

Section II - Higher Education

1. Eligibility:

- (A) The Tribal Education Program (TEP) is for the specific purpose of financially assisting eligible enrolled Tribal members and first generation direct descendants of the Tule River Tribe, that meet the funding priorities (see Section II, #4 Payment of Award) as long as funds are available for the following:
1. Junior College- to attend the junior college closest to his/her home, or to attend a Tribal college and/or transfer to a university upon completion of AA/AS degree.
 2. Universities/Colleges- Student must receive an acceptance letter to university/college based on school's acceptance requirements.
 3. Funding for all post-graduate students will be determined by the Committee if the student has not received 10 semesters of TEP funding. If the student has exhausted their 10 semesters of TEP funding, the Tule River Tribal Council will determine their eligibility after Committee recommendation (funding is not guaranteed).
 4. Private schools considered based on the following criteria and as long as funds are available:
 - a. Continuing students transferring at a junior level or above into a Bachelor degree or higher degree program must have a 3.0 GPA or higher prior to entering a private school.
 - b. The private school chosen by the student must be accredited by one of the regional accrediting bodies approved by the U.S. Department of Education.
 - c. First year college students are ineligible for private schools.
 - d. Only tuition and books shall be funded.
 5. Students who have received an Associate of Arts/Associate of Science and/or a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science degree shall not be eligible for further TEP funding to receive the same or duplicate degree.

Applicant(s) must be:

1. In possession of a high school diploma or GED accredited by one of the regional accrediting bodies approved by the U.S. Department of Education.

2. Able to demonstrate a need as determined by the financial aid office of the college/university to be attended after all of the following sources of funding are considered, such as:
 - a. Other grants and scholarships from colleges, private and foundation scholarships, state and federal sources (refer to Financial Needs statement.) Applicant must apply for at least five grants and/or scholarships. Proof of applications for grants/scholarships must be submitted and verified by TEP staff. Applications are available at the Tule River Education Department.
 - b. Student and Parent contributions: Students are dependent upon parent income until age 24 unless student can prove independent status (Section C: Student Status on Free Application for Federal Student Aid).
3. All new applicants must attend a mandatory Education Committee meeting prior to approval/denial of application, date will be announced, or funding will be denied.
4. Tribal Certification:
 - a. Enrolled member and first generation direct descendants: It is the applicants' responsibility to provide Tribal documentation. First generation descendant Tribal member co-signers may only sign for up to two first generation descendants. However, if co-signer is a current TEP student, he/she may only sign for one first generation descendant. All co-signers must be in-compliance with TEP policy in order to sign for first generation descendants.
 - b. Burden of proof lies with the applicant, the Committee and the Education Department staff assumes no responsibilities for improper or incomplete applications.

2. Funding Application Process:

- (A) *Student will submit a completed Free Application for Federal Student Aid to the Federal Student Aid Commission. (*see glossary of terms) on or before the due date.
- (B) TEP application packets are available at the Tule River Indian Education Department or at www.tulerivereducation.com.

- (C) Applicant(s) will submit completed TEP application packets to the Tule River Indian Education Department. Application packets will be reviewed by the Committee once they are complete. Packet must be complete and reviewed at least 30 days prior to the start date of school, and will include rental agreement, and child care agreements, if applicable. Child care assistance will be determined based on TEP student's full time schedule and county rates will be used to determine amount of child care assistance. Payment of rent will be pro-rated based on number of adults living in the residence. The amount of rent shall not exceed the maximum allowed as determined by the Committee. Rent payments will be distributed directly to landlord/property management agencies. However, if landlord/property management agencies refuse to return W-9 form to TEP, the TEP funded student will be required to submit receipts of rent payments on a monthly basis. Failure to return receipts on a monthly basis will result in discontinuance of rental payments. Utilities will not exceed \$300.00 per month. Students residing with parents/guardians/family members will not receive rent payments, unless student and parent(s)/guardian(s)/family member(s) meet with the Committee and can show proof that the cost exceeds allowed amount. If a student is requesting funding to attend a community college away from home the student must meet the eligibility requirements (see Section II, #1 A), the Committee will request the student to attend a local community college nearest the student's home residence in order to be considered for funding, due to cost effectiveness. If the student's major is not offered at the local community college, the Committee will take the request into consideration to attend a community college out of the immediate area.
- (D) Continuing students must re-apply each year for funding.
- (E) Applicants will not be considered as a Tribal Education Program (TEP) student until they are officially approved by the Committee.

