

Meskwaki Higher Education Program

Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa

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Confidentiality Policy

The Meskwaki Higher Education Program is authorized to release student information only to parties specified by the student. All other requests for student information should be directed in writing to the Executive Director of Tribal Operations.

**Meskwaki
Higher Education
Program**

Funding Guidelines Handbook



Higher Education
Career/Technical Education
Education Achievement Grant
Conference/Workshop Support
Pre-College Support
Adult Continuing Education



*Assisting enrolled Meskwaki tribal members and
their descendants in pursuing post-secondary
education and life-long learning goals*



MESKWAKI HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

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Application Checklist

Applicants: The items checked below are required in order to complete your application and file. An incomplete file may delay the disbursement of financial aid.

Student Name _____ E-mail Address _____
 Home Phone Number _____ (Must be current and checked weekly)
 Date _____ Academic Year _____

The following items are needed for all applications, including renewal and summer:

- Meskwaki Higher Education/Vocational Program
- Meskwaki Higher Education/Vocational Program Financial Aid Verification Form to be returned by school's Financial Aid Office.
- Student Aid Report (SAR) for the upcoming academic year - You will receive this report in the mail
- Copy of student bill and book receipts.
- Copy of course registration that includes course number, course title and number of credit hours for the academic term of _____
- Copy of grade report for the academic term of _____
- Copy of official grade transcript for the academic year of _____
- Copy of course drop/add slip for _____
- Written statement of withdrawal from school for the academic term of _____
- Copy of official diploma or certificate upon graduation from institution or training program

New applicants are required to submit the following items. These documents only need to be submitted once, as they will be placed in the student's permanent file.

- Copy of acceptance letter from the accredited post-secondary institution
- Official high school final transcript or GED certificate with test scores (if under 22 years of age)
- Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood from the Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa (For enrollment information, call 641/484-4678.)

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HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

Purpose

Through BIA¹ and Tribal funding for higher education, the Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa hopes to encourage tribal members and their descendents to pursue a course of study leading to an associate, baccalaureate or graduate degree from an accredited college or university.

Eligible Programs

Any course of study that leads to the completion of an associate degree (2 year), a baccalaureate degree (4 year), or a graduate degree (master's or doctorate) is allowed. No funding is available for students attending educational institutions outside of the United States. Study abroad programs sponsored and accredited by U.S. educational institutions will be recognized and funded.

Eligibility for Higher Education/Vocational Grants

The Meskwaki Higher Education Program (MHEP), awards two types of educational grants: **(1)** BIA Higher Education/Vocational Grant and **(2)** Meskwaki Higher Education/Vocational Grant. An applicant for either type of grant must be a United States citizen, who also meets the requirements specified below, and is currently in attendance or accepted for admission as a full-time associate, undergraduate or graduate student at an accredited institution of higher education in the United States. Students who are less than full-time may be considered depending upon the availability of funds. Additional eligibility guidelines for each grant are listed below:

1. BIA Higher Education/Vocational Grant

To be eligible for this grant, the applicant must: (1) be an enrolled member of the Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa or one-quarter degree Meskwaki blood descendant and (2) demonstrate financial need greater than the amount covered by personal resources, loans, scholarships and other grants.

The amount of this grant is determined by the difference between a student's proposed expenses and his/her total resources, including grants and loans based on the Financial Aid Verification Form. Award letters describing sources of financial aid will be mailed to students.

2. Meskwaki Higher Education/Vocational Grant

To be eligible for this grant, the applicant must be an enrolled member of the Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa. Financial need is not a requirement (all though tribal members may receive a combination of BIA and Tribal funds.)

The amount of this grant is determined by the difference between a student's Tuition, Fees, Books, Room & Board and his/her scholarships, grants & tuition waivers based on the Financial Aid Verification Form. This grant will not cover any other educational expenses than those listed within this paragraph. Award letters describing the source(s) of the financial aid will be mailed to students.

