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# CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES

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## HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT POLICY & PROCEDURES HANDBOOK



*A People of Vision*

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Council is very glad to support our eligible tribal members who pursue post-secondary education and training. Please dedicate yourself to achieving your academic goals with the help of these resources. Be aware that failing to make adequate academic progress can result in the forfeiture of this funding. Realize your personal potential and discover the opportunities for meaningful employment that education can offer. Become the leaders you are meant to be.

**Application deadline is Wednesday, May 1, 2024**

All students who apply and receive a Higher Education Scholarship from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes are subject to the provisions contained in this Higher Education Student Policy & Procedures Handbook. Every effort will be made to be fair and equitable given our available resources. Every student is accountable for submitting documents and meeting academic standing for allowable funding each year.

The Scholarship Officer is available to assist students in completing Higher Education, Vocational Training and FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) applications, providing information on financial aid sources, assisting in the selection of a school or career and problems encountered while attending school.

**Students can submit their applications by either mailing to:**

**CSKT Education Department  
Attn: Miranda Burland, Scholarship Officer  
P.O. Box 278  
Pablo, MT 59855**

**Or scanning and emailing to the Higher Education Scholarship Officer at [Miranda.Burland@cskt.org](mailto:Miranda.Burland@cskt.org).**

Faxed Higher Education Scholarship applications **will not** be accepted.

Students must read this Student Policy Handbook. Any questions or clarification needed should be made to the Higher Education Scholarship Officer at (406)675-2700 ext. 1074 or by emailing Miranda Burland at [Miranda.Burland@cskt.org](mailto:Miranda.Burland@cskt.org).

## **SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY**

To be considered eligible for a Tribal Higher Education Scholarship the applicant must meet all of the following criteria:

- 1) Be an enrolled member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes;
- 2) Possess a high school diploma or GED/ HiSET;
- 3) Be accepted into a regionally accredited post-secondary institution;
- 4) Cannot be in "default" status with other funding sources
- 5) Cannot have been convicted of a felony in the past (1) year.

Tribal funding that an applicant may receive is supplemental to other forms of federal and campus-based financial aid. An applicant must apply for federal funding such as Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA or Pell), Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), State Student Incentive Grant (SSIG), College Work-Study and Montana University Systems Native American Tuition Waiver. Funds can be used to pay for tuition and fees, room and board, books, and miscellaneous expenses related to school.

### **INCARCERATED APPLICANTS:**

Applicants incarcerated in tribal, state or federal penal institutions are ineligible to receive funding while they are incarcerated.

### **FELONY CONVICTIONS:**

Applicants who have been convicted of a felony will not be considered for funding until (1) one year after the conviction date. If you are convicted of a felony during the academic year of being funded, your funding will be suspended at that time.

### **ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS:**

The course of study must be from a regionally accredited institution and must result in the attainment of an Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's degree, Certificate or another instrument indicating successful completion. These institutions must be able to accept Pell funding from the Department of Education.

### **LENGTH OF ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING:**

The length that a student can receive CSKT higher education funding is directly connected to the attempted credits taken. Undergraduate students are eligible to receive the Higher Education scholarship at 150% for a total of:

#### **Quarter Schools:**

Associate Degree: 135 maximum quarter credits

Bachelor Degree: 270 maximum quarter credits

#### **Semester Schools:**

Associate Degree: 90 maximum semester credits

Bachelor Degree: 180 maximum semester credits

Students who have exceeded the maximum credits allowed may petition the Tribal Education Department (TED) for financial consideration and/ or appeal to the Appeals Committee, which consists of the Tribal Education Department Head and the Executive Director of Tribal Member Services, for approval or denial. Credits that are accumulated in Salish or Kootenai Language courses will not count towards your credit limit, as long as the student is making progress in these courses. Language courses will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis before being recommended to appeal.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Students will need to fill out and submit pages 3 & 4 of the Higher Education Scholarship application packet by **Wednesday, May 1, 2024** to the Scholarship Officer. Applications will be considered on time for funding if a complete application is submitted. If students submit their application after this date, it will be marked as LATE and funding will not be guaranteed for the academic year.

