

The Bureau of Indian Education Higher Education Grant Program

**Information for Prospective
American Indian College Students**

Academic Year 2010 – Fall Edition



An Introduction to the Bureau of Indian Education's Higher Education Grant Program

The Bureau of Indian Education's (BIE) Higher Education Grant Program is not an entitlement program. You do not automatically receive funding because you are an American Indian. That is why it is very important for you to become familiar with the requirements of the BIE's grant program college admission requirements as well as your tribe's eligibility terms and the relationship between these various programs and offices. Your undivided attention is needed to successfully complete admission and financial packages. College admissions officers and students say, "... completing the admission and financial aid's seemingly endless paperwork is far more demanding than the academic term ..."

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE GRANT?

The purpose of the BIE's Higher Education Grant Program is to provide supplemental financial assistance to the eligible American Indian/Alaska Native scholar entering college seeking a baccalaureate degree.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR A GRANT?

A student must comply with eligibility criteria:

1. Must be a member of, or at least one-quarter degree Indian blood descendent of a member of an American Indian tribe which is eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States through the Bureau of Indian Education because of their status as Indians.
2. Must be accepted for admission to a nationally accredited institution of higher education which provides a course of study conferring the Associate of Arts or Bachelor's degree.
3. Must demonstrate financial need as determined by the financial aid officer of the collegiate institution.

WHERE CAN I OBTAIN A GRANT APPLICATION?

The grant application is available with the education officer of the tribe in which you are affiliated or possess membership. As the majority of federally recognized tribes are administering the grant program for their tribal members, call your tribe first. (A Tribal Leaders Directory is located on the Department of the Interior's (DOI) web page: www.bia.gov. Next go to Document Library, select Frequently Requested Documents, then select Tribal Leaders Directory) If your tribe is not administering the grant program, they can direct you to the nearest BIE Education Line Officer for the application. In the meantime, while you are waiting for your application, request all available financial aid information from the college to be sent to you. Be sure to inform the financial aid

officer that you are tribal and will be submitting the grant application along with other financial aid applications. Many colleges have knowledge of the BIE's grant program and can refer you to a knowledgeable counselor but don't assume the college will automatically transfer your paperwork because quite a few institutions are still clueless as to what grants are specifically for American Indian/Alaska Natives.

GRADUATE STUDENT RESOURCES

The Bureau of Indian Education administers a grant program through the American Indian Graduate Center (AIGC) that offers supplementary financial assistance for students pursuing post-baccalaureate degree programs.

The criteria for eligibility are:

1. Be an enrolled member of a federally recognized Indian/Alaska Native tribe in the United States.
2. Pursue a masters or doctorate degree as a full time student at an accredited graduate school in the United States.
3. Apply for campus-based financial aid through the federal financial aid process at the college by June 1st.

AIGC has served American Indian graduates since 1969, in all fields of study. First time applicants are assessed a non-refundable application fee of \$15. Applications must be received within their timeframes. Additional information and an application is available from the following address and telephone number: American Indian Graduate Center, 4520 Montgomery Blvd. NE, Suite 1-B, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87109, (505) 881-4584. Additional information is available at their website: www.aigcs.org

LAW STUDENTS

Law students seeking opportunities to enhance their academic success will want to contact the American Indian Law Center, Inc. This organization conducts an eight-week session to prepare potential Indian law students for the rigors of law school. There is an emphasis in the development of skills necessary for success in study habits, legal research and legal writing. This program is primarily for those students that have been accepted into an accredited institution.

For additional information and application process contact the American Indian Law Center, Inc., 1117 Stanford NE, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87196 or call (505) 277-5462.

TRIBAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Tribal colleges and universities were founded in recognition of the tremendous importance of postsecondary education to tribal economic development, cultural preservation and tribal sovereignty. These institutions represent the most significant and successful development in American education history. There are over 30 tribal colleges and universities in the United States educating over 26,000 Indian students that represent over 200 American Indian tribes. Additional information about these institutions can be found by contacting them directly.

