

Oklahoma



Pawnee Nation Behavioral Health Center

Pawnee, OK (2023)

Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma, a Central Plains Indian Tribe, received \$14 million in NMTC financing from Clearinghouse CDFI to construct a 22,000 sq. ft., 26 bed adult/geriatric inpatient and outpatient behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment facility. The new behavioral health center serves as a critical referral source for the Tribe's adjacent primary care center, which otherwise was unable to provide the necessary mental health treatment for a tribal community experiencing mental illness at more than twice the rate of other Oklahomans. The facility also provides local, accessible treatment for the predominately rural five-county service area, including both native and non-native members, who previously were forced to travel more than 40 miles to Tulsa to seek quality behavioral and mental health treatment.

FINANCING

NMTC Financing: Clearinghouse CDFI: \$14 million
Equity Investor: Wells Fargo
Total Project Cost: \$22 million

IMPACT

- 47 construction jobs
- 53 new FTE jobs created with target hiring for Native American individuals
- 2,040 unique patients annually. Over 75% low-income persons and over 90% of Native American descent
- Provides solutions to the needs identified in letters of support provided by the City of Pawnee, Congress and Senate leaders, the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, local healthcare groups and area nonprofits

COMMUNITY

- Median Income: 68.5% of the AMI
- Medically Underserved Area

Construction of a Tribal Behavioral Health Facility

The project reflects the needs outlined in the Pawnee Nation Needs Assessment identifying Pawnee as one of the state's hardest hit rural regions for opioid addiction, suicide and accessible medical care. In partnership with Ascension Recovery Services (ARS), the facility provides psychiatric diagnoses, medication assisted treatment, intensive outpatient treatment, individual counseling, residential substance use disorder treatment, psychiatric (acute/crisis stabilization) and withdrawal management/detox treatment. ARS is an industry leader in developing comprehensive, fully integrated behavioral health systems for vulnerable populations who are uninsured or under-insured.

ARS intentionally designed the facility's welcoming, accommodating programming, tailored for the ethnically diverse Tribal community that has not historically had access to treatment.

As a startup behavioral health center serving predominately low-income populations covered by government payment options, the project was impaired in its approach to securing the suite of capital needed. Thanks to a team of dedicated financing partners including Clearinghouse CDFI and Wells Fargo as the NMTC investor, Native American Bank as senior lender, the USDA and EDA providing \$4.25 million of grant support, and a third-party mezzanine investor, the \$22 million project, an endeavor that was five years in the making, was able to proceed.