ADULT CONTINUING EDUCATION

Purpose

The purpose of the Meskwaki Adult Continuing Education Program is to encourage Meskwaki adults to take advantage of life-long learning opportunities that will advance employment skills or increase knowledge in an academic discipline. This program is not designed for students who are planning to complete a degree or certificate program on a part-time basis.

Participant Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to participants in the Adult Continuing Education Program:

- The applicant must be an enrolled Meskwaki Tribal member.
- The applicant must not be on probation or suspension from any other education-funding program.
- Participants may take up to two courses (six credits) per academic term at an accredited college/university.
- An educational enrichment application must be completed at least one month prior to the start of the course(s).
- The participant must submit a class registration form, bill, and book receipts at the beginning of each term and an official grade transcript at the end of each term.
- Upon completion, students will be reimbursed for their payment.

We here at Meskwaki Higher Education Program want you to succeed and achieve your educational goals; Please utilize the staff anytime you are experiencing problems. We will do our best to assist you.

¹ Bureau of Indian Affairs

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP SUPPORT

Enrolled Meskwaki Tribal members who are attending college are eligible to receive a \$200 grant in order to attend one academic or professional conference/workshop per year. To receive this grant, students must complete an educational enrichment application, pay for the conference/workshop, and submit copies of receipts to the Meskwaki Higher Education Program. Following this, the grant will be issued directly to the student.

PRE-COLLEGE SUPPORT

Purpose

The purpose of the Meskwaki Pre-College Support Program is to provide enrolled Meskwaki Tribal members with financial assistance for pre-college expenses and academic enrichment programs. This includes college entrance exam preparatory classes and testing fees, college/university application fees, and academic enrichment programs for high school students.

ACT/SAT Preparation and Test Fees

A one-time reimbursement is available to cover the cost of one ACT preparation course and exam and/or one SAT preparation course and exam. In order to be reimbursed, the student must complete an educational enrichment application, provide documentation of tribal enrollment, and submit receipts of payment.

Application Fees

Financial assistance (up to \$150) is available to help students pay college/university/vocational program application fees. In order to receive funding, students must complete an educational enrichment application, provide documentation of tribal enrollment, and submit their program application(s) to the Meskwaki Higher Education Program. The Higher Education Program will then send the application fee to the educational institution along with the student's application.

Academic Enrichment Programs

Financial assistance (up to \$800 per request/\$1,600 per child) is available for parents who would like to send their children (ages 13-18) to pre-college, academic enrichment programs. Parents are limited to two requests per child, and these two requests cannot be made within the same academic year. In order to be reimbursed, the parent must complete an educational enrichment application and provide the following: (1) documentation of the child's tribal enrollment, (2) supporting documents that provide a detailed description of the program, (3) receipt of payment, and (4) certification of successful program completion. When this process is complete, the parent will be reimbursed up to \$800 depending on the cost of the program.

STUDENT LOANS

The Meskwaki Sac & Fox Tribe will not be responsible for repayment of student loans of any type.

Grant Award Amounts

Higher Education/Vocational Grants are dependent upon the availability of funds and will not exceed the post-secondary institution's designated maximum financial aid award. Any dollar amount over the maximum award limit will be returned to the Higher Education Program. A written notice will be mailed to the student regarding the return of funds to the office. These grants are not intended to cover the full cost of attending school; therefore, it is the student's responsibility to budget accordingly. Grant award amounts are based on student status: *EFFECTIVE JANUARY 2010 ROOM & BOARD WILL BE PAID TO ON CAMPUS UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AND GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY!*

Meskwaki Grants – to be applied toward tuition, fees, books, and room & board

- Full-time, undergraduate students (at least 12 credit hours) may qualify for a grant up to \$6,000 per semester.
- Part-time, undergraduate students (6-11 credit hours) may qualify for a grant up to \$3,000 per semester.
- Full-time, graduate/professional students (at least 9 credit hours) may qualify for a grant up to \$8,000 per semester.
- Part-time, graduate/professional students (4.5-8 credit hours) may qualify for a grant up to \$4,000 per semester.
- Students who are less than part-time may qualify for a grant to pay for only tuition, fees and books.

