



# Higher Education Grant Policies

## I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Tribal Higher Education award serves students as a supplemental source of aid for enrolled members of the Yurok Tribe pursuing regular course work required to meet a degree objective. Grant funds may be used for tuition, living expenses, required fees, textbooks, and miscellaneous expenses related to attendance at an accredited college.

## II. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURE

- Applicant must be an enrolled Yurok Tribal member.
- Applicants who are currently incarcerated in a state or a federal prison system may not apply.
- Applicants are no longer required to apply for the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) filing for FAFSA, federal financial aid at <https://student.aid.gov/> although it is highly recommended to access possible additional funding each academic year.
- Applicants are required to apply for acceptance into an accredited college or university and meet all of the educational institution's deadlines for admission. Students may be required to provide accreditation information.
- Applicants must be a high school graduate or have earned a General Equivalency Degree (GED). Minors must provide proof of completion when applying for Tribal funding.
- Students may submit an application for scholarship funds to the Yurok Tribe only after they have secured admission to an accredited college.
- Students must be currently enrolled in the semester for which they are seeking funding assistance.
- Application forms for educational grant assistance are available upon request by contacting the Yurok Tribe Education Department at: [HigherEdGrants@yuroktribe.nsn.us](mailto:HigherEdGrants@yuroktribe.nsn.us) or can be downloaded from the tribal webpage, [www.yuroktribe.org](http://www.yuroktribe.org) under the Education Department.
- Completed applications are accepted only during the open period.
- All supporting application information must have the applicant's printed name, and date on the document.
- Students' responsibility to Confirm that completed application has been received.
- Completed applications will be funded on a first-come, first-serve basis pending availability of funding. All applicants will be notified via email of receipt within ten business days.
- Funding for Higher Education is always contingent on federal funding being available to the Yurok Tribe. The new federal fiscal year begins October 1 each year and students may have to wait for the new fiscal year to begin for funds to be awarded.

## III. FUNDING REQUIREMENTS AND AWARD AMOUNTS

### School Terms: Semester & Quarter Systems

The Higher Education Grant is awarded twice each school year; once per fall semester and once per spring semester. Students must reapply for each term. Students enrolled on different school terms (e.g., quarter or trimester) must apply only during the Tribal grant's open period, too. Furthermore,

students with different school terms must show proof that they are enrolled either full- or part-time. The Higher Education Grant does not award summer courses, nor does it consider summer grades in application reviews.

**Full-Time Students:**

Funds may be awarded to students who are attending college full-time and are enrolled in a minimum of 12 units per semester. Students attending schools with a different credit system for full-time are responsible for providing that documentation for full-time. Current allocation amount is based on availability of funds.

**Part-time Students**

Funds may be awarded to students who are attending college part-time and are enrolled in a minimum of 6 units per semester. The amount is half of what a full-time student receives. Current allocation amounts are based on the availability of funds.

**Graduate Students:**

Applications for graduate students will be accepted. The minimum number of units required for full- or part-time funding may vary and is determined by university policy or documentation. Applicants may need to provide university policy stating the number of units required for part or full-time graduate status. Graduate students are encouraged to contact the American Indian Graduate Center (AIGCS.org) at (505) 881-4584 or other scholarship sites for scholarship opportunities.

**IV. UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE ACCREDITATION**

The institution the student elects to attend must be accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency; or be an institution whose credits are accepted on transfer by no fewer than three institutions which are accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association on the same basis as if transferring from an accredited institution. This latter alternative is referred to as “three institutional” certifications. Junior colleges may qualify if they meet any of these criteria.

**V. CONDITIONS FOR CONTINUATION OF GRANT**

- Maintain minimum 2.0 GPA for each school term.
- Maintain enrollment in minimum number of units for full- or part-time status.
- Submit a new, fully completed, Higher Education application for each new school year.
- Submit unofficial transcripts or grades, units, with applicant’s name, for each term in which an award was given.
- Submit a new class schedule with units with student name, date or term, for each applicable term.
- Submit a completed and signed W-9 form with the last 4 digits of social security # and mailing address matching that on the application. The W-9 is for informational purposes only. (This is required by the fiscal process for production of the higher education grant check)
- Applicants in their final term/semester before college graduation are encouraged to provide the Yurok Education Department with a graduation photo and their plans for their future.