### **What is needed for a COMPLETE application file?**

- 1) 2024-2025 Higher Education Scholarship **application** (General Information and Information Disclosure Authorization) pages 3 & 4).
- 2) After completing Part 1 of your **Financial Needs Analysis** (pages 5 & 6), you must submit it **to the Financial Aid Office** of the school that you choose to attend. After completing Part 2, your Financial Aid Office will send it back to the Tribal Education Department on or before August 9<sup>th</sup>.
- 3) **OFFICIAL College Transcripts:** (you must request them from your school; see notes below)
  - a. If you are a **New Student**, meaning you have never attended a college/ university/ vocational training institute, then you do not have transcripts to submit.
  - b. If you are a **Continuing Student**, meaning you attended school the last term (quarter or semester), then you must submit your "Official" transcript to the Tribal Education Department by the second week of July. **DO NOT REQUEST THEM UNTIL YOU HAVE FINISHED YOUR SPRING TERM.**
  - c. If you are a **Returning Student**, meaning you have taken time off school, then you must get your "official transcript" on or before May 1<sup>st</sup> to the Education Department. Most schools will send an official transcript, at your request, to your funding source with your signed release of information; it is your responsibility to obtain this.
- 4) Copy of Tribal ID or Certificate of Indian Blood (CIB). This can be obtained from the Tribal Enrollment Office. You can call the Enrollment Office at 406-675-2700 ext. 1014 and request that a copy be sent to the CSKT Education Department Scholarship Officer.
- 5) Copy of the college's **Acceptance letter or acceptance email** you plan to attend; you may already have a letter on file **IF** you are a continuing student in the same school; check with the Tribal Education Department to see if this is in your file.
- 6) Copy of **High School Transcripts or Diploma or GED/ HiSET Certificate or Transcripts**. All 2024 High School graduates should submit a copy by July.
- 7) **2024-2025 Student Aid Report (SAR)** is to be submitted to The Tribal Education Department. This will be retrieved from the FAFSA website after completing and submitting it. If you are attending a Vocational or Trade School, this may not be available to you.
  - a. You must have filed (*completed and submitted*) your **2024-2025 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**; go to [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov).
  - b. You need to use 2022 taxes to complete; if under the age of 24, you will need your parent's tax information also.
- 8) Student Agreement Form. This form will be sent out to all students in July and will need to be filled out and sent back by August 9, 2024. This packet will inform students of what is still missing from their file, an award amount if available at that time, and verify application information and academic standing, if provided.

The priority deadline for all other needed documents for your file are due by Friday, August 9, 2024. This ensures that your fall term funding is submitted to your school in a timely manner; your funding will be delayed if your documents are not all submitted by this date.

**STUDENTS-** If you need any clarification or have questions on your academic standing, degree you wish to pursue, or probation/ suspension status you need to contact the Scholarship Officer to discuss the details and the Policy Handbook.

**SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Submit a completed application on or prior to Wednesday, May 1, 2024.
2. Submit a current grade report within 30 days of the end of each quarter/semester and your upcoming term’s schedule; by mail or email; the grades are not required to be “official”. **The next term’s funding will not be released until your grades and schedule are submitted and reviewed.**
3. Declare a major area of study by the end of your second year.
4. Inform the Tribal Scholarship Officer of any changes to your major, address, email, phone number, school or course schedule.
5. Maintain acceptable institutional academic standards.
6. Achieve a minimum of a 2.5 GPA and pass all classes (whether full-time or part-time) to meet credit and GPA requirement for each term.
7. Submit a new application each year to be considered for scholarship funding.
8. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each academic year.

**PRIORITY FOR FUNDING:**

Students who have completed their Higher Education file by the deadline dates will have priority for funding. Students must be in good academic standing to receive funding. This consists of turning in all required paperwork.

