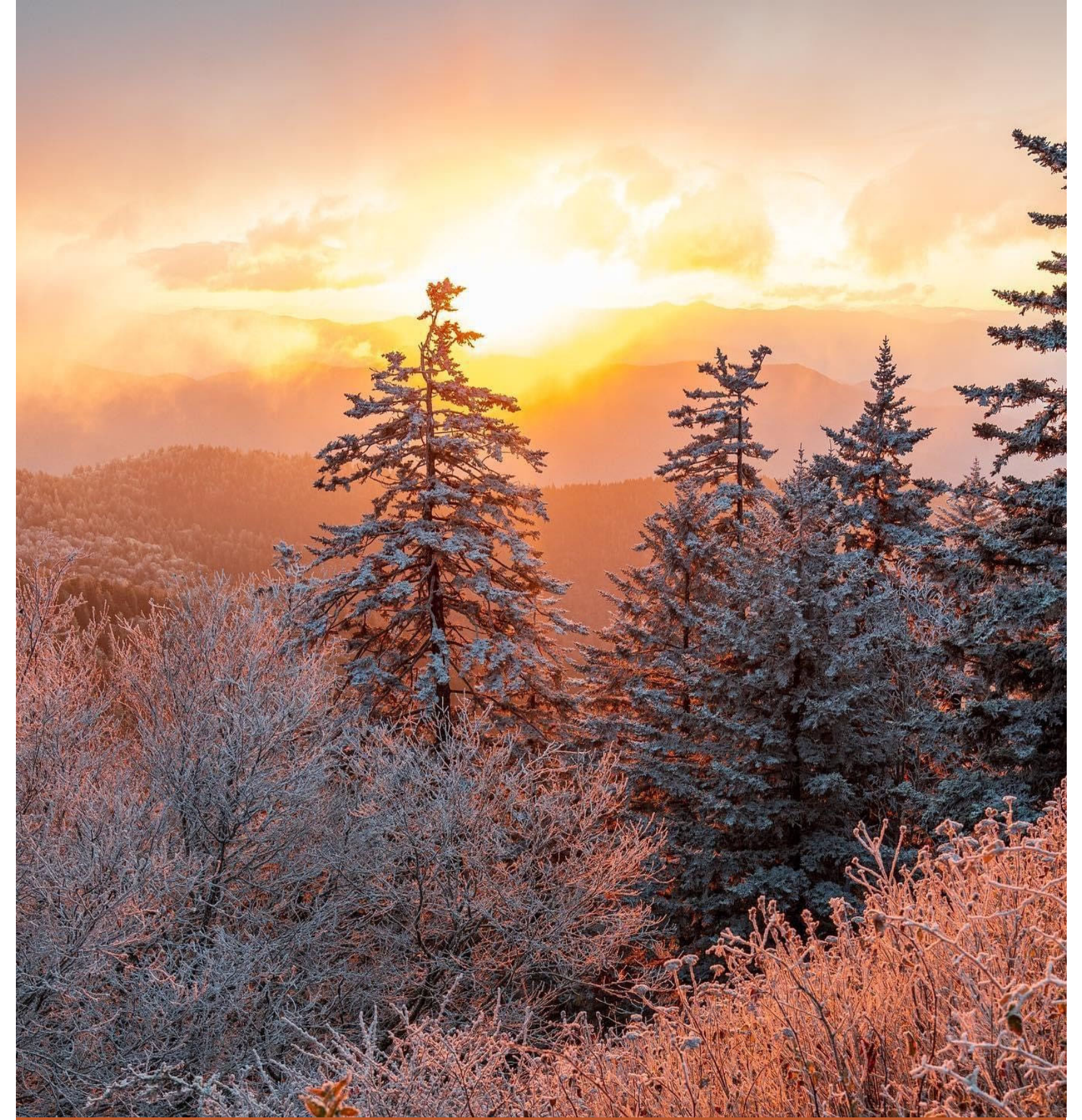




Strategic Plan: FY2026-FY2030



Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Strategic Plan FY2026-FY2030

Vision: *A nation that honors our culture and traditions while advancing a prosperous and sustainable future.*

Mission: *To strive for cultural integrity, economic prosperity, a healthy and educated community, and a protected natural environment.*

A. Advancing Education, Language and Cultural Preservation

Secretary of CERS, Director of Information Technology, Secretary of Commerce

Goal A.1: *Align all language & cultural teaching models, evaluations, and reporting by FY2026.*

A.1.1 Develop and implement standardized assessments across all language programs, ensuring alignment with ACTFL proficiency standards.

A.1.2 Strengthen language structure and integrate cultural curriculum into all existing and emerging language programs.