BIA Grants – to be applied toward tuition, fees, books, and room & board

- Full-time, undergraduate or graduate/professional students may be awarded a grant up to \$3,000 per semester (\$2,000 per trimester; \$1,500 per quarter).
- Part-time, undergraduate or graduate/professional students may be awarded a grant up to \$1,500 per semester (\$1,333 per trimester; \$1,000 per quarter).
- Students who are less than part-time are not eligible to receive a BIA Grant.

Summer Grants

Summer students who are full-time (at least six credit hours) may qualify for a Meskwaki or BIA Grant. During the summer term, the maximum Meskwaki Grant is \$2,000, and the maximum BIA Grant is \$1,500. Summer students who are part-time (fewer than six credit hours) may qualify for a Meskwaki Grant to pay for only tuition, fees and books with a maximum award amount of \$1,000. BIA Grants are not available for summer students taking fewer than six credit hours.

Disbursement of Awards

All financial award checks will be processed through the Meskwaki Higher Education Program, issued jointly to the student and the post-secondary institution, and mailed directly to the institution. Students must endorse the check at their institution's financial aid office, and the money will then be credited to their account. If there is any remaining money after the bills have been paid, it will be given to the student by the educational institution.

Application Process

To apply for either BIA, or Tribal financial assistance through the Meskwaki Higher Education Program, students must complete the following steps:

1. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). FAFSA forms are available in the high school guidance office, college/university financial aid office, and the Meskwaki Higher Education Office or may be completed online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The FAFSA is to be completed as soon as possible after January 1 of each academic year. After processing the FAFSA, the U.S. Department of Education will send students their Student Aid Report (SAR). **The SAR must be turned into MHEP.**
2. Complete the Meskwaki Higher Education Program Application for the academic year in which the student plans to enroll. All students are required to reapply for funding each academic year; a separate application form is required for the summer term.
3. **New applicants** – submit copies of the following forms: college/university letter of acceptance, final high school transcript or GED scores, official college transcript (if applicable), and Tribal ID or Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB).
All applicants (new, current and previously funded) – submit copies of the following forms: SAR for each academic year and course registration, student bill and books receipts for each academic term.
4. Each academic year and/or summer term, ask the college/university financial aid officer to complete the Meskwaki Financial Aid Verification Form (FAVF) and return a certified copy to the Meskwaki Higher Education Program by mail or fax.

Application Deadlines

Complete the application process at least 90 days prior to the applicant's proposed term of enrollment. Applications are processed in the order that they are received in the office. Financial assistance may be denied if the following deadlines are not met:

- **June 1st**– for the fall term or the entire academic year
(**Must** check spring box on application)
- **November 1st** – for the spring term only (semester or quarter)
- **March 1st**– for the summer term

CAREER/TECHNICAL EDUCATION FUNDING

Career and technical education programs provide specific training for vocational careers such as culinary arts, cosmetology, mechanics, truck driving, medical assisting, etc.

Eligible Programs

Programs must be accredited and cannot exceed 24 months in length. Due to the great variety of career and technical programs, the Meskwaki Higher Education Program will evaluate each program individually. Specific or unique requirements in the application process will be explained to the individual student at the time of application.

BIA Career/Technical Grants

Funding will be offered to enrolled tribal members or ¼ descendants who are in financial need and are at least 18 years of age. An applicant must be in need of training in order to obtain reasonable and satisfactory employment, or the applicant must be underemployed and no additional training would result in hardship for that person. Financial assistance may be awarded for career and technical training, certificate programs, and short-term career and technical programs for the purpose of improving job skills. The financial award limit is the same as the BIA Higher Education/Vocational Grant.