Bay Mills Community College
12214 West Lakeshore Drive
Brimley, MI 49715
(906) 248-3354

Cankdeska Cikana Community College
POB 269
Ft. Totten, ND 58335
(701) 766-4415

College of Menominee Nation
POB 1179
Keshena, WI 54135
(715) 799-4921

Dine College
Box 126
Tsaile, AZ 86556
(928) 724-6671

Fort Belknap Community College
POB 159
Harlem, MT 59526
(406) 353-2607

Fort Peck Community College
POB 398
Poplar, MT 59255
(406) 768-5551

Iisagvik College
POB 479
Barrow, AK 99723
(907) 852-2729

Blackfeet Community College
POB 819
Browning, MT 59417
(406) 338-5411

Chief Dull Knife College
POB 98
Lame Deer, MT 59043
(406) 477-6215

Crownpoint Institute of Technology
POB 849
Crownpoint, NM 87313
(505) 786-4102

Fondu Lac Community College
2101 14th Street
Cloquet, MN 55720
(218) 879-0811

Fort Berthold Community College
POB 490
New Town, ND 58763
(701) 627-4738

Haskell Indian Nations University
155 Indian Avenue
Lawrence, KS 66046
(785) 749-8404

Institute of American Indian Arts
83 Avan Nu Po Road
Santa Fe, NM 87508
(505) 424-2302

Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College

111 Beartown Road 1
Barage, MI 49908
(906) 353-4600

Leech Lake Tribal College

POB 180
Cass Lake, MN 56633
(218) 335-4200

Little Priest Tribal College

POB 270
Winnebago, NE 68071
(402) 878-2380

Northwest Indian College

2522 Kwina Road
Bellingham, WA 98226
(360) 676-2772

Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College

2274 Enterprise Drive
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858
(989) 775-4123

Sinte Gleska University

POB 105
Mission, SD 57570
(605) 856-8100

Sitting Bull College

HC1, Box 4
Ft. Yates, ND 58538
(701) 854-3403

Stone Child Community College

Rocky Boy Rte., Box 1082
Box Elder, MT 59521
(406) 395-4313

Turtle Mountain Community College

POB 340
Belcourt, ND 58316
(701) 477-7870

Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Comm. College

3466 West Repania Road
Hayward, WI 54843
(715) 634-4790

Little Big Horn College

POB 370
Crow Agency, MT 59022
(406) 638-3100

Nebraska Indian Community College

POB 428
Macy, NE 68039
(402) 837-5078

Oglala Lakota Community College

POB 490
Kyle, SD 57752
(605) 455-6000

Salish Kootenai College

POB 70
Pablo, MT 59855
(406) 275-4801

Sisseton Wahpeton Community College

Box 689
Sisseton, SD 57262
(605) 698-3966

Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute

9169 Coors Road, NW
Albuquerque, NM 87120
(505) 346-8401

Tohono O'odham Community College

POB 3129
Sells, AZ 85634
(520) 383-8401

INDIAN ANCESTRY

Thousands of people throughout the United States have some degree of Indian blood. However, unless such an individual has at least one parent legally entitled to membership in a federally recognized Indian tribe, it is improbable that they can qualify for special services available to Indians or share in assets owned by an Indian tribe. The burden of proof of Indian ancestry rests with the individual claiming possession of Indian blood.

Many people are descended from eastern tribes that disbanded before the present government of the United States came into being in 1789. As a result, there are no existing Indian groups with which these individuals can affiliate. Others are descended from western tribes but can't substantiate their claim to membership in an Indian tribe due to lack of early family records.

Contrary to popular belief, Indians do not receive payments from the federal government simply because they have Indian blood. Funds distributed to a person of Indian descent may represent income from his/her own property, collected for him/her by an agent of the United States. Other disbursements to individuals may represent compensation for lands taken in connection with governmental projects, comparable to payments made to non-Indians for the acquisition of land for governmental purposes. Some Indian tribes receive income from the utilization of tribal timber and other reservation resources, a percentage of which may be distributed as per capita among the tribe's membership. Individual tribal members also share in the money paid to the tribes by the federal government in fulfillment of treaty obligations. Money available for payments belong either to the tribe or to an individual and is held in trust by the federal government. In this event, government checks are issued in making payment to individuals or to the tribes.

To be eligible to receive payment from tribal funds, a person, in addition to possessing Indian blood must be a recognized member of the Indian tribe whose money is being distributed. Generally, responsibility for establishing this membership lies with the tribe and the individual. Indian tribes establish their own enrollment criteria.

