

WESTERN SHOSHONE EDUCATIONAL TRUST FUND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

I. MISSION STATEMENT

The Western Shoshone Educational Trust Fund (WSEFT) is established to distribute financial assistance for educational purposes for the Western Shoshone people and their lineal descendants, in accordance with Public Law 108-270, adopted July 7, 2004.

II. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- (a) Must be a Western Shoshone member. As defined in PL 108-270, "Western Shoshone member" means an individual who appears on the judgment roll or a lineal descendant of an individual appearing on the roll.
 - Proof of membership status (i.e., certified copy of birth certificate) may be required and final verification will be confirmed by the Western Shoshone Educational Trust Fund – Administrative Committee (Committee).
- (b) Must be enrolled/acceptance into one of the educational institutions listed in Section III.
- (c) Must be a high school graduate or GED equivalent. Continuing recipients must maintain a 2.0 or above GPA for the last completed semester/term.

III. POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL CATEGORIES

- (a) Associate or Bachelor's Degrees
 1. Must be accepted for full-time admission to a nationally accredited institution of higher education course of study to obtain an Associate or Bachelor's degree.
 2. Full-time students must maintain 12 credits per semester (or be identified as full-time by the institution) to receive WSEFT financial assistance.
- (b) Vocational or Trade School Certificate/Diploma
 1. Must be accepted for admission to certified program at a nationally accredited vocational or trade school institution.
 2. Must meet and maintain the minimum attendance and skill levels as required by the certified adult vocational/technical training institution.
 3. Must have a document/letter indicating good standing from school official/counselor.

IV. SELECTION CRITERIA

- (a) Priority funding will be for students completing their initial 4-year undergraduate degree program or an initial vocational/trade school program.
- (b) Funding exceeding a maximum of 10 semesters for Bachelor degrees will be referred to the Committee for review of the circumstances.
- (c) Funding exceeding a maximum of 5 semesters for Associate degrees or Vocational or Trade School diplomas/certificates will be referred to the Committee for review of the circumstances.
- (d) The committee retains the right to review funding on a per application basis. Funding will be based on the number of eligible applicants per funding availability.

V. APPLICATION DEADLINES

- (a) Students must submit a complete application either online or by email (preferred) by the deadlines listed below. Applications received after the deadline date will be denied (the Committee may extend a deadline in emergency situations).
 - **Fall Semester..... June 15**
 - **Spring Semester..... January 15**
- (b) Students attending vocational/trade schools who have timeframes that are different from traditional semesters will need to submit their applications using one of the deadlines closest to the start of their schools. Student must include a copy of the institution's academic calendar if significantly different from traditional semesters/terms.

VI. REQUIRED APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

- (a) **Standard Requirements.** Students must have submitted their application by deadline to be considered for the semester. An acknowledgment will be sent to the student notifying them if their application was received. Students are responsible for submission of required documents listed below. The Committee reserves the right to request additional documentation for incomplete applications. The Committee will put an application on pending status for up to 10 business days, instead of a denial, to allow a student to submit the required documents.
- (b) **New Student Applicant Checklist.**
 1. Western Shoshone Educational Trust Fund Application – Part 1;
 2. Western Shoshone Lineal Descendancy Chart – Part 2;
 3. High School or College Transcripts or Diploma, or GED Equivalent;
 4. Acceptance letter/documentation to an accredited higher education institution or certified AVT Program, to be completed by the Institution; and
 5. Class Schedule for upcoming semester

- (c) **Continuing/Returning Student Application Checklist.**
 - 1. Continuing/Returning Student Update Form;
 - 2. Current College/AVT Program Transcripts; and
 - 3. Class Schedule for upcoming semester
- (d) **Document Standards.** All documents and forms being requested from an educational institution must include the name of student, the date of issuance, and must be from the institution that they are enrolled or attending and show the name of institution.

VII. REASONS FOR DENIAL OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- (a) **Ineligibility.** Student is not an eligible Western Shoshone member to receive WSETF financial assistance.
- (b) **Late Application.** Application not submitted by the application deadlines set by the Committee.
- (c) **Incomplete Application.** Application missing required items (descendency chart, upcoming semester schedule, current transcripts (official preferred), high school diploma/GED certificate, etc.).
- (d) **Admissions Issue.** Student not attending an educational institution, dropped out, did not register, does not have sufficient number of credits/classes for full or part-time status; and/or changing educational institutions after the deadline.
- (e) **Unsatisfactory Academic Progress.** Below minimum GPA for the semester, high number of withdrawals from classes, etc.,
- (f) **Fraudulent Information.** Student submitted information that was not their own or utilized documents/items that were altered, changed, or manipulated for eligibility, academic progress, etc.
- (g) **Exceeding Maximum Funding Period.** Student exceeding maximum number of semesters. The Committee can make exceptions based on extraordinary circumstances.

