

**Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)
Education Department
Higher Education Grant/Scholarship Policies**

AUTHORITY: Snyder Act of November 2, 1921 (25 U.S.C., Sec. 13). 25 CFR Part 40 and Section 271.12 of P.L. 93-638. The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1973 as amended: and the Constitution of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and associated ordinances.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Wampanoag Higher Education Grant Program is to provide equal educational opportunities for Tribal members who desire a college education who have the greatest financial need. The Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) also desires that students sponsored under this program return to the reservation lands and assist the Wampanoag Tribe. The WTGH(A) desires to further the educational advancement of the Wampanoag Tribal members.

POLICIES: It is important to point out that the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) desires that all applicants consider that assistance under this program is not to be considered a right. Students sponsored under this program must demonstrate the ability and the willingness to abide by the conditions and the criteria as set forth below. Further assistance under this program is a privilege granted by the Tribal Council to those student Tribal Members who have the greatest financial need and demonstrate the highest commitment to the ideals of the Wampanoag Tribe and the furtherance of the Wampanoag Tribe. The Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) therefore sets forth the following policies to govern the administration of the Wampanoag Tribal Higher Education Grant Program:

Section 1: Scholarship Committee: The Tribal Education Committee shall be established to oversee and monitor the operation of the Wampanoag Tribal Higher Education Grant Program. The Education Committee shall consist of five (5) members of the Tribe with a quorum of three members at each meeting. These members will be appointed and ratified by the Tribal Council and shall oversee any and all scholarship awards and donations.

Section 2: Financial Need: The Wampanoag Tribal Higher Education Grants are supplemental grant awards. They are not to be considered a program which provides a full scholarship or all costs incurred in enrolling full time or part time in an accredited college or university degree program. Highest priority will be given to: 1) students residing near or on the reservation, 2) students residing in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and 3) students who reside out-of-state. Financial need is based upon examination of the financial analysis report signed and certified by the Financial Aid Officer at the college or university which the applicant will be attending.

Section 3: Degree program: Higher Education Grant Assistance under this program will apply to students who are pursuing an associates or baccalaureate degree at a two year or four year accredited college or university. These accredited schools include state operated or private institution.

Section 4: Application for Financial Aid: All applicants are required to apply for aid at the college or university in which the applicant plans to enroll. Priority will be given to the students who demonstrate initiative by obtaining other sources of financial aid. Scholarships and other sources of financial assistance. Applicants who fail to apply for financial aid will not be considered for the award.

Section 5: Admission: Applicants must demonstrate evidence of admission or acceptance to an accredited two year or four year college or university. A copy of the letter of admission or permit to register must be placed on file in the Tribal Education Department as evidence in fulfillment of this requirement.

Section 6: Grades/Standing: All students who are sponsored under the Tribal Higher Education Grant Program are required to successfully complete or pass twelve (12) credit hours per term (quarter or semester). If a student fails to meet this requirement, he/she will be given another term (quarter or semester) during which the student must successfully pass the 12 credit hour requirement - this is considered a grace period or probationary period. If the student fails to meet this requirement by the end of the probationary period, then the student will be discontinued or declared ineligible to continue receiving assistance under the program. Students sponsored under the Tribal Higher Education Grant Program will be considered in good academic standing unless they are placed under probation. Students who are placed on academic suspension or prohibited from enrollment in school will likewise be discontinued from the Tribal Higher Education Grant Program.

Section 7: Suspension: Students who are placed on academic suspension or discontinued from the program due to academic deficiencies, will be eligible to apply for higher education grant assistance after a (12) month period following termination from the program. The student must provide documentation that he/she has been readmitted to the same college or university or to another accredited college or university.

Section 8: Time Limitations: Students pursuing an undergraduate degree will be required to complete their degree program by the end of six (6) years. All exceptions to this requirement must be authorized by the Tribal Education Committee. The student requesting exception must provide an academic plan which will set forth the number of years, courses needed, reasons for the delay and other rationale to be considered in requesting the exception.

Section 9: Records: A file must be kept on all students receiving grant assistance under this program. This file will be confidential and available only to authorized personnel in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 as amended. Authorized personnel shall constitute: Student, Tribal Chairperson, Tribal Council, Education Committee, Tribal Administrator, Education Director and other personnel as designated by the Tribal Council and others as authorized by the student.

