



SECTION 1

HIGHER EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM POLICY

1.1 – PURPOSE:

The Higher Education Grant Program is a financial program based on the need to provide educational opportunities for Walker River Paiute Tribal members to attend a higher education institution. The program's funding criteria are based on the Walker River Paiute Tribe's annual funding agreement with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This program is designed to offer support and guidance to Walker River Paiute Tribal members in attaining a higher education.

Students must be entering or continuing with their post-secondary education at the undergraduate level and require financial support.

1.2 – ELIGIBILITY:

To be eligible for a grant, an applicant must be:

- A. An enrolled member, certified with the Walker River Paiute Tribe.
- B. Students may be eligible for funding for up to five (5) years (10 semesters).
- C. Any student receiving higher education funds may not be eligible to receive AVT or Enrichment funding in the same funding cycle.

1.3 – CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

- A. No member of the WRPT Board of Education shall participate in any decision-making procedure involving a specific person who is a member of his/her immediate family (spouse, domestic partner, son, daughter, father, mother, sister, or brother), or in any matter that otherwise involves a conflict of interest.
- B. Board members shall refrain from any actions involving family members that may be construed as a conflict of interest.
- C. It is the sole right and responsibility of any Board of Education or Education personnel to disclose any potential conflict of interest.

1.4 – DETERMINATION:

- A. The WRPT Education Director shall have the responsibility for determining an applicant's eligibility for funding.
- B. Eligible students who demonstrate a financial need, as stated herein, are eligible for funding.

1.5 – STANDARDS OF GRANT APPLICATION AND FUNDING:

Contingent upon the amount of funds made available to the Walker River Paiute Tribe, eligible students will be funded according to the following policies. Annually allocated Tribal education funding will be divided equally in half for the academic year starting the Fall semester and ending the following Spring semester, to distribute funding fairly and equitably for eligible applicants.

- A. Applicants will be funded based on a completed application consisting of:
 1. A Higher Education Grant application.
 2. A letter of acceptance from the college or university, or proof of enrollment.
 3. A Financial Needs Analysis (FNA) completed by the college financial aid officer documenting financial need.
 4. Must have a signed FERPA release.
 5. Completed and signed W-9 for student check payments.
- B. A continuing student must submit an unofficial grade transcript.
- C. High school diploma or GED.
- D. Proof of Tribal membership. (New student)

1.6 – DEADLINES:

The Higher Education Grant application deadlines and related calendar of events are as follows:

Fall Semester

- **Third Friday of July, by 5:00 p.m. (PDT) – Students’ deadline for applying.**
- Due to the summer break, the Education Department will accept the **Financial Needs Analysis** form from schools/institutions **no later than August 1st**.
- The Board of Education shall hold a special meeting to review and approve applications within five business days of the August 1st deadline.
- Letters of notification will be sent on or before August 10th to all applicants approving or denying higher education funding.

Spring Semester

- **December 15th - Deadline for submitting a completed application.**
- The Board of Education shall review and approve applications during its December regular meeting.
- Letters of notification will be sent on or before December 23rd to all applicants approving or denying higher education funding.
- Due to a new funding year, Spring award payments will be processed after January 1st.

All continuing students must reapply for the Higher Education Grant each semester by the deadline.

1.7– CALCULATION OF AWARD:

The calculation process of the award for applicants is based on a Financial Needs Analysis (FNA) and the Unmet Need.

$$\text{Total Expenses} - \text{Total Resources} = \text{Unmet Need}$$

Total Expenses: Tuition/Fees, Room/Board, Books/Supplies, and transportation.

Total Resources: Pell Grant, other grants, and scholarships.

Calculation of the Award:

The college Financial Aid Officer (FAO) completes the Tribes' Financial Needs Analysis (FNA) form, which represents the school's recommendation for funding for the Higher Education Program. Full-time status or a minimum of 12 credits is required to receive funding.

Funding areas to be considered for Higher Education: (maximum allowed per semester)

1. Tuition and fees. (\$7,500 maximum allowed)
2. Books, materials, and supplies. (\$2,000 maximum allowed)
3. Room and Board. (\$4,800.00 maximum allowed)
4. Transportation. (\$2,000.00 maximum allowed)

Expenses will be limited to the maximum amounts stated above only. Resources will include Pell grants, state grants or awards, and other scholarships. Student resources will not include parents' or students' expected family contribution, student work-study, loans, or other items requiring payback.

EXPENSES		RESOURCES	
Tuition	\$7,500	Pell	\$2,500
Room/Board	\$2,000	Scholarship	<u>\$ 750</u>
Books/Supplies	\$4,800		\$3,250
Transportation	<u>\$2,000</u>		
	\$16,300		
		EXPENSES	\$16,300
		RESOURCES	<u>-\$3,250.00</u>
		UNMET NEED	\$13,050.00

Total of all students' unmet needs divided by the amount allocated for that semester = percentage of funding to be provided.

Example: If the total of all students' unmet needs is \$100,000 and the amount of funding to be provided for the semester is \$20,000, then the percentage of funding to be provided would be calculated as:

\$100,000 divided by \$20,000 = 20%

The student example provided above showed an unmet need of \$3,750. This student would receive:

\$3,750 unmet need x 20% = \$750.00

Students eligible for **NSHE Fee Waiver funds will only have them applied to Room/Board, Books/Supplies, and Transportation. Tuition will not be covered.*

1.8 – FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION:

It is the student's responsibility to follow through with the Financial Needs Analysis form to be completed by their school. Students may contact their school's financial aid office to be sure their financial aid file is complete. At the latest, this is recommended to be completed one full month before the Higher Education deadlines.