**STUDENT STATUS:**

**Continuing Students** are students who have not taken an absence from college for more than a quarter or semester.

**New Students** are students who have never attended college before or received Tribal Higher Education funding.

**Returning Students** are students who have taken a break from college for more than one quarter or semester.

**FUNDING LEVELS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

**UNDERGRADUATE FUNDING:**

**FULL-TIME STUDENTS:** Undergraduate students who are taking 12 or more credits each quarter or semester may be eligible for the full scholarship amount of up to \$5,000 for the academic year.

**PART-TIME STUDENTS:** Undergraduate students who are taking less than 12 credits each quarter or semester will be eligible up to \$2,500 each year on a pro-rated amount depending on the number of credits being taken.

**GRADUATE FUNDING AND CREDITS:**

A set-aside amount of \$140,000 for graduate level students will be available each fiscal year. Eligible students can receive up to \$5,000 per year, depending on financial need and credits taken. **Graduate Level Students** will not be identified as a part-time student as they may be enrolled below 12 credits each term and funding amounts will be pro-rated each term, depending on the number of credits being taken. Schools will determine if a graduate level student is full-time or part-time based off the institute’s credit criteria.

Any student that is taking three (3) credits or below will not be funded.

## **CSKT HIGH NEED DEGREE FIELD FUNDING:**

If you are enrolled and accepted into one of CSKT's high need degree fields, as either an Undergraduate Junior or Senior level or a Graduate level student, you will be awarded up to \$6,000 for the academic year. This award amount is designated for the following fields of study: Civil and/or Electrical Engineering, Education K-12 Teachers, Hydrology, Pharmacy, and Social Work. Students only qualify for the \$6,000 award if in these above specified high need fields (not for degrees that lead to work in the CSKT priority professions noted below).

## **CSKT PRIORITY PROFESSIONS:**

The CSKT Education Department and Tribal Council are supportive of all students to achieve their educational goals and accomplishments in any field of study of their choosing. According to Tribal Personnel, the following areas are priority professions in need of tribal members for which there exists current professional employment opportunities:

Accountants/CPA's, Attorneys, Nursing positions, Dental Hygienists, Dentists, Pharmacists, Physicians, Fisheries Biologists I & II, Foresters I & II, Information Technology Specialists, Child Protective Services/Foster Care Workers, Teachers (Two Eagle River School and Early Childhood Services), and Wildlife Biologists I & II. CSKT advocates for teachers and educational opportunity positions in all our public schools on the Flathead Indian Reservation.

The entire list of employment opportunities within the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes can be found at the Tribal Personnel Department or at <https://csktribes.org/index.php/employment>.

## **SCHOOLING OPTIONS**

### **VOCATIONAL TRAINING:**

If you are planning to attend a Vocational/ Training School or Trade Program through an accredited institution, this will be determined for approval on a case-by-case basis along with the possible funding amount to be awarded.

A limited number of vocational training programs are available locally. Students who have an interest should contact Salish Kootenai College at (406) 675-4800 or the Missoula or Kalispell Technical Centers; contact the Tribal Education Department for phone numbers to the Technical Centers. Each of these include placement options at the time of completion. A limit of (4) one-year vocational/technical training certificates can be obtained and must remain within the number of specified credit hours. Two certificates in non-related fields may be obtained; however, the third and fourth certificates must relate to a previous obtained certificate. Applications for vocational training are submitted on the same forms and criteria as higher education.

### **ONLINE EDUCATION:**

Full-time, "distance education" courses (12-15 credits) may be funded. However, freshman and sophomore students will be encouraged to enroll for only 6 credits to demonstrate extended working knowledge of the Internet, ability to complete the independent study, and course success. Junior and Senior students can enroll full-time. All students must notify TED that distance education is included in your studies.

