



Student Handbook: Policy & Procedures

BIA Higher Ed / AVT / ABE – GED

NOOKSACK INDIAN TRIBE
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

a. EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Meeting the costs of an undergraduate education is a major investment for students. It requires planning, careful decision making, and a commitment from you and your family. In support of the college mission, the Education Department makes every effort to provide financial assistance to eligible applicants through grants, scholarships, internships, or a combination of these student aid programs. Aid is available to help meet educational costs including tuition and fees, books and educational supplies.

Eligibility for financial aid is determined by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on an annual basis.

Financial aid is administered in accordance with federal and state regulations. Policies and procedures within this guide may be changed at any time to fall into accordance with new State or Federal regulations.

b. WHAT TYPES OF AID ARE AVAILABLE

i. Federal

Federal Aid is generally the starting point for students seeking aid. Application for Federal Pell Grant through the FAFSA is also the way most other scholarships will determine your eligibility.

ii. State

Depending on what state you are from, there may be opportunities available for scholarships. Contact your state's higher education board for information. If you are a resident of Washington State, there are many scholarships available for Native Americans, foster children, and other diverse groups. Check with the Washington Student Achievement Council at: <http://readyssetgrad.org/#college/financial-aid-101> for listings of current scholarships and eligibility guidelines.

iii. Tribal

Nooksack Indian Tribe offers a few scholarships and grants through our Education Department. Tribal members are encouraged to apply for the various and helpful Education grants: BIA Higher Education, Adult Basic Education, Adult Vocational Technical Education, Johnson O'Mally Program, SIAMSCHA Assistance Program. These applications and the process to apply can be found on the tribal website: <https://nooksacktribe.org/departments/education/education-grants/>

Application openings and deadlines are provided on the scholarship and grant applications.

iv. **Outside Scholarships**

Students can apply for and receive outside scholarships (See table IV for a list of scholarships and deadlines known to the Education Department).

c. **WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS?**

Generally, eligibility for student aid is based on financial need (as demonstrated by completing the FAFSA annually) and on several other factors.

Federal and State:

Some of the basic eligibility requirements to receive federal and/or state aid are listed below:

- ◆ Be a U.S. citizen or an eligible non-citizen (documented Canadian First Nations)
- ◆ Have a valid Social Security Number
- ◆ Maintain satisfactory academic progress in college (see table I for satisfactory Academic Progress guidelines)
- ◆ Be accepted to an Accredited College as a regular full time student by completing an application.
- ◆ Be declared in an approved program of study:
 1. Bachelor Degree (Any)
 2. Associate Degree (Any)

Tribal:

I. BIA HIGHER EDUCATION:

- ◆ Be an enrolled Tribal Member
- ◆ Be a full-time student enrolled in 12 or more credits
- ◆ Be accepted by admissions to a nationally-accredited institution of higher education that provides a course of study conferring an associate of arts or a bachelor's degree
- ◆ Demonstrate financial need as determined by the financial aid officer of the post-secondary institution
- ◆ Maintain satisfactory academic progress in college: with a quarterly and cumulative GPA of 2.0

2. HOW TO RECEIVE FINANCIAL AID

a. GETTING STARTED

Getting aid begins with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each academic year. Before applying, you'll want to have the following information ready:

- I. Income tax returns (yours and your parents if you are under 24 and are not married and have no dependents), W-2 forms, bank statements and other records of income both taxed and non-taxed.
- II. Identification information (for student and parent(s) if applicable: social security numbers, driver's license numbers, alien registration card)
- III. Your own, private email address

b. COMPLETE THE FAFSA

The FAFSA is free (never pay to complete the FAFSA, there are scam sites out there, so be careful).

- I. Go to www.fafsa.ed.gov
- II. Enter Information as accurately as possible
- III. Apply for and use your FSA ID (get it at www.fsaid.ed.gov). Your parents will need to apply for and use their FSA ID if their information is required (see "dependent vs. independent" section below)
- IV. If you need help, the Education office can assist you or you can use the online chat assistance at studentaidhelp.ed.gov, or call the U.S. Department of education at 1-800-4-FED-AID
- V. Submit FAFSA

c. RECEIVING THE MONEY

i. How is aid disbursed?