1.9 – DISBURSEMENTS:

- A. **Payment Methods:** The Higher Education grant awards will be made by a check/ACH payment directly to the Financial Aid Office of the student's enrolled institution. The Agai Dicutta Scholarship award will be made by a check payable to the student. *(See Agai Dicutta Scholarship Policy for more information)* Students will not be allowed to collect their school checks, as they are payable to the school, not the student.
- B. **School/University Disbursement:** In the letter to the school, instructions are provided to credit the grant funds towards the student's tuition, fees, and on-campus room and board, if applicable. Any remaining balance is paid directly to the student for other educational expenses. If the school is unable to pay out excess funds to the student, the check must be returned to the Tribe, and the amount will be reissued to the student by the Tribe.
- C. **Annual Timeframe:** Funding is disbursed by semester (twice a year).

1.10 – ACADEMIC REQUIREMENT:

The following requirement for academic progress will be used to determine continuation of funding under the Tribal Higher Education Grants Program:

A student must notify the Education Director in writing immediately upon electing not to proceed with his/her courses or at any time the student is dismissed or disenrolled from school. The student is responsible for filing with the Education Director a notice of withdrawal from the school. Failure to provide this notice may adversely affect future funding.

1. All students will maintain a minimum of 2.0 grade point average (GPA) for at least 12 credit hours per semester/ quarter.
2. Those earning less than a 2.0 GPA in one semester will then be placed on Academic Probation.

Students withdrawing or leaving school after funds have been distributed will automatically be suspended from the Higher Education Grants Program until they return or repay to the Tribe an equivalent dollar amount to what the student or the student's school received.

1.11– ACADEMIC PROBATION OR SUSPENSION:

1. A student who does not meet the minimum academic requirement for one term will be funded on academic probation during the next term.
 - a. Academic probation requirement: Student will be required to receive a 2.0 or higher GPA on college credits equivalent to that amount that was lost, resulting in being placed on academic probation.

- b. Notification of this action will be made to the student by letter; lack of notification does not negate the action. If substantial progress is not made during the probationary period, the student's Tribal funding will be suspended.
2. Once a student's Tribal funding has been suspended, the student will not be considered for funding until the student, through other funding sources, earns a minimum of college credits equivalent to what was previously funded for and lost, and earns a 2.0 or higher GPA.
3. After a student reinstates his/her Tribal funding by fulfilling the requirements, he/she will continue to be eligible for funding if he/she maintains the academic requirements stipulated by the program.

1.12 – APPEAL PROCEDURES:

1) RIGHT TO A HEARING

- A. Upon filing a written request as provided herein, a participant is entitled to a hearing before the Board of Education.

2) DEFINITIONS

- A. A participant is defined as anyone participating in a program funded by the WRPT Education Department.
- B. An appeal or complaint is defined as any dispute with respect to the WRPT Education Department regulations, guidelines, or procedures that affect the rights, duties, welfare, or status of the participant.

3) THE PROCEDURE TO OBTAIN A HEARING

- A. Any appeal or complaint must be in writing and signed by the participant and filed with the Education Director. After reviewing the appeal or complaint, a hearing before the Board of Education will be held within twenty (20) days or at the next regular Board of Education meeting (whichever comes first).

4) THE HEARING

- A. If the participant fails to appear or make himself/herself available by phone at a scheduled hearing, the WRPT Board of Education may decide that the participant has waived his/her right to a hearing. The participant will then be notified in writing of the result and determination.
- B. At the hearing, the participant will be given the opportunity to address the Board of Education to present the issues in his/her appeal/complaint and to state the participant's requested relief. The Education Department staff will also be given an opportunity to address the issues raised in the appeal/complaint.

5) DECISION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

- A. The decision of the Board of Education will be based solely and exclusively on the facts presented by both the participant and the Education Department at the requested hearing, and the applicable laws/regulations/policies governing the matter.

- B. The Board of Education shall prepare, in writing, its decision with the reasons for or against the participant's request within twenty (20) days after the hearing. A copy of the decision will be sent to the participant, and a copy will be kept on file.

6) FINAL DECISION

- A. If the participant is not satisfied with the Board of Education's decision after the hearing, the participant may appeal the decision to the Walker River Paiute Tribal Council.
- B. A final decision on the matter will be determined by the Walker River Paiute Tribal Council.
- C. Hearing Request: The participant shall submit a written request for a final hearing by the Tribal Council to the Tribal Council Secretary. The Tribal Council shall hold a hearing on the matter within twenty (20) days or by the next regular Tribal Council meeting (whichever occurs first), after receipt of such a request.
- D. The decision of the Tribal Council shall be based solely and exclusively on the facts presented by both the participant and the Education Department at the hearing, and the applicable laws/regulations/policies governing the matter.
- E. The Tribal Council shall prepare a written decision with the reasons for or against the participant's request within twenty (20) days after the hearing. A copy of the decision will be sent to the participant, and a copy will be kept in the file.
- F. The Tribal Council's decision shall be final and not reviewable by any court or any other entity.

1.13 – AUDIT OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM:

- A. A minimum of 5 randomly chosen applicant files will be audited for accuracy by the WRPT Board of Education and the August and December board meetings in closed session. The audit is to take place before higher education funding can be released to applicants.
- B. The audit process will cover the entire funding cycle from grant application to receipt of funds.