A.1.3 Create analytics, benchmarks, and a unified reporting model to provide consistent measurement of language learning outcomes across programs.

Goal A.2: *Increase representation of community identity and Cherokee language on all tribal levels by FY2027.*

A.2.1 Expand engagement opportunities for community members, employees, and visitors to participate in Cherokee Language programming.

A.2.2 Enhance visibility and accessibility of Cherokee Language and culture through coordinated media, public communication strategies, and cross-department partnerships.

A.2.3 Develop multimedia cultural education resources—including videos, podcasts, and digital storytelling—to promote cultural understanding and language use.

A.2.4 Collaborate with media organizations, tribal entities, and external partners to highlight cultural initiatives, success stories and community language efforts.

Goal A.3: Build comprehensive archives and enhance technology across all tribal divisions, entities, and the community by FY2027.

A.3.1 Document and preserve boarding school experiences, elders stories, and cultural knowledge to safeguard historical memory.

A.3.2 Use software, digital platforms, and other technological tools to develop a comprehensive and accessible language and culture archive system.

A.3.3 Develop and implement standardized data-reporting processes that promote transparency across all tribal divisions and programs.

Goal A.4: Improve educational opportunities that support unique and long-term career pathways for our community by 2027.

A.4.1 Identify and develop specialized positions that create meaningful incentives and career investment opportunities for EBCI Citizen.

A.4.2 Strengthen and expand partnerships with educational institutions, organizations, and other entities to broaden career pathways and long-term educational advancement.

B. Strengthening Community Engagement and Public Safety

Secretary of Operations, Director of Information Technology, Secretary of Commerce, Executive Office

Goal B.1: Increase effective communication channels that engage the community by FY2026.

B.1.1 Maintain consistent engagement with enterprises, tribal entities, divisions, community groups, and partners to advance strong, trust-based relationships.

B.1.2 Promote and support the growth of local businesses while encouraging innovation, new ideas, and entrepreneurial initiatives.

B.1.3 Create and maintain A UNIFIED communication plan and annual reporting model for all tribal programs and entities, ensuring alignment with EBCI's annual report and strategic plan.

Goal B.2: Continue improving and expanding the Cherokee Experience to benefit our community and visitors by FY2028.

B.2.1 Develop, expand, and refine greenways and outdoor amenities that enhance quality of life for tribal citizens and visitors.

B.2.2 Create and preserve historically accurate and culturally sensitive spaces throughout the community to strengthen cultural identity and visitor education.

Goal B.3: Monitor community safety using data analytics and expand public safety structures to meet community needs by 2026.

B.3.1 Strengthen public safety communications to better inform and educate the community about emerging safety concerns and ongoing safety efforts.

B.3.2 Leverage real-time crime and safety data from diverse sources to improve emergency response times, support officer safety, and proactively address community risks.

B.3.3 Monitor social media, surveys, and community feedback to identify gaps between reported data and community perceptions, using this insight to guide public safety improvements.

C. Promoting Tribal Health and Healing

Secretary of Human Resources, Secretary of PHHS, Secretary of Housing, Secretary of CERS, Secretary of Operations, Chief of Police

Goal C.1: Increase the utilization of natural resources by FY2027.

C.1.1 Develop sustainable, culturally grounded food sovereignty initiatives to expand access to healthy, traditional foods.

C.1.2 Enhance outdoor amenities and strengthen community connections to natural resources through thoughtful design, education, and engagement.

C.1.3 Promote increased physical activity by offering new indoor and outdoor recreation programs that meet community needs and interest.

C.1.4 Strengthen local food systems through upgraded infrastructure, coordinated planning, and expanded opportunities for Tribal producers and consumers.

Goal C.2: Increase workforce development and education throughout the community by FY2026.

C.2.1 Advance Tribal sovereignty by expanding Indian Preference and building specialized career pathways.

C.2.2 Improve workforce benefits and increase access to mental health supports to foster a healthy work-life balance.

C.2.3 Establish integrated youth and adult internship and mentoring programs that cultivate a skilled, self-sustaining Tribal workforce.

C.2.4 Expand education and workforce partnerships to increase vocational, technical, and professional training opportunities.

C.2.5 Create long-term career pathways for Cherokee language speakers across Tribal divisions and entities.

C.2.6 Strengthen communication and coordination within and across Tribal programs to improve service delivery and community accessibility.

C.2.7 Support reentry services by coordinating programs that promote wellness, rehabilitation, and productive recovery.

C.2.8 Develop targeted workforce training, education, and support programs that serve vulnerable populations, including youth and adults.

Goal C.3: Improve community health infrastructure by FY2028.

C.3.1 Expand access to affordable, safe, and healthy housing for adults of all ages and income levels.