1. Tuition, fees, housing (if living on campus), textbook charges, and any other institutional cost is billed to your student account.

Keep in mind:

- Returning students may have a balance from a previous quarter.

- Students considered non-residents for tuition paying purposes (generally students who do not have a Tribal ID on file in the enrollment services office) will have higher tuition rates.
- Pell is available up to 150% of the award year, if the student meets certain qualifications. Students wishing to utilize Summer Pell can do so by an email from their student account or a written and signed statement. Refer to your award letter for more information.

2. Awards for the quarter are applied to your student account.

3. Awards are generally (with some exceptions, depending on the origin of the award) used first to cover any outstanding balance on a student account.

4. If the amount billed to your account is higher than the amount of the award applied to your account, you are required to make arrangements to pay the remainder of your balance.

5. If there is any amount of funding remaining on your student account after all of your outstanding balance has been paid, the remainder will be issued to you in the form of a refund check.

6. Credit Load:

1 Credit – 5 Credits	Less than Half Time
6 Credits – 8 Credits	Half Time
9 Credits – 11 Credits	Three Quarter Time
12+ Credits	Full Time

ii. When is aid disbursed?

Students must meet the following criteria before funds are disbursed:

- Be registered full time (12 or more credits)
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress (receive a GPA of 2.0 or above and complete the full time amount of credits)

iii. Attendance

Students must attend classes to receive Pell grant and many other scholarships. Instructors are expected to keep a regular log of their students' attendance in the online attendance link. Students who have not been marked as attending their classes will have the respective class's credits amount reduced from the amount of Pell the student was otherwise entitled. Students who do not attend

any of their classes will have their entirety of their Pell and some other grants returned to their grant sources, but they will still be responsible for any tuition and fees incurred if they do not withdraw from classes by the withdrawal deadline. Students must contact their instructors regarding any attendance issues and their instructors must enter attendance online. No other forms of attendance verification will be accepted.

iv. Deadlines

It is very important to pay attention to the deadlines of a particular scholarship. Missing deadlines can often result in the inability to receive the award. "Meeting a deadline" means having a complete file, with nothing still pending from the student or the Department of Education. Remember that the FAFSA can be filed as early as October 1 of the year prior to the start of the academic year, so complete it as soon as you have your tax information from the previous year available.

- Priority Deadlines: Most awards are FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE. Meeting the priority deadlines can help you receive more scholarships. Even if you plan to arrive in the winter or spring, applying by the summer priority deadline may allow you to accept awards that would be gone by the time you enroll. Just remember if you receive an award letter and you wish to defer some of your awards for a later quarter you must contact the financial aid office so that your awards are not reallocated to another student when you don't show up in the fall.

d. AT THE END OF THE QUARTER

i. Satisfactory academic progress

At the end of the quarter, the Nooksack Indian Tribe Education Department will require students to regularly submit proof of satisfactory completion, continued enrollment, statement of financial need, or other information to continue receiving funding. It is the sole responsibility of the student to provide such documentation to the Education Department by the deadline. The financial aid office will not respond to requests from outside agencies to release your financial aid information unless a release form is on file in the financial aid office.

e. MAINTAINING ELIGIBILITY

i. Suspension of Aid

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EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box 157
Deming, WA 98244

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@nooksack-nsn.gov

If a student falls below the satisfactory academic progress requirements and either of the following occur, the student must notify the financial aid and Tribal Education office according to the guidelines below:

1. Grade Changes

If your grades from a quarter in which you were placed on suspension or warning change, please notify us by completing a grade change notification form. We will review the change and adjust your status accordingly. Any changes to awards will result in an updated award letter via email or mail.