3. Notification of Award:

- (A) TEP staff shall notify all applicants in writing within **TEN** working days, as to the receipt, approval or disapproval of their application packet. Applicant will also be informed when the next Committee meeting will be scheduled, and funding approval/disapproval will be made by the Committee.
- (B) Notification to applicants approved for funding will specify the amount of the award and special conditions, if applicable. Written notification will also be sent to the financial aid office at the attending college/university and will specify the amount awarded, if applicable.

4. Payment of Award:

(A) Funding Limitations are as follows:

1. Funding will be based upon the recommended need on the Financial Needs Statement as determined by TEP Policy. The Parent and/or Student Contribution portion of the Financial Needs Statement will be paid directly to the student when financial aid checks are processed. These funds are part of the financial aid award and must be used for school expenses.
2. Tuition and enrollment fees will be paid before application packet is complete only for students who are enrolling in a college/university where fees must be paid before enrollment of classes is allowed. Post-graduate funding is not available through this program, but Tribal Council will take requests on an individual basis. Out of state tuition fees will not be paid. Student will be responsible for paying the difference in resident/non-resident costs. If the student's major is not offered at a California college/university, the Committee will take the student's request into consideration and may allow the non-resident tuition fees to be paid.
3. Reimbursement for expenses incurred before the BIA/TEP application packet is approved by the Committee will not be allowed.

(B) Funding Priorities are as follows:

1. Availability of funds.
2. Continuing students previously approved with no break in their academic endeavor.
3. Enrolled members of the Tule River Tribe.
4. First generation direct descendants with an approved Tribal Member sponsor.

(C) Special Requests:

1. Special requests will be reviewed by the Committee and approved/denied based on the students needs.

Payment of Award will be as follows:

1. Payments for tuition and/or fees will be made to the financial aid office at the attending college/university as approved by the Committee.
2. The attending college/university will deduct the necessary fees owed by the student and work with the student to develop a monthly budget for the remaining funds, if applicable.
 - a. If college/university cannot provide budget assistance, student can request assistance from TEP staff, by appointment.
 - b. Checks will be processed two times per semester, the first within 21 days of funding approval by the Committee and the second after student has submitted the required mid-term progress reports to the TEP office. Note: mid-term progress reports are due no later than ten days after mid-terms, or the second check will not be processed. All students on academic probation will be required to submit monthly progress reports, and the second check will not be processed if the student does not comply with the instructions in their award letter.
3. If a student does not enter or drops from the college/university, the college/university shall refund the remaining funds to the Tribal Education Program.
4. Students must report any and all other scholarships and/or grants received by the school.

5. Academic Requirements:

- (A) The following requirements for academic progress will be used to determine funding:
 1. All students must maintain a minimum of 2.0 grade point average (GPA) and 90% attendance each semester/quarter.
 2. All students must be considered as full time students, which means 12 or more units. On-line courses will be acceptable at community college level, unless there are no other options available at university level. Student is limited to no more than two on-line courses per semester/quarter and courses must pertain to major/graduation requirements. If student drops below full time status or does not receive credit in credit/no credit classes; student will be considered as less than full time upon completion of semester/quarter. Funding will not be available until one successful semester or quarter with a 2.0 GPA and

90% attendance has been completed at full time status within one academic year at student's own expense. Full time students must be enrolled in core (required for major/graduation) courses. Credit/no credit courses shall not exceed six credits per semester/quarter.

- a. Duplicate classes will be at student's expense and will not be considered as part of the full-time credit schedule. However, if student is approved for summer school funding, retakes will be acceptable.
 - b. Summer school full-time status will be determined by the attending school's policy. Students must take the maximum amount of units allowed, and those courses must be core classes.
 - c. Student's may apply for summer school as long as they are full-time based on their attending school's policy and are taking core classes to graduate based on their current and updated education plan from their counselor. Also, students may be eligible if they were not on probation for the spring semester prior to the summer in which they are applying for TEP funding. If students are approved for attending summer school, that semester will not count towards their 10 semesters of available TEP funds.
3. Appeal must be made in writing to the Committee if denied financial aid by other funding sources due to poor academic standing or academic probation (see #7, Academic Probation and Suspension, page 8).