VIII. AWARD PROCESS

- (a) Awards will be made on a semester basis. Once an award has been determined, an award letter will be sent to the student and financial aid office notifying them of the award amount and semester funded.
- (b) Primarily, funds awarded will be used for a student's tuition, fees, books/supplies per semester then a credit balance will be released to the student to cover the cost of attending an educational institution.

(c) The WSETF grant will be sent to the institution's Financial Aid Office. In extraordinary situations, the grant may be sent directly to a student.

IX. CONTINUATION FUNDING AND STUDENT TRANSFERS

(a) Students receiving grants must maintain acceptable academic standing at college, institution or the university; maintain social conduct within the rules of the institution attended, demonstrate satisfactory progress toward degree or certification requirements, submit a written request (application) in advance for the next year's grant by the application deadlines and successfully complete the school year or grant period specified by the college or institution.

(b) Students transferring from one educational institution to another educational institution must provide all transcripts showing the prior semester GPA (grade point average).

X. INAPPROPRIATE USE OF FUNDS

(a) **Withdrawals and Repayments.** If selected for an award and unable to attend, the award will be forfeited back to the WSETF grant program. If a student terminates their college enrollment, then the following will apply:

1. A student who, without justifiable circumstances, officially or unofficially withdraws; is expelled or fails to meet the academic standards required by the institution shall repay the amount of the grant received to the WSETF grant program. Money order or cashier's check shall be made out to the "Western Shoshone Education Trust Fund" and remitted to the Committee.
2. A student who officially withdraws, or who is expelled during the semester, shall submit a written notification to Committee within 10 days with the following information:
 - a. Date the student withdrew or was expelled
 - b. A statement with supporting documentation indicating the reason for withdrawal or expulsion including mitigating circumstances, if any; and
 - c. A copy of the student's letter or request to the college or vocational school to return all remaining funds of the WSETF financial assistance for that semester.

(b) **Cancellation of Financial Assistance.** The Committee will cancel a student's obligation to repay the financial assistance provided if a student withdraws or did not attend for a semester if it determines:

1. Unforeseeable, acute, severe illnesses or injuries that incapacitate the student or illness severe enough so as to warrant hospitalization and/or treatment and multiple sessions of counseling, psychotherapy, or psychiatric consultations. Must have a supporting documentation from a physician/health care provider.

2. Extenuating Circumstances which include: personal trauma; death of a parent, child, sibling, or caregiver; new diagnosis of documented learning disability; natural disaster recovery; or caregiver for ill parent

In both of these situations, the student must provide sufficient documentation to verify their request for cancellation of financial assistance.

(c) **Process.** The Committee shall determine the portion of the grant that must be repaid and the Committee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the student and make arrangements for recovery of the determined amount. A payback agreement must be signed by all students receiving educational funding from the WSETF and if necessary, arrangements will be made to determine a re-payment plan.

XI. APPEALS PROCESS

- (a) The Committee has the discretion to review an application that has been denied due to factors beyond the student's control.
- (b) Late appeal applications will not be considered.
- (c) The Committee will appoint a WSETF Appeals Board comprised of a minimum of three (3) individuals. This Board shall be comprised of the following individuals:
 1. An Alternate Member of the WSETF-AC provided they were not involved in the original denial decision);
 2. A Committee Member of the WSETF-AC provided they were not involved in the original denial decision due to absence for the review/approval meeting or other decisions in the denial.
 3. Any other person who is not a Committee or Alternate Member that has been involved in secondary/post-secondary positions.
- (d) The WSETF Appeals Board will be convened upon receipt to the Committee of a requested appeal.
- (e) Applicants have ten (10) calendar days from the date of notification of denial of financial assistance to request an appeal. The student may submit an appeal either online or by email - no exceptions.
- (f) The WSETF Appeals Board will convene within 15 calendar days upon receipt of the written appeal. The Committee will notify the student of the WSETF Appeals Board decision within ten (10) calendar days by email.
- (g) The decision of the WSETF Appeals Board will be final.