2. Complete a Quarter on your own

Students who successfully complete a quarter of at least 6 credits will be automatically reinstated. It may take more than 6 credits to successfully meet satisfactory academic progress. They will be reinstated on a probationary status. If the probationary quarter is not completed successfully, the student will be placed back on suspension or denied status. Students will receive notification of their reinstatement via email.

3. Appeal for Reinstatement of Aid

If the cause of you being unable to complete the quarter within the satisfactory academic standards is due to a special mitigating circumstance beyond the student's control, you may be able to appeal for reinstatement of aid. Students must complete the reinstatement appeal form and attach all required documents including copies of unofficial transcripts by the deadline each quarter. Documentation is required. Incomplete appeals will not be reviewed. Please refer to the appeal form for process and policy information. Complete appeals will be sent a reply in writing.

II. APPEAL PROCESS

An applicant, who feels that they have been wrongly denied, as per the guidelines, may appeal the decision within 20 working days of the denial letter. The appeal shall be in writing setting forth the reason(s) why the applicant believes the decision should be changed. Students may attach additional documentation supporting their appeal. Documents must be submitted prior to their appeal date in order to be included for the EAC to review. The Education Coordinator will schedule a date for the EAC to meet and make a second decision on the original student request. That decision shall be final. If the student is still denied funding, the student will receive a letter containing the reason for denial.

Committee members are prohibited from talking about student cases outside of EAC meetings. All members are held strict confidentiality according to the confidentiality statement they signed.

Written appeals shall be sent to the following address:

Nooksack Indian Tribe
Attention: Education Director
P.O. Box 157
Deming, WA 98244

3. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Sometimes students have extenuating circumstances which may change the way their FAFSA application is considered. Such circumstances may include such things as: deaths in the family, change of employment status, pregnancy or childbirth, or other situations. Students wishing to have considerations made in regard to their application must request in writing using the change of circumstances form available by contacting the Financial Aid Office. All requests will require documentation. The director will review your form and written statement and then contact you to inform you what other documentation will be required.

4. TABLES

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS REQUIREMENTS

Applies to Pell Grant, State Need, Tribal Scholarships and Grants: To receive aid and continued funding, students must maintain BOTH quantitative requirement and the qualitative requirement. Satisfactory Academic Progress checks are done quarterly.

Quantitative Requirement

Students must complete a minimum of 12 credits of the quarterly and cumulative attempted credits

Qualitative Requirement

Pell, State Need, BIA Grants: Students must maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA of 2.0 and a Quarterly GPA of 2.0

Students who do not meet BOTH of these standards in one quarter will be placed on warning. They will still be able to receive continued funding, and if they meet the requirements in the following quarter, they will return to good standing.

Students who do not meet these requirements for two successive quarters will be placed on suspension of funding. If funding is suspended, students are required to pay their own tuition until such time as they again meet the guidelines for making satisfactory progress.

Students are notified of their current status at the end of each quarter via e-mail.

REINSTATEMENT

Students with special mitigating circumstances contributing to being denied may be able to appeal for reinstatement provided they can properly document their circumstance and that they do not have more than two consecutive quarters of non-satisfactory academic progress. Appeals are reviewed by the Education Advisory Committee quarterly and students are notified of the results by email. Students may only receive a reinstatement ONCE in their career and it may only be applied to one quarter. If successful completion of a probationary quarter would not result in the student returning to good standing, the appeal will not be granted. A student may earn reinstatement by successfully completing 6 or more credits with their own funding. It may take more than 6 credits to successfully meet satisfactory academic progress. The student should consult an advisor.

Other Scholarships

NAME	TYPE	WHERE TO APPLY
AICF – Full Circle	Tribal	Collegefund.org
American Indian Services	Tribal	Americanindiainservices.org
Accenture American Indian Scholarship	Tribal	Aigcs.org/scholarships
American Indian Endowed	WA Tribal	Readyssetgrad.org
Washington Indian Gaming	WA Tribal	Washingtonindiangaming.org

More scholarship opportunities can be found at

- ❖ www.finaid.org/scholarships
- ❖ www.thewashboard.org
- ❖ Bigfuture.collegeboard.org

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