

## HIGHER EDUCATION GUIDELINES

The following guidelines have been developed for a consistent Higher Education Program. The Northern Cheyenne Tribal Education Department will utilize the guidelines to provide comprehensive services to all eligible Northern Cheyenne tribal members. The guidelines will assist individuals to stay in compliance with the requirements for the Higher Education Scholarship Program.

### **I. ELIGIBILITY FOR SCHOLARSHIP GRANT ASSISTANCE:**

1. Be an enrolled Northern Cheyenne Tribal member as supported by a certificate of degree of Indian blood from the tribe.
2. Applicant must be a high school graduate or obtain a high school equivalency (GED) before entering college or the university.
3. Must be accepted for enrollment at an accredited college or university.
4. Show financial need as determined by the college or university's financial aid office. (Needs Analysis) Special scholarships will be excluded.
5. Students must be in a degree program that leads to an Associate of Arts or a Bachelors degree.
6. Must be 17/18 years old by the time of full time enrollment in a college/university.

### **II. APPLICATION PROCEDURES:**

- A. New applicants and graduating high school seniors must submit an application on or before March 1<sup>st</sup>. The application must be at the Tribal Education Department on March 1<sup>st</sup>.
  1. A complete Northern Cheyenne Tribal Education Department Scholarship application for the college/university the student will attend with supporting documents as listed below.
    - a. Certificate of Tribal enrollment (Degree of Indian Blood)
    - b. Proof of filing for financial aid before March 1<sup>st</sup>. (FAFSA)
    - c. Copy of the SAR/ISAR/ESAR
    - d. Seventh semester high school transcripts ( by March 1) for high school students.
    - e. Completed official high school transcript sent upon graduation. (by June 30)
    - f. A copy of GED certificate with test scores sent on or before the March 1<sup>st</sup> deadline.
    - g. Completed official college transcripts. (If applicable) Colleges who do not give out an official transcript must provide a statement that an official college transcript cannot be sent.
    - h. A one page written statement of educational goals explaining need for the scholarship, choice of college, major, entry date and plans after graduation.
      - i. Submit copies of any awards or achievements earned while in school or for community service.
      - j. **New applicants**, three (3) letters of recommendation addressed to the Tribal Education Department (do not use relatives).
      - k. Verification of applying for admission to the university/college (**Print a copy of admission form if applying on line**)
      - l. Official letter of acceptance from college/university
      - m. Needs analysis (**Due before June 30 for fall semester. December 1<sup>st</sup> for winter quarter/spring Semester.**)
- B. **Faxed applications and supporting documentation will not be accepted. Students must start the application process early to avoid faxing paperwork.**
- C. **All on-line application documents must be mailed to the Tribal Education Department.**
- D. **Federal Express applications must be postmarked before the scholarship deadlines and received in the office by the March 1<sup>st</sup> deadline.**
- E. Universities and colleges may require separate forms for grants and have their own priority deadline dates. Refer to the college/university catalogs.
- F. Apply for financial aid at the university or college and complete all required documentation for the coming academic year.
- G. Continuing college students must complete the financial aid process **before March 1<sup>st</sup> or by the college/university deadlines.**
- H. Students who are denied admission from the college of their choice by March 1<sup>st</sup> must submit a letter to the Scholarship Committee with supporting documentation. Otherwise, the application will be considered incomplete for funding.

- I. There will be an exception given for **official** letters of acceptance and student aid reports which may not be available by the March 1<sup>st</sup> deadline.
- J. Continuing college students must submit a complete official transcript( unless II.1.g. applies) before **June 30** of each year.
- K. Applicants who have attended a college, university or vocational school must submit an official transcript of grades ( unless II.1.g. applies) from any institution that was attended prior to applying to the Tribal Education Department. Previous course work will be considered in the number of quarters/semesters that a student can receive funding. (see VI Minimum Requirements) students must submit their transcripts before **June 30**.
- L. Previous College students must be in good standing academically and financially before being considered for a scholarship.
- M. College seniors who wish to attend summer school must submit a separate application before **April 1**. (**seniors will be considered pending the availability of funds**) (see section XIV).

**DEADLINES FOR APPLYING FOR A HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP:**

A completed application must be submitted to the Tribal Education Department on or before March 1st of each year for fall semester and October 1<sup>st</sup> for winter quarter/spring semester. This date will coincide with the financial aid priority deadlines established by most colleges and universities. If a student fails to meet the deadlines for campus based aid, the Tribal Education Department will determine the level of funding at less than the full unmet need. (**check the college/university catalogs for deadlines for campus based financial aid**)

The following deadlines will apply for applications to the Tribal Education Department for funding. The application must be at the Tribal Education Department by the deadline dates.