Meskwaki Career/Technical Grants

These grants are non-need based and are offered to enrolled Meskwaki tribal members who want to pursue a career or technical degree at an accredited institution. Financial assistance may be awarded for career and technical training, certificate programs, and short-term career and technical programs for the purpose of improving job skills. The financial award limit is the same as the Meskwaki Higher Education/Vocational Grant.

Additional Guidelines

- The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is required for some, but not all, career and technical programs. The student will be informed of the need to complete a FAFSA during his/her application process if necessary. For those programs where the FAFSA is required and enrolled Meskwaki tribal members choose not to complete it, the Higher Education Program can only offer financial assistance for tuition, fees and books under the Meskwaki Grant.
- After the practical training is completed, the student is responsible for ensuring that state, national or professional exams and licensure requirements are fulfilled. The Higher Education Program will support the student in fulfilling these licensure requirements if the student is having difficulty, but it is the student's responsibility to report these difficulties to the office.
- Unless noted differently, career/technical students are also subject to all Higher Education guidelines (see Higher Education Funding, p. 2).

Appeal/Grievance Procedure

An applicant who wishes to voice his/her concerns regarding action taken by the Meskwaki Higher Education Program (e.g., probation, suspension, denial of funding, etc.) may file an appeal. The steps for filing an appeal are listed below.

1. Submit a written statement of appeal and request for a file audit to the Director of the Higher Education Program within 30 days of receiving notification of denial, probation, suspension, etc. Include any supporting documentation.
2. Include in your letter an email address and correct mailing address where a verification of receipt can be sent to. If you have not received conformation of receipt contact the Higher Education Program by telephone to verify that the staff has received your appeal and request for a file audit.
3. The Director of the Higher Education Program will convene a Grievance Committee comprised of himself/herself, the Executive Director of Tribal Operations, and the Tribal Council Education Representative. The Committee will hear the appeal and make a decision based upon the submitted material. (The Director of Higher Education cannot overrule a decision reached by the Committee.)
4. The Director of Higher Education will send a written response to the appeal within 20 business days of a decision being reached.

Note: Failure to file an appeal within the timeline stated will result in denial of the appeal. Failure to complete the steps as outlined may affect the outcome of the appeal; appeals should not be directed to the Tribal Council.

Responsibilities of Higher Education Grant Recipients

- Maintain current address, phone, **e-mail** and other contact information with the Meskwaki Higher Education Program so we may contact you.
- Start school at the institution named on the application during the first year of the award.
- Complete the appropriate number of credit hours and maintain at least the minimum required GPA during each academic term (see Credit & GPA Requirements, p. 6).
- Report changes in class schedules to the Meskwaki Higher Education Program **immediately**.
- Submit current Financial Aid Verification Form and report any changes in financial conditions to the Higher Education Program. Failure to report any changes in financial aid could result in the loss of funding.
- Submit a transcript or grade report within **30 days** of the end of each academic term-**failure will lead to SUSPENSION**. The transcript or grade report should clearly state the course number, title and grade; number of credit hours earned; and the current and cumulative GPA. An unofficial transcript or grade report will be accepted at the end of the first term of an academic year, but an official transcript is required at the end of each academic year.
- Reapply annually for academic financial assistance. (Reminder: a separate application must be completed for summer financial aid.)
- Upon completion of the first year of an associate or graduate degree program or the second year of a bachelor degree program, ask academic advisor to submit an educational plan to the Meskwaki Higher Education Program. This educational plan should outline a course of study and timeline for completion of the selected degree program.
- Upon graduation, submit an **official final transcript and a copy of the diploma within 30 days** to the Meskwaki Higher Education Program. Failure may lead to SUSPENSION.

Transfer Information

It is the student's responsibility to work with the educational institution to make certain any proposed transfer will be successful. The student must inform the Meskwaki Higher Education Program of the proposed transfer at least 60 days prior to starting classes at a new institution. Financial aid may be delayed if this deadline is not met.