Section 10: Authorized Costs: Only College related costs are authorized to be funded under this grant program. These costs include: tuition, books, fees, room and board, supplies, incidental living costs, and other college related costs as deemed appropriate by the financial aid officer at the college to be attended by the student. Students are not allowed to obligate grant assistance toward debt retirement or expenses incurred during a period previous to the time for which the student is receiving assistance. Students are also prohibited from obligating grant assistance for any capital investments such as: homes, cars, and other major personal investments. Any unauthorized purchases by a student must be paid back within a reasonable period of time or be deducted from the student's next grant award, in instances when the award is very minimal. Student actions will accordingly affect future requests by the student for grant assistance.

Section 11: Correspondence Courses: Requests for payment for correspondence courses will not be considered.

Section 12: On-Campus Living: Students receiving grant assistance are required to live in on-campus dormitories if such living facilities are provided by the college unless living with his/her parents until such time that the student attains junior class status or their third year in college. Exception may be granted for those students who are married, age 30 and above, and have demonstrated maturity which exceeds this requirement.

Section 13: Required Documents: Students applying for grant assistance are required to provide the following documents to the Education Department in order to receive consideration for assistance: 1) Letter of Acceptance (first time applicants or transfers), 2) Financial Aid Analysis Report, 3) High School Transcript (if applicable), 4) Official College transcript. 5) Completed BIA grant application form and 6) Essay (first time applicants only.)

Section 14: Notification of Changes: Students receiving grant assistance are required to notify the Education Department within forty-eight (48) hours of the following instances: 1) Student withdraws or drops from school. 2) Student is suspended from school, 3) Student is placed on academic probation, 4) Other circumstances which might affect their status under the grant program. Students who have been awarded grant assistance and decide not to go to school will forfeit their award and they must reapply should they go back to school.

Section 15: Use/Misuse of Grant Funds: It shall be a long standing policy of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) that such funds may legitimately be used only for the purposes directly relating to the education of the recipient. Eligibility for such funds shall exist only so long as the grant recipient is enrolled in an approved college and the grant funds are used for the purpose intended. The use of grant funds not relating to the direct education of the recipient or received under false pretenses while the recipient is not enrolled in a college approved by the Tribal Council shall be immediately repayable to the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and/or may be recovered in any court of competent jurisdiction.

Section 16: Continuing Students: Continuing students must reapply for grant assistance each academic year. They are not automatic.

Section 17: Graduate Students: Requests for grant assistance for graduate students will be considered after all undergraduate student requests have been awarded funding consideration. Graduate students will receive assistance for no more than four years or for terms equivalent to four years, except for summer terms.

Graduate students may separately apply for funding to prepare for graduate school admission tests. This is a one time award up to \$500. The applications for such funding will be due on July 15th of each year, the same as all other higher education applications. Graduate students must be enrolled members of the Tribe and academically eligible for graduate school admission tests. Students must submit course description, show proof of state or federal accreditation of the institution offering the courses and include a brief essay describing why this training is needed and how it will benefit the student. The Education Committee will review the application and make a recommendation to Tribal Council regarding approval or denial.

Section 18: 25 CFR Part 40: Any or all actions or activities not covered under these policies and procedures shall be subject to Part 40 of 25 Code of Federal Regulations, as amended.

Section 19: Amount of Awards: All Applicants must complete the required documentation by **July 15th** each year. Those not completing the application process by **July 15th** will not be considered. Awards will be based on financial need and funding availability.

Section 20: Disbursement of Grant Funds: Payment of grant awards shall be paid by check to the applicant in care of the Financial Aid Officer of the institution in which he/she is enrolled. Payment may be made directly to the student when the student submits to the Education Department an invoice from the school that shows a zero balance.

Section 21: Hearing and Appeals: Any Tribal member applying for or receiving financial assistance and/or services provided under the Program who is adversely affected by any decision or action may appeal and request reconsideration. Upon receiving a written request for reconsideration, the Tribal Administrator will convene a meeting of the Education Advisory Committee to review the action being appealed and to render a decision. If the said Tribal member remains aggrieved by the Advisory Committee's decision, upon receiving a written request and written report of action being appealed the Tribal Administrator will convene a meeting of the Tribal Council to review the action being appealed and to render a decision on the basis of the written reports. The Tribal Council may sustain, reverse, or selectively alter the initial decision, and the decision of the Council is final.