### **SUMMER SCHOOL:**

Students who would like to attend summer school are still subject to the \$5000 maximum amount per academic year. To the extent that funds are available, students wanting to attend summer school may receive financial assistance from the Tribal Scholarship Program to offset the cost of tuition, fees and books. Students must select this option if they plan to attend summer school. Applications will be approved on a case-by-case basis.

**OUT-OF-STATE SCHOOLS:**

Students attending out-of-state and private schools will be funded at in-state tuition level and will still have a maximum of up to \$5,000 per academic year.

**OUT-OF-COUNTRY SCHOOLS:**

Students attending out-of-country schools may be funded on a case-by-case basis.

**CSKT HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL POLICY****SCHOLARSHIP DISBURSEMENTS:**

All awards will be disbursed to the Financial Aid Office at the school where a student attends. Funding disbursements are made by semester (two times per year) or quarter (three times per year) depending on the system the school uses. Please know your summer funding will be included in your annual award, if selected. Be aware that it could take up to two weeks before students see their Higher Education funding on their financial account.

**FINANCIAL AID PACKAGES:**

Students must accept the financial aid package (excluding loans) as provided by the college or university. Students are encouraged to apply for other scholarships based on their chosen career or other options matching their interests. Any financial aid declined will not be the responsibility of the Tribal Education Office to add to the student's budget.

**FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION:**

It is the responsibility of the student to follow through with the Financial Needs Analysis- Part 2. Contact your school's financial aid office to be sure your financial aid file is complete with them. At the latest, it should be done one full month prior to classes beginning.

**ACADEMIC CONSEQUENCES**

**Students make yourselves familiar with this portion of this Student Policy Handbook.**

**CSKT SCHOLARSHIP PROBATION:**

In the event a student should fall below 2.5 GPA, or not successfully complete a minimum of 12 credits per quarter/semester, unless listed as a part-time student, they will be placed on CSKT Scholarship Probation or immediate suspension depending on each situation. Probation will consist of students being monitored by the scholarship officer; not limited to, but possibly including the options listed below:

- Control the release of funding to monthly disbursements or partial funding release along with mid-term grade check before remaining funds can be released for the term
- Withhold funding for a quarter/semester
- Place the student on CSKT Suspension

**CSKT SCHOLARSHIP SUSPENSION:**

Funded students must maintain acceptable institutional academic standards. Students will be placed on suspension in the event he/she fails to maintain the minimum requirements for GPA and/ or credits for two consecutive quarters/ semesters. He/she will be automatically ineligible for assistance for a period of one full year. During the one-year suspension, the student must demonstrate their ability to achieve academic success at their educational institution. No Higher Education Scholarship funding will be available during that time.

**APPEALS PROCESS:**

The Scholarship Officer will make the initial decision on scholarship awards by applying the established criteria in this Student Policy Handbook. Students will be notified of incomplete application packets, allowing the student sufficient time to correct the deficiencies.

If a student is still dissatisfied with the Scholarship Officer's decision, he/she must then request an appeal to the Appeals Committee within the specified period of five (5) working days of being notified that they will not be funded. Students are advised to bring or submit the following documents:

- Provide a copy of your current grades or transcripts
- Your course/curriculum outline

Students can communicate with the committee in person or by teleconference.

Students can appeal the Scholarship Officer's decision to place the student on academic probation or suspension or the Scholarship Officer's decision to suspend funding due to exceeding the credit limit, felony conviction within the past year, or not receiving fall funding due to a late application submittal. Students in default status will not be able to appeal. Appeals will be presented to the Appeals Committee, which consists of the Tribal Education Department Head and the Executive Director of Tribal Member Services, for an approval or denial. The committee will have five (5) working days to hear the student appeal. The Scholarship Officer will notify the student with the final decision made.

### **RECOMMENDATION FOR MEDICAL / HEALTH COVERAGE:**

All students eligible for Tribal Health Paid Care must update their patient registration information before leaving for school and include verification of enrollment as a **full-time student**. Contact Patient Registration at (406) 745-3525 or (406) 883-5541 ext. 7364 or ext. 7310 for an updated application form. This needs to be completed **every** year you are enrolled in college.