Funding Time Limits

Qualified students are eligible to receive funding from the Meskwaki Higher Education Program for a period not to exceed 10 semesters or 20 quarters, regardless of credit hours, with an emphasis on increasing educational levels (i.e., advancing from undergraduate to graduate status). Students who exceed this time frame or who do not advance their educational level must provide justification for continued funding. Funding will not be awarded to students seeking a second degree at the same educational level unless special permission is granted from the Meskwaki Higher Education Program.

Academic Warning Procedures – Probation/Suspension

Financial aid may be discontinued or adjusted if a student fails to comply with the funding guidelines and grant recipient responsibilities. If this occurs, written notification of probation or suspension will be mailed to the student.

Credit and GPA² Requirements

Students who receive financial assistance are required to complete a minimum number of credit hours and maintain at least a minimum GPA during each academic term:

- Full-time, undergraduate students must complete at least 12 credit hours and maintain a 2.0 GPA.
- Part-time, undergraduate students must complete at least 6 credit hours and maintain a 2.0 GPA.
- Full-time, graduate/professional students must complete at least 9 credit hours and maintain a 3.0 GPA.
- Part-time, graduate/professional students must complete at least 4.5 credit hours and maintain a 3.0 GPA.

To maintain eligibility for funding, students who withdraw from courses must notify the Meskwaki Higher Education Program by submitting a copy of the withdrawal form and a written explanation for the withdrawal. Grade reports must be submitted within 30 days of end of classes and Official Transcripts at the end of the academic year within 30 days.

Probation

Probationary periods begin with the next academic term, and the student will remain eligible to receive funding. Students will be placed on probation if one of the following occurs:

- Student fails to complete the specified course load on their class registration.
- Student drops from full to part-time status or from part-time to less than part-time status. (Student must notify the Meskwaki Higher Education Program by providing a copy of the withdrawal form and a written explanation for the withdrawal.)
- GPA falls below a 2.0 (undergraduate student) or 3.0 (graduate student) for the current academic term.

Probation Reinstatement Requirements

- Students will be removed from probation once they have completed a specified number of credit hours with a grade point average of or above 2.0 (undergraduate) or 3.0 (graduate).
- The student must meet with the Meskwaki Higher Education Director to discuss the option of repayment of funds agreement.
- MHEP will not repay for the retaking of a previously paid for class.

Suspension

A student will be suspended from the Meskwaki Higher Education Program and will be ineligible to receive funding if he/she:

- Is on probation and does not meet the probation requirements.
- Does not submit a grade report at the end of the academic term within 30 days.
- Receives all F's for the academic term.
- Earns a GPA of less than 1.0 for the academic term.
- Fails to immediately notify the Meskwaki Higher Education Program of withdrawal from classes and/or a change in status from full to part-time or part-time to less than part-time.
- Fails to immediately notify the Meskwaki Higher Education Program of withdrawal from school.

Suspension Reinstatement Requirements

- Students may be removed from suspension after they submit documentation demonstrating completion of the required number of credit hours for which they were funded with expenses paid by other than BIA or Tribal funding.
- Students may instead choose to utilize a payback option. The student will need to schedule a meeting with the Meskwaki Higher Education Director to discuss the repayment of funds from the term that the student withdrew from classes and to receive approval for reinstatement. Student will be required to sign a payback agreement.
- The student must schedule an appointment with his/her academic advisor at least two weeks prior to the start of the academic term in order to plan his/her courses, review his/her academic course of study, and set goals for graduation.
- Following the meeting with his/her advisor, the student must meet with the Meskwaki Higher Education Advisor to review the reinstatement agreement, discuss the outcome of the academic advisor meeting. A copy of the educational plan of study must be submitted to the Meskwaki Higher Education Program.

² Grade Point Average