<b>Fall Quarter – March 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Spring Quarter – October 1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>Fall Semester – March 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Spring Semester – October 1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>Winter Quarter – October 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Summer Funding – April 1<sup>st</sup></b>

**III. PRIORITIES:**

**First Priority** will be renewal of grants to continuing and former students in good standing based on academic progress. Students must meet the required deadline for submitting the financial aid forms, the Tribal Education Department application and a **complete** official transcript (unless II.1.g. applies) by the end of each academic year. Transfer students must submit all supporting documentation by the March 1<sup>st</sup> deadline or write a letter of appeal to the Scholarship Committee.

**Second Priority** will be graduating high school seniors in good standing or first time adult college applicants not previously funded by the Tribal Education Department. Selection will be based on previous academic achievement, official transcripts, achievement awards, one page written statement of educational goals that includes, need for grant, choice of college, plans after graduation, college major and entry date. All first time students must submit three (3) letters of recommendations (no relatives). Other required documents as stated in II, 1.

**Third Priority** will be those students or individuals who have previously failed to meet the requirements of the scholarship program. They must submit a letter of commitment, one (1) letter of recommendation and an official transcript(s) from the college or university.

**Fourth Priority** if funds are available higher education funds will be awarded to graduate students by the Scholarship Committee.

Those students who have completed an Adult Vocational Training Program will be considered a low priority and may not receive higher education funding. (Exception will be based on the availability of funds). (See section VII, # 9,10,11)

The scholarship will be competitive due to limited funding. Number of students selected will be based on the availability of funds.

Applicants who are members of other tribes will be given technical assistance and will be referred to their home agency for funding.

**IV. SELECTION PROCESS:**

1. The Scholarship Committee shall make the final selection of qualified, eligible applicants. The Tribal Education Director and counseling staff will assist with recommendations to the committee to aid in the selection process.
2. The Scholarship Committee will meet a minimum of three (3) times per year to make selections for the academic year

beginning with the fall term of each year.

**3. Applications that are incomplete will not be submitted to the Scholarship Committee.**

**V. FUNDING**

1. The higher education scholarship funds are supplemental to all other funding sources and any income. Applicants must seek all available campus based aid awarded by the institution which includes, PELL, SEOG, SSIG, Work Study and Loans. **Students must be PELL eligible to receive higher education funding, excluding special scholarships. Students are encouraged to apply for other scholarships.**
2. The Tribal Education Department **will not reimburse loans that have been accepted and received by the student.** Students who accept the loans will not receive funding from the Tribal Education Department if the loan covers their unmet need.
3. **Only** Freshman students will be exempt from College Work Study.
4. Eligible students must apply for the Indian Fee Waiver (If Applicable).

**A. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS:**

Funding level will be based on a needs analysis submitted by the financial aid office at the college/university listed on the scholarship application. \$6,000.00 is the maximum amount of higher education funds a student can receive per academic year, excluding summer.

1. No funds will be disbursed without a formal needs analysis from the financial aid office/college/university.
2. Funds will be disbursed on a monthly basis by the Tribal Education Department.
3. Part-time students must meet all application procedures. The student must apply for the PELL Grant. If eligible to receive a PELL Grant, the student must pay for their tuition, books, and fees. The balance will be paid after the PELL is applied
4. Students must submit class schedules, plans of study and billing statements before funds are disbursed.

**B. DEFAULT:**

1. Any student receiving funds and failing to enroll or received a 0.0 Grade Point Average will be required to reimburse the program in full within twelve months and before any financial assistance will be considered by the Scholarship Committee.
2. Any student withdrawing without good cause from college voluntarily or involuntarily will be suspended and may be required to reimburse the funds to the Tribal Education Department before consideration can be given for another service.
3. Any student who fails or refuses to reimburse the scholarship program for funds in accordance with 1 and 2 above will not be considered for any further financial assistance.
4. The Tribal Education Department shall refer all persons in default to the Tribal Attorney.
5. The Northern Cheyenne Tribal Courts will be utilized to enforce collection procedures. The Federal judicial system will be utilized in cases involving fraud.

**C. Fraud:**

1. The Northern Cheyenne Tribal Courts will be utilized to enforce collection procedures. The Federal judicial system will be utilized in cases involving fraud.