*Please note:* Students earning less than a 2.0 GPA will be placed on probationary status for one semester and will receive only half funding. If the student does not bring his or her GPA up to 2.0 by the following, third semester, his or her funding will be suspended, and he or she will be required to complete a semester with a 2.0 GPA without Tribal funding before funds can be reinstated. A student who was funded for part-time, may complete a part-time or full-time semester on their

own with a 2.0 GPA. A student who was funded for full-time must complete a full-time semester or two part-time semesters on their own with a 2.0 GPA.

**In the event that the student has experienced “extreme circumstances” and has not fully completed his or her semester, the student will be required to provide medical or other professional documentation. The Department Director will review the documentation provided and notify student in writing of their decision. See Section X for further explanation.**

#### **VI. APPLICATION REVIEW**

Completed applications will be reviewed on an individual basis and either approved or disapproved by the Education Department. Do NOT send high school transcripts, diplomas, GEDs, or college letters of admission unless specifically requested by the Education Department.

The following chart indicates what constitutes a completed grant application:

<b>Required Documents for Complete Application</b>
Grant Application – fully completed, dated and signed (yearly unless information changes)
Class Schedule with units and name. Disregard if info. is on transcript (each application)
Unofficial college transcript with units, grades, name, date/term (each application)
W-9 form with mailing address matching application page (only once unless address changes)
Proof of Tribal Membership (each application)
See scholarship check list for other funding opportunities

#### **VII. RELEASING TRIBAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD & PENALTIES**

- Approved grant award will be paid by check to the student.
- When a student withdraws (either partially or fully) or is dropped from college, a refund of the unused grant funds will be made to the Yurok Tribe by the student.
- Alternatively, the amount will be deducted from the student’s eligible allocation the following term in which the student seeks funding assistance.
- Students will not be eligible for any educational grant award until the debt is resolved.

#### **VIII. PROBATIONARY STATUS**

- Students are required to submit their unofficial transcript, grade reports to the Education Department.
- Funding for the upcoming term will not be allocated until the grade report is received.
- A grant recipient who does NOT meet the academic requirements explained in Section V of these policies will be placed on financial aid probation for a period of one (1) term.
- To remove the probationary status the student must meet the minimum standards of eligibility by the end of the probationary term. If the student does not meet minimum standards, the grant will be suspended until he or she successfully completes a term.
- Students whose circumstances change and know they will not complete the semester/term have the option to return the grant check to stay in good standing. Please notify the Education Department before sending the check.

## **IX. SUSPENDING GRANT ELIGIBILITY**

- A student receiving a Tribal scholarship who is on financial probation and fails to meet the academic standards will be suspended from the scholarship program.
- A suspended student is ineligible for future funding until he or she earns a minimum GPA of at least 2.0 for a single term at full- or part-time enrollment depending on the student's previous enrollment status in which they received an award.
- A suspension notice will be sent to the student.  
Students whose circumstances change and know they will not complete the semester/term have the option to return the grant check to stay in good standing. Please notify the Education Department before sending the check.

*Funding for the new federal fiscal year begins October 1 each year and students may have to wait for the new fiscal year to begin funds to be awarded.*

## **X. APPEAL PROCESS**

Students can appeal their probationary or suspension status via written request. The grievance process shall be as follows:

### **Step 1**

The student shall submit the written grievance to the Yurok Tribal Director of Education Programs. The Education Director will review all material available, including any new information submitted, within 10 working days and inform the student via letter of the decision made. If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily, then the student can move to the next step of the appeal process.

### **Step 2**

The student shall then submit within five working days the written grievance to the Executive Director of the Yurok Tribe. The Executive Director will review all material available within 10 working days and inform the student via letter of the decision made. If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily, then the student can move to the next step of the appeal process.

### **Step 3**

The student shall then submit within five working days the written grievance to the Yurok Tribal Council. The Tribal Council will review all material available within 30 days and make a determination in writing. The decision of the Tribal Council is final.