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FIRST STEPS TO HOPE PILOT PROGRAM FAQ

1. What is the First Steps to HOPE Program?

The First Steps to HOPE Pilot Program was created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to assist low income, pregnant Cherokee Nation citizens by providing a monthly economic support payment. The economic support payment is intended to reduce barriers relating to well-being.

2. Who is eligible for the program?

- Must be a registered Cherokee Nation citizen
- Must currently be enrolled in the Cherokee Nation WIC program as a pregnant participant
- Live within the Cherokee Nation Reservation
- Must have an active bank account; payments to CashApp and Push-to-Card services are not allowed.

3. Where do I apply for the First Steps to Hope program?

[Apply online using the Gadugi Portal](#), click on the applications button and then select the First Steps to HOPE application. If you have any questions, difficulty accessing or completing the application please contact us using the phone or email listed below.

4. How much will I receive and when will I receive it?

Economic support payments will be made electronically, directly into a bank account, each month in the amount of \$400.

5. Will taxes be withheld from the First Steps to HOPE Pilot Program?

Economic support payments will not be taxable.

6. What if I do not have a bank account?

You must open a bank account in your name to be a participant. We must have a valid account and routing number for the direct deposit payments. If you have difficulty opening a bank account, please contact us for assistance.

7. Will these payments affect my current benefits through other programs?

The economic support payments made will not affect your WIC eligibility. If you have questions about how the

additional monthly income may affect other benefits you receive, please contact us using the information below.

8. How do I know if my application was approved?

You will receive an email confirmation regarding your status in approximately 14 days. If you do not receive a reply within 14 days, please contact us at the number or email below.

9. What am I required to do if I am accepted into the First Steps to HOPE Pilot Program?

As a pilot program, we will be collecting important data to help us evaluate the outcome of this pilot program, as well as help us better serve our citizens. As a participant, you will be required to:

- Continue to actively receive WIC benefits, this program is tied directly to WIC benefits and to continue enrollment in this program, you must continue to receive WIC benefits.
- Respond to requests for updated information.
- Participate in a budget counseling session through Cherokee Nation's Commerce Group or participate in Building Bridges program. Additional information on the budget counseling and Building Bridges program will be sent to you once you are enrolled in the program.

10. Who can I contact if I have questions regarding the program?

Please contact NyeKeisha Marshall at 918-207-4946 or by email at Firststeps@cherokee.org.



Scan here to apply for the First Steps to HOPE Program using the Gadugi Portal