**VI. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTABLE SCHOLASTIC STANDING:**

1. Freshman and sophomores will be expected to carry a minimum of **14 credits per quarter or 16 credits per semester.** Junior and seniors will be expected to carry a minimum of **16 credits per quarter or 18 credits per semester.**

2. **Students must submit a plan of study by mid term of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter/semester.** Students are required to submit a class scheduled each quarter/semester to verify courses on the Plan of Study. **If a plan of study is changed the student must submit a revised plan of study. Further funding will not be processed without these documents.**
3. First three quarters/two semesters, students are expected to earn a minimum of 42 quarter, credits or 32 semester credits with a 2.0 Grade Point Average per quarter /semester.
4. Second three quarters/two semesters, students are expected to earn a minimum of 42 quarter credits or 32 semester credits with a cumulative of 84 quarter credits or 64 semester credits with a 2.0 Grade Point Average. At the end of the second academic year, the student must submit a Plan of Study to the Tribal Education Department to assure academic progress is being made towards completing their degrees.
5. For the third three quarters/two semesters, students are expected to earn a minimum of 48 or 36 semester credits with a cumulative of 132 quarter credits or 100 semester credits with a 2.0 Grade Point Average or the required GPA for the program of study/major.
6. Fourth quarters/two semesters, a student is expected to have a minimum of 48 quarter credits or 36 semester credits with a cumulative of 180 quarter credits or 136 semester credits with a 2.0 Grade Point Average.
7. If the fifth three quarters/two semesters are needed, the student must write a letter to the Scholarship Committee requesting funding by the 7<sup>th</sup> semester or 11<sup>th</sup> quarter. The letter must be signed by the student and their advisor. A revised Plan of Study must be submitted and signed by the student's advisor.
8. If Associate Degree requirements cannot be reasonably met within two academic years due to the design of the program for the degree, a review will be conducted by the Scholarship Committee for possible extension of time period for an additional term but not more than one academic year. **The Scholarship Committee must approve the additional time period. The two years will include those years that are not funded by the Tribal Education Department.**
9. Pass/ Fail Grades will be reviewed on an individual basis. No more than two (2) Pass/Fail Grades will be allowed per term.
10. **Only two remedial classes will be accepted per term.** The remedial classes will be in addition to the full time status of 12 credits for 100 level and above course work.
11. **All credits will be considered when evaluating the amount of time a student will be funded. The credits will be considered even if Tribal Education did not fund the student.**
12. These are minimum requirements. Students are expected to graduate in the shortest possible time. **Note: The Montana University System expects students to graduate with a minimum of 120 semester credits. Students will pay out of state tuition cost after 150 semester credits. Students must remember the academic requirements for graduation are different for each college or university. This will depend on college majors.**

## **VII. STUDENT REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Students must report their academic standing by **mid term** to the Tribal Education Department. Checks will be held until the mid term reports are received to assure that academic progress is being made.
2. If a student receives a progress report with low grades, the Tribal Education Department may require an updated Progress Report to show that academic progress is being made before a check is released.
3. Students who are in college and request scholarship funds must be making satisfactory academic progress before they will be considered for funding.
4. Students shall be expected to attend all classes while enrolled at a college or university. **Students may be dropped for lack of attendance.**
5. Students who fall below the minimum requirement of 2.0 or received less than the 14/16 quarter credits or 16/18 semester credits must justify the reason for not maintaining the requirements to the Tribal Education Department. The student must notify their Tribal Education counselor by mid term if they will not maintain a 2.0 Grade Point Average or if they receive less than 14/16 quarter credits or 16/18 semester credits. Students must contact the Tribal Education Department counselors before they drop classes which put them below required credits. If the student does not provide justification by mid term, they may be subject to suspension. Probation may be considered if proper documentation is received by the Tribal Education Department.