C.3.2 Increase access to specialized health services by creating an enrichment center for individuals with intellectual and development disabilities (IDD).

C.3.3 Implement culturally informed programming and assessment tools that promote healing and reduce risk among the offender population.

C.3.4 Strengthen family-focused wellness by developing healthy outdoor spaces and community-based family programming.

C.3.5 Improve mental health outcomes using evidence-based practices combined with Cherokee cultural teachings and healing traditions.

Goal C.4: Prioritize and address health related community needs by FY2028.

C.4.1 Expand services for vulnerable populations by renovating and repurposing vacant facilities into community-servicing spaces.

C.4.2 Grow the Tribal land base and develop multi-use mapping tools to guide buildable housing and community development opportunities.

C.4.3 Improve access and communication of services for elders, youth, and families through clear, accessible, and comprehensive information resources.

C.4.4 Increase access to pediatric mental health services for Tribal members.

C.4.5 Expand partnerships and accountability among stakeholders.

D. Financial Security for Our Future Generations

Secretary of Treasury, Secretary of Operations

Goal D.1: Conduct proper due diligence in project planning and effective project monitoring by FY2026.

D.1.1 Expand the use of internal expertise and tribal-owned entities throughout all phases of project planning, design, and construction to increase efficiency, cultural alignment and economic benefit.

D.1.2 Enhance financial oversight practices through consistent capital project reporting, increased transparency, and timely updates to Tribal leadership.

D.1.3 Implement a rigorous due diligence framework for project planning—evaluating feasibility, timelines, risks, and operational impacts—while ensuring full engagement from all relevant divisions and stakeholders.

D.1.4 Strengthen grant management systems and streamline communication on the use, impact, and requirements of external funding across all tribal divisions and enterprises.

Goal D.2: Create and refine fiscal processes and reporting for programs and entities by FY2027.

D.2.1 Adopt and institutionalize structured due diligence procedures for evaluating tribal entities, boards, investments, and new initiatives to support informed decision-making.

D.2.2 Establish clear expectations, performance benchmarks, and report standards for entities, boards, and investment portfolios to support accountability and long-term sustainability.

D.2.3 Expand financial literacy initiatives for youth and families through interactive, technology-driven tools and programming.

D.2.4 Advance cash position and debt management transparency by continuing to enhance multi-year cash flow projections and reporting mechanisms.

D.2.5 Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of all Tribal entities' cash positions and investment strategies, resulting in a unified management plan for government, enterprise, and investment portfolios.

D.2.6 Develop a sustainability plan supported by policies and laws that protect and grow tribal assets and resource development, ensuring long-term financial resilience and responsible stewardship.

E. Protecting Tribal Sovereignty

Goal E.1: Build and enhance EBCI relationships with state, regional, tribal, and federal agencies by FY2028.

E.1.1 Protect and reclaim tribal land boundaries by asserting legal rights and exercising sovereignty through coordinated efforts between Realty, Legal and Public Safety.

E.1.2 Expand EBCI's political presence by cultivating strategic relationships at the local, state, regional and federal levels.

E.1.3 Establish a centralized system to track, measure, and evaluate the value, impact, and effectiveness of governmental relationships across all levels of governance.

Goal E.2: Establish EBCI as a National leader in Tribal governance & Sovereignty Advocacy by FY2027.

E.2.1 Develop a National Tribal Policy Engagement Plan that outlines priority federal, intergovernmental, and intertribal forums critical to advancing EBCI interests.

E.2.2 Designate and train EBCI ambassadors and delegations to ensure consistent participation in state, national, and international gatherings that impact tribal sovereignty.

E.2.3 Host an annual Intertribal Governance Summit on the Qualla Boundary to convene tribal leaders, strengthen alliances, and advance shared policies priorities.

E.2.4 Create a strategic communications plan to educate policymakers, partners, and the public on EBCI priorities, sovereignty issues, and advocacy efforts.

Goal E.3: Expand infrastructure and technology access across local and regional access points by 2028.

E.3.1 Implement resilient communications and technology systems to ensure uninterrupted emergency and public safety services.

E.3.2 Engage EBCI communities to identify and bridge connectivity needs, remove barriers to technology use, and determine priority areas for broadband and digital outreach.

E.3.3 Build and strengthen regional partnerships to enhance public utility infrastructure and expand service delivery.

E.3.4 Modernize and upgrade critical infrastructure to improve essential public services, using a prioritized capital projects framework.

Note: This Strategic Plan is submitted in accordance with Ordinance Sec. 117-47 (i), which requires the Executive Committee to prepare and deliver a one-year strategic plan and a five-year strategic plan to the Tribal Council on or before April 15 each year and shall be revised regularly to reflect changing circumstances. (Revision 2026) Updated 03/10/26