6. Progress Evaluation:

- (A) All students who have been funded on the grant program for an excess of five academic years or ten semesters will have their college transcript reviewed by the Committee. The funding clock starts at the first year student is funded by the Tribal Education Program (TEP) including any time used in Section IV – Career Specific Training School Policy. The purpose of this review is to evaluate the student's progress and determine if the student is making a sincere effort to complete their educational goals. Further funding for the student will be determined at that time by the Committee.
1. If student is attending a community college or Tribal college, funding will not exceed five semesters/eight quarters to earn an AA/AS degree. Tribal Education Program (TEP) staff will evaluate student's transcripts each academic year by GPA and class schedule, if student requests a longer period of time. Final decision for funding consideration will be determined by the Committee.

2. If student is attending a university or Tribal college, funding will not exceed five semesters/eight quarters after receiving an AA/AS degree or no AA/AS degree but intend to transfer to earn a BA/BS degree. Tribal Education Program (TEP) staff will evaluate student's transcripts each academic year by GPA and class schedule, if student requests a longer period of time. Final decision for funding consideration will be determined by the Committee.
 3. A break, one academic year, in the student's academic endeavor will result in the student being considered as a returning student. All funding previously received will be counted toward overall time limitations, if and when student reapplies for TEP funding. If prior written notification was made to TEP staff regarding the emergency situation that school must be discontinued for any length of time, the Committee may consider the student as continuing, under the policy at that time. Final decision will be made by the Committee, after reviewing pertinent documentation, if requested.
- (B) If a student who is funded in the program changes their college major, the student must petition in writing to the Committee to explain the reason for the change.

7. Academic Probation and Suspension:

- (A) All students will be required to submit an official transcript of each term of academic progress to the Tribal Education Program no later than **THREE WEEKS** after term ends.
- (B) If a student falls below the minimum 2.0 GPA, funding at the college/university will be suspended, as per school regulations. Student must petition as per the attending school's policy and procedure to become eligible for further funding through the school. TEP funding will continue for one semester/quarter, and student will be on academic probation, only if student submits a full-time class schedule to TEP showing continued enrollment. If student completely drops from their program, they will be required to reimburse their dropped or failed semester/quarter of amount funded. If the student shows continued enrollment and their GPA is not brought back to the minimum 2.0, TEP funding will be suspended and it will be the students responsibility to reimburse the last two failed semesters/quarters funded by TEP. See 5. Academic Requirements: (A) 1, page 6.
- (C) It is the student's responsibility to inform the TEP staff in writing of undo hardship that may cause interruption/failure in academic studies, or any changes

in class schedule. The Committee will take the hardship into consideration and make the final determination of compliance or non-compliance of the TEP Policy, if student provides pertinent documentation.

- (D) If a student drops or fails after receiving their TEP funding, they are responsible for reimbursing the dropped or failed semester/quarter of amount funded. Further funding will not be available until the debt has been paid back per Tribal Council Resolution #57-89 and amendments. Once payment(s) have been made, Tribal Council/staff has the responsibility to notify TEP staff of payment so balance due can be adjusted through Fiscal Office reports. See Section II 9A, page 9.

8. Appeal Process:

- (A) All students who have not been funded from other sources, or denied Tribal Education Program (TEP) funding have the right to appeal in writing to the Committee. The Committee will take into consideration the student's circumstances as well as their:

1. Prior educational assistance.
2. GPA (grade point average) and no less than 90% attendance.
3. If financial aid appeal at attending college/university has been denied, and all other resources have been exhausted.

A copy of denial letters will be forwarded to Tule River Tribal Council.

- (B) Final decision of appeal process will be determined by the Tule River Tribal Council.

9. Conclusion:

- (A) If it is found that the student(s) has, or is receiving non-reported duplication of services or assistance, or has given false information, TEP funding will cease immediately. Reimbursements of funds expended by TEP are to be returned immediately. Further TEP funding will not be available until debt has been cleared by the Fiscal Department and a three year waiting period has been reached which will be determined by the Committee. Notification for reimbursement will be made in writing by TEP staff and/or Tribal Attorney as per Tribal Resolution #57-89 and amendments. Once payment(s) have been received Tribal Council/staff has the responsibility to notify TEP staff of payment so the balance owed can be adjusted through Fiscal Office reports.