Some early records or consensus of Indian bands, tribes, or groups are on file at the National Archives and Records Service, Natural Resources Branch, Civil Archives Division (Eighth and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20408). These records, identified by tribes, are dated chiefly from 1830 to 1940. To search records, the archivist must be given the name of the Indian in question (preferably both his English and his Indian name), his date of birth, and the name of his tribe. The names of his parents and grandparents should also be given. If ancestry is unknown, there are private research sources that are available. The credibility of the research service should be established before securing the service by contacting local offices of the Better Business Bureau.

The Central Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) does not maintain comprehensive lists of persons possessing Indian blood or enrollment data of every federally recognized Indian tribe. However, copies of census and membership rolls may be on file in the BIA's field offices. A list of these offices can be obtained from the BIA's Tribal Leaders Directory under "Area Offices." The Area Office list identifies the states over which a particular Area Office has

jurisdiction. If proof of membership in a particular tribe is desired, inquiry should be made to that particular tribe. The BIA publishes a list of federally recognized Indian tribes in the Federal Register. The latest publication was on March 22, 2007, (Vol. 72, No. 55), which can be obtained from most libraries, or accessed at the DOI's webpage: www.doi.gov/leaders.pdf.

GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH.

How to begin. Unless you are a king or a president or other notable, finding your ancestors and making sure a "family tree" is kept for future generations may be up to you. The federal government does not do family research, or does its National Archives collect or preserve family trees. Books or family history and genealogy are collected, compiled, and published by private individuals who do so because they are interested descendants.

As the depository of the federal government's records deemed of permanent value for historical purposes, the National Archives houses many records that can be helpful to persons who wish to trace their ancestry. The search however, cannot be completed at the National Archives alone. Many other depositories should be consulted. Following are suggestions about things to do and ways to go about getting a start at finding your ancestors.

START WITH YOURSELF. You are the beginning "twig" on the vast family tree. Start with yourself, the known, and work toward the unknown. You should find out all the vital information you can about your parents, write it down, then find out about your grandparents, great-grandparents, etc.

NAMES, DATES, PLACES, RELATIONSHIPS. You will be concerned with pulling from the many and varied documents of recorded history's four key items. These are the tools of the family researcher. People can be identified in records by their names, the date of events in their lives, the places they lived, and the relationships to others either stated or implied in the records.

HOME SOURCES. The first place begins at home. You can find much information in family bibles, newspaper clippings, military certificates, birth and death certificates, marriage licenses, diaries, letters, scrapbooks, backs of pictures, baby books, etc.

RELATIVES AS A SOURCE. Visit or write those in your family who have information, particularly older relatives. More often than not others before you have gathered data about the families in which you are interested. You should write a letter, make a personal visit, or conduct a telephone survey to find out about such persons and what information is already collected.

FINDING DISTANT RELATIVES. Before launching your research program in libraries and archives, search for distant relatives who may have already performed this search. Advertise in the local genealogical bulletins where your ancestors lived.

BIRTH, MARRIAGE AND DEATH RECORDS. Some states began to keep records of birth and death earlier, but for most of the United States, birth and death registration became a requirement around the turn of the century, about 1890-1915. Before that time these events will be found recorded generally in church records and family bibles. Marriages will be found recorded in most counties, dating often as early as the establishment of the country.

CHURCH RECORDS. A few churches have records of important events in the lives of members but many do not. Investigate the possibility of finding genealogical data in the records of the church in which your ancestor belonged.

DEEDS AND WILLS. Records of property acquisition and disposition can be good sources of genealogical data. Such records are normally in the county courthouses. Often the earliest county records or copies of them are also available in state archives.

FEDERAL RECORDS. The National Archives in Washington, D.C. has records of use in genealogical research. The federal census records are also available on microfilm in the National Archives regional branches located in 11 metropolitan areas throughout the country. The National Archives also has military service and related records, passenger arrival records and others.

LIBRARIES, SOCIETIES, ARCHIVES. Visit the state, regional, local institutions in your area. Libraries, historical and genealogical societies, and archival depositories are all good sources for genealogical and family history data.

HIRING A RESEARCHER. If you wish to hire a researcher, write to the following organization that will provide you a list: Board for Certification of Genealogists, POB 14291, Washington, D.C. 20044.