

Cherokee Nation Code Annotated

Title 10A: Cherokee Nation Juvenile Code

Article 2

Chapter 5: Treatment of Serious Acts

§ 2-5-205. Certification as youthful offender or juvenile

Cite as: 10A CNCA § 2-5-205

A. Any person thirteen (13) or fourteen (14) years of age who is charged with murder in the first degree shall be held accountable for the act as if the person were an adult; provided, the person may be certified as a youthful offender or a juvenile as provided by this section, unless the person is subject to the provisions of subsection H of Section 2-5-204 of this title.

B. Any person fifteen (15), sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) years of age who is charged with murder in the first degree at that time shall be held accountable for his or her act as if the person was an adult and shall not be subject to the provisions of the Youthful Offender Act or the provisions of the Juvenile Code for certification as a juvenile. The person shall have all the statutory rights and protections of an adult accused of a crime. All proceedings shall be as for a criminal action and the provisions of Title 22 of the Cherokee Nation Statutes shall apply. A person having been convicted as an adult pursuant to this paragraph shall be tried as an adult for every subsequent offense.

C. 1. Upon the filing of an adult criminal information against such accused person, a warrant shall be issued which shall set forth the rights of the accused person, and the rights of the parents, guardian or next friend of the accused person to be present at the preliminary hearing, to have an attorney present and to make application for certification of such accused person as a youthful offender to the district court for the purpose of prosecution as a youthful offender.

2. The warrant shall be personally served together with a certified copy of the information on the accused person and on a custodial parent, guardian or next friend of the accused person. The court may inquire of the accused as to the whereabouts of his or her parents, guardian, or next friend in order to avoid unnecessary delay in the proceedings.

3. When personal service of a custodial parent, guardian or next friend of the accused person cannot be effected, service may be made by certified mail to such person's last-known address, requesting a return receipt from the addressee only. If delivery is refused, notice may be given by mailing the warrant and a copy of the information on the accused person by regular first class mail to the address where the person to be notified refused delivery of the notice sent by certified mail. Where the address of a custodial parent,

guardian or next friend is not known, or if the mailed warrant and copy of the information on the accused person is returned for any reason other than refusal of the addressee to accept delivery, after a thorough search of all reasonably available sources to ascertain the whereabouts of a custodial parent, guardian or next friend has been conducted, the court may order that notice of the hearing be given by publication one time in a newspaper of general circulation in the county. In addition, the court may order other means of service of notice that the court deems advisable or in the interests of justice.

4. Before service by publication is ordered, the court shall conduct an inquiry to determine whether a thorough search has been made of all reasonably available sources to ascertain the whereabouts of any party for whom notice by publication is sought.

D. 1. The accused person shall file any motions for certification as a youthful offender or a juvenile before the start of the criminal preliminary hearing. If both a motion for certification as a youthful offender and a motion for certification as a juvenile are filed, they shall both be heard at the same time. No motion for certification as a youthful offender or certification as a juvenile may be filed after the time specified in this subsection. Upon the filing of such motion, the complete juvenile record of the accused shall be made available to the Attorney General and the accused person. All reports, evaluations, motions, records, exhibits or documents regarding the educational history, mental health or medical treatment or condition of the offender that are submitted to the court or admitted into evidence during the hearing on the motion for certification as a youthful offender to the juvenile system or motion for imposition of an adult sentence are confidential and shall be filed or admitted under seal, except that such records shall be provided to the Department of Juvenile Justice. Any testimony regarding the reports, evaluations, motions, records, exhibits or documents shall be given in camera and shall not be open to the general public; provided, all persons having a direct interest in the case as provided in paragraph 1 of subsection A of Section 2-2-402 of this title shall be allowed to be present during the testimony but shall be admonished not to discuss the testimony following the hearing. All reports, evaluations, motions, records, exhibits or documents shall be released from under seal by order of the court if the youthful offender is sentenced to the custody or supervision of the contracted detention facility by the court pursuant to either paragraph 1 of subsection B of Section 2-5-209 or paragraph 5 of subsection B of Section 2-5-210 of this title or if the juvenile or youthful offender is later charged as an adult with a felony crime.

2. The court shall commence a preliminary hearing within ninety (90) days of the filing of the information, to determine whether the crime was committed and whether there is probable cause to believe the accused person committed a crime. If the preliminary hearing is not commenced within ninety (90) days of the date the accused person is

charged, the district court shall hold a hearing to determine the reasons for delay utilizing the procedure set out in Section 812.2 of Title 22 of the Cherokee Nation Statutes, to ensure the preliminary hearing is expedited. If the whereabouts of the accused are unknown at the time of the filing of the information or if the accused is a fugitive, the State of Cherokee Nation shall make reasonable efforts to locate the accused in order to commence the proceedings. An accused who flees the jurisdiction of the court or purposely avoids apprehension for the charges, waives the right to have the preliminary hearing commenced within ninety (90) days of the filing of the information. An accused who fails to cooperate with providing information in locating the parents of the accused, guardian, or next friend for purpose of notice waives the right to have the preliminary hearing commence within ninety (90) days of the filing of the information. If the preliminary hearing did not commence within ninety (90) days from the filing of the information due to the absence or inability to locate the accused, the preliminary hearing shall commence within ninety (90) days after the Nation has actual notice of the in-reservation location of the accused. If the accused is found out of the reservation, the court shall set the hearing within ninety (90) days after the accused has been returned to the Cherokee Nation.

3. At the conclusion of the Nation's case at the criminal preliminary hearing, the Nation and the accused person may offer evidence to support or oppose the motions for certification as a youthful offender or an alleged juvenile delinquent.

E. The court shall rule on any motions for certification as a youthful offender or an alleged juvenile delinquent before ruling on whether to bind the accused over for trial. When ruling on a motion for certification as a youthful offender or juvenile, the court shall give consideration to the following guidelines with greatest weight to be given to paragraphs 1, 2 and 3:

1. Whether the alleged offense was committed in an aggressive, violent, premeditated or willful manner;
2. Whether the offense was against persons, and, if personal injury resulted, the degree of personal injury;
3. The record and past history of the accused person, including previous contacts with law enforcement agencies and juvenile or criminal courts, prior periods of probation and commitments to juvenile institutions;
4. The sophistication and maturity of the accused person and the capability of distinguishing right from wrong as determined by consideration of the person's psychological evaluation, home, environmental situation, emotional attitude and pattern of living;

5. The prospects for adequate protection of the public if the accused person is processed through the youthful offender system or the juvenile system;
 6. The reasonable likelihood of rehabilitation of the accused person if such person is found to have committed the alleged offense, by the use of procedures and facilities currently available to the juvenile court; and
 7. Whether the offense occurred while the accused person was escaping or on escape status from an institution for youthful offenders or delinquent children. The court, in its decision on a motion for certification as a youthful offender or juvenile, shall detail findings of fact and conclusions of law to each of the above considerations, and shall state that the court has considered each of the guidelines in reaching its decision.
- F. The order certifying a person as a youthful offender or an alleged juvenile delinquent or denying the request for certification as either a youthful offender or an alleged juvenile delinquent shall be a final order, appealable to the Cherokee Nation Supreme Court when entered.
- G. An order certifying the accused person as a youthful offender or an alleged juvenile delinquent shall not be reviewable by the trial court.
- H. If the accused person is prosecuted as an adult and is subsequently convicted of the alleged offense or against whom the imposition of judgment and sentencing has been deferred, the person may be incarcerated with the adult population and shall be prosecuted as an adult in all subsequent criminal proceedings.

Historical Data

LA 11-21, eff. March 15, 2021.