The student is responsible for notifying the Healthcare Resource Division of the educational institution that they will be attending to discuss health insurance options available while attending school.

All students need to know that Montana Medicaid has expanded and is based on income; adults age 19-64, without children, are eligible to receive Medicaid. Students can apply at any county office or any Tribal Health clinic. Contact Tribal Health Paid Care (THPC) at (406) 745-3525 ext. 5053 to verify the student is eligible for services while attending college.

It is the student's responsibility to notify THPC of any doctor's office visits, including ER visits, within 72 hours. The Tribal Education Department recommends that you take the campus-based care for minor emergency coverage. Please remember to have your routine eye exam, dental and/or doctor appointments done locally before you leave for college. If you receive pharmacy services through Tribal Health Pharmacy, please contact the Pharmacist at (406) 745-3525 ext. 5180 or ext. 7395 regarding your prescriptions and their procedures.

**CALENDAR & TIME LINE**  
**UPCOMING YEAR- WHAT TO DO AND WHEN**

**SEPT:** Stay in contact with Higher Education Scholarship Officer regarding file completion and fall funding.

**OCT:** Submittal of late Higher Education Scholarships will close on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

**NOV & DEC:** Apply to each school for admission application and financial aid forms, to determine which documents are required.

**DEC & JAN:** Begin the 2024-2025 FAFSA process for the upcoming year; this will be based off the 2022 tax information.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov), also known as the Pell Grant, will be available for the 2024-2025 year. If the school you are applying to does not have electronic data processing, it may take up to six weeks before your FAFSA and Student Aid Report (SAR) will be processed and returned. Students under the age of 24 must report your parent's income unless you are married, have children or are a documented unaccompanied youth.

Students will need to submit final Fall Term grades to the Scholarship Officer. Final Fall grades must be received before your next term's funding will be released to your school; this will also be based off your academic standing at that time; these do not have to be official. You will also need to submit your next term's schedule for credit verification.

**FEB-MAY:** Tribal Higher Education Scholarship applications are available from the Tribal Education Department or [www.cskteducation.org](http://www.cskteducation.org). Students need to continue gathering and submit all documents required for the Higher Education Scholarship.

**MAR & APR:** Students will need to submit final Winter Quarter grades and spring schedule to the Scholarship Officer. Grades need to be received before your next term's funding will be released to your school; this will also be based off your academic standing at that time; these do not have to be official.

**MAY: 2024-2025 Higher Education scholarship applications are due Wednesday, May 1, 2024**

For students who apply after the May 1<sup>st</sup> deadline date, their applications will be marked as LATE and kept on file. We cannot guarantee any funding to late applicants, but if we have available funding later in the year, the LATE applications will be reviewed and a decision will be made to assist with any funding. Funding for late applications will not be available for the fall term. Late applications will be accepted through October 31<sup>st</sup>.

**MAY & JUNE:** Students need to submit final Spring Term grades to the Scholarship Officer; these grade reports do not have to be official.

**JULY: Student Agreement form** packets are sent out to all students who applied. This packet will inform students of their Higher Education Scholarship file completion or missing items and your award amount, if available. This form needs to be returned to the Scholarship Officer by **August 9<sup>th</sup>**. Call your financial aid office to verify you have completed all your internal financial aid paperwork to assure they can complete and send the Financial Needs Analysis form back to the Tribal Education office. It is the student's responsibility to follow through with Part 2: Financial Needs Analysis.

**AUGUST:** All additional paperwork is to be turned into the CSKT Scholarship Officer by **Friday, August 9, 2024** to receive your funding in a timely manner to start school.

If you have any questions or need clarification, call Miranda Burland, CSKT Scholarship Officer at (406)675-2700 ext. 1074 or email [Miranda.Burland@cskt.org](mailto:Miranda.Burland@cskt.org).