6. Students who have been suspended from the Higher Education Scholarship Program or financially suspended from college will not be eligible for funding. To be considered for further funding, students will be required to successfully complete one quarter/semester on their own with a minimum of 14/16 quarter credit hours or 16/18 semester credit hours with a 2.0 Grade Point Average. Students must complete the application process and meet the required deadlines.
7. **Students in default on a loan will not be eligible for Higher Education funds until they are removed from default.**
8. Students who are academically suspended must sit out for one academic year before being considered for further funding.
9. Students must submit a billing statement each quarter/semester to verify charges and to assure they have a zero balance so that grades and transcripts can be released to the Tribal Education Department.
10. Students who are suspended from the college will also be suspended from the Higher Education Scholarship Program.
11. If a student falls below minimum standards while on probation, they will be suspended from the scholarship program and required to attend a quarter/semester on their own and maintain a 2.0 Grade Point Average. The student must complete the application process and meet the required deadlines.
12. Student who receive a 0.0 Grade Point Average for any given quarter/semester will be automatically suspended from the scholarship program and will be required to reimburse the Tribal Education Department for funds expended or be required to attend one quarter/semester at their own expense and maintain satisfactory academic progress
13. A student in good standing and who elects to interrupt for good cause or extenuating circumstances will be considered a continuing student upon re-entry to college providing paperwork is complete and all deadlines are met. Notice must be given to the Tribal Education Department as early as possible so they may be considered under the priority system. **(Section III. First Priority)**
14. Students who have completed a Job Training and Placement Program and who are approved to receive higher education funds will have their credits and number of years in training added to their intended programs. **This includes years that the Tribal Education Department did not provide funding.**
15. If a student with an Applied Science/Associate degree decides to further their education, they must continue into a bachelors program within their same major. Previous years of funding will be considered in completing the Bachelors degree. A maximum of five years funding can be provided. (Refer to Priorities II for selection process)
16. Students who are funded for two years under the Higher Education Scholarship Program will not be funded to attend a Job Training and Placement Program due to limited funding and increased number of students who are applying for scholarships.
17. Students who graduate from a two year college or are beyond sophomore status must continue their education at a four year institution to be eligible for further funding.
18. After the freshman year a major must be established. Changing college majors will not be allowed after the freshman year, except for justified reason. The Scholarship Committee must approve all changes in college majors.
19. Once the student is approved by the Scholarship Committee to attend a particular college, the student cannot change colleges without the approval from the Scholarship Committee. A complete scholarship application and appeal letter must be submitted by the student for the proposed college before it is presented to the Scholarship Committee.
20. The Scholarship Program will not cover the cost of repeat courses.
21. No more than two incomplete courses will be allowed. Students must make up the incomplete before the beginning of their next term.

#### **VIII. TRANSFERS:**

1. All deadline dates will apply to transfer students.
2. Funding will be subject to review and will not exceed the student's current level of funding.
3. Students must be able to complete their education in the same amount of time as previous program of study/major.

**Note:** Students transfer GPA may not be cumulated until the semester prior to graduation (refer to college catalogs).

**IX. ATTENDING OUT OF STATE INSTITUTIONS OR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS:**

1. Students will be expected to pay the difference between the out-of-state institution and instate costs if those costs are higher.
2. An exception will be made if no comparable course of study exists in a Montana institution. Eligible Northern Cheyenne students residing out of state will be subject to the same regulation. However, they may enroll in a Montana institution of higher education provided there is not a comparable course of study at an institution in the state in which they reside.

**X. DISTANCE LEARNING:**

1. Students enrolled in distance learning or on line course programs will be required to follow the college/university requirements. Courses must be a program requirement and be able to transfer to the student's major.

**XI TRIBAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM:**

1. Tribal Scholarship students must follow the Higher Education Guidelines.

**XII. SPECIAL SCHOLARSHIPS:**

1. Special Scholarships must follow the Higher Education Guidelines if they do not have their own program guidelines.

**XIII. MEDICAL COVERAGE:**

1. Medical coverage is not the responsibility of the Education Department. Students must submit an Advance Indian Student Data Application to the Northern Cheyenne Service Unit, P.O. Box 70, Lame Deer, Mt. 59043. Students must follow the Contract Care Guidelines.
2. Students have the option to purchase medical insurance offered by the institution. Students must go on line to waive the insurance or it will be the student's responsibility to pay out of pocket.

**XIV. SUMMER SESSION:**

1. Scholarship funds will be provided to college seniors who need summer credits in order to graduate pending the availability of funds and meeting the April 1<sup>st</sup> deadline.

**XV. STUDENT FILES**

1. Student files become the property of the Tribal Education Department. Only authorized persons will be able to review the student's file and have access to the information. Students requesting copies of any specific information contained in the file must submit a request in writing.

**XVII. APPEALS PROCESS:**

- A student has the right to appeal a decision made by the Tribal Education Department within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the letter rendering a decision such as suspension, probation and funding levels.
- The student must appeal in writing to the Scholarship Committee in care of the Tribal Education Department, P.O. Box 307, Lame Deer, Mt. 59043.
- The Scholarship Committee will address the appeal at their next regular meeting.
- The Scholarship Committee will rule on the decision at a regular or a special meeting.
- The decision from the Scholarship Committee is final.

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