

Poarch Band of Creek Indians

First Generation Tuition Assistance Application

The information requested within this application is voluntary. However, if you fail to provide necessary documentation and information, your application will not be considered. **Please mail your application to PCI- Education Department Attn: Monica Johnson at 5811 Jack Springs Road, Atmore, AL 36502 or email it to mjohnson@pci-nsn.gov.**

Full Name: _____

Social Security Number: _____ Date of birth: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email Address: _____ Home phone: _____

Work phone: _____ Cell or alternate phone: _____

Are you currently a high school senior? ___ yes ___ no

Indicate your current educational standing (COLLEGE)

___ Freshman ___ Sophomore ___ Junior ___ Senior

Master or other professional program: ___ Year 1 ___ Year 2 ___ Year 3 or beyond

Type of professional program attending: _____

Are you currently enrolled in college? ___ Yes ___ No If no, when do you plan to enroll? _____

What type of degree are you working toward?

___ Certificate ___ Associate ___ Bachelor ___ Master ___ Professional Degree

What field of study are you entering? _____

Name and address of college(s) to which you are applying or have already been accepted:

Fax Number to the Financial Aid Office: _____

Cumulative Grade point average for the last semester attended (must be at least a 2.0): _____

AN OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT IS REQUIRED.

AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION FROM YOUR SCHOOL

Name: _____

Name attended under, if different: _____

Social Security Number: _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

I, _____ (Student's Name), hereby give permission to _____ (School's Name) to release any requested information concerning my attendance, status of financial accounts, grade reports, transcripts, and school conduct. I understand that this information will be used to determine eligibility for the Poarch Creek Indians First Generation Indian Descent Scholarship Program.

- ❖ The information requested may be communicated orally or in writing.
- ❖ I understand that I may revoke this consent at any time by notifying the providing organization in writing, except to the extent that action has already been taken in reliance on it.
- ❖ I understand that information disclosed under this authorization may be disclosed again by the person or organization to which it is sent.
- ❖ A photocopy of this document shall be as valid as the original.

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT

DATE

Notary Public

Signed before me this _____ day of _____, _____.

Notary

My Commission Expires : _____

AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE INFORMATION TO A THIRD PARTY ON YOUR BEHALF

In the United State, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 protects the privacy of student educational records. Therefore, the Poarch Creek Indians Education Department cannot release personally identifiable information without prior written consent. A parent does not have the automatic right to view or access the student records of his or her child, unless that child is a dependent less than 18 years of age. Students may grant a third-party (i.e. parent, spouse, relative, friend, organization, etc.) access to their student records by completing this form and returning it to the Poarch Creek Indians Education Department.

I, _____ (print full name), authorize the Poarch Creek Indians Education Department to release my information, including but not limited to; Financial Aid information, Award amounts, status of application, class schedules, grades – to the following individual(s) or organization(s):

Name (First, M.I., Last)	Relationship to Student	Contact Phone Number

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you no longer wish for the listed individual(s) or organization(s) to have access to your student records, you must notify the Poarch Creek Indians Education Department.

Application Check List

Please review the following checklist to ensure you have a complete application. Your application is not complete unless you submit all the required paperwork.

- ___ I have submitted a copy of my Indian Descent Letter. You can obtain an Indian Descent Letter from the Tribal Member Benefits Office which can be reached at (251) 368-9136 extension 2281. Your application must have your Indian Descent Letter to be complete.
- ___ I have enclosed or requested an official transcript with a minimum GPA of 2.0 to be sent directly to the PCI Education Department. **(See note below regarding transcripts)**
- ___ I **have not** enclosed or requested my transcript because I have been **out of school more than 5 years.**
- ___ I have completed each section of the application.

I agree that all of my information is true and that my application is complete. I understand that if I have requested my transcript be sent to the PCI Education Department, it is my responsibility to ensure that it is received.

Name

Date

Please note: To clarify, an official transcript is REQUIRED, unless you have been out of school for more than 5 years. An official transcript is one that arrives in a sealed envelope, bearing the seal of the Registrar. You may hand deliver official transcripts, but they must not be opened. We WILL NOT accept transcripts which are faxed, photocopied, or opened prior to arrival in the Education Department. I understand that any award I may qualify for will not be granted until such time as my official transcript is received by the Education Department.

****An award letter will NOT be mailed to you. If you are pursuing an associate's degree or certificate and have satisfied all the requirements of the program you will receive \$20,000.00. If you are pursuing a bachelor's degree or higher and have satisfied all the requirements of the program you will receive \$40,000.00. We will notify your school each semester by faxing them an authorization letter. It is the students responsibility to turn in grades from each semester. If you do not turn in your grades from one semester we will NOT notify your school about the following semester.**

**POARCH BAND OF CREEK INDIANS
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

**First Generation Indian Descent
Tuition Assistance Program**

Revised: December 6, 2012

Revised: June 20, 2013

Revised: August 1, 2013

Revised: April, 2015

History of the Education Department's First Generation Indian Descent Tuition Assistance Program

July 28, 2008

The Fred L. McGhee Memorial Scholarship program was revised and began awarding funds to First Generation Indian Descent (FGID) students on a competitive basis. \$25,000.00 was awarded this during this year.

2009

The FGID Tuition Assistance Program was awarded \$85,500 for competitive distribution.

2010

The FGID Tuition Assistance Program was awarded \$97,500 for competitive distribution.

2011

The FGID Tuition Assistance Program began to accept applications year round, and it became the first non-competitive tribal scholarship for Indian descent students.

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First Generation Indian Descent Tuition Assistance Program Policy

Section I. Definitions

- A. **Accredited** means an institution whose standards meet the essential requirements for academic excellence according to a recognized governing body for the state in which the educational institution is located, such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). There are many dubious institutions offering a variety of online or certification programs. If there is any doubt as to the legitimacy of a program or its accreditation, the Education Department will research it and render an opinion as to the validity and acceptance of the program under this policy. If it is determined that the program is not valid, no funds will be expended on the program.
- B. **Certificate program** means a program which does not culminate in a degree but allows the holder to practice jobs in certain fields. The allowable amount for a certificate program is \$10,000.00 for programs at schools which accept Federal Student Aid. Programs at schools which do not accept Federal Student Aid are capped at \$5,000.00. These funds may not include continuing education programs, conferences, workshops, or similar types of activities.
- C. **First Generation Indian Descent (FGID)** means the biological child of an enrolled member of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.
- D. **Living expenses** means general expenses encountered by everyone, such as gas expenses, electric bills, etc. These expenses are not covered by this program.
- E. **Mandatory fees** means those costs deemed not optional by the individual school. These may vary from school to school.
- F. **Specialized tools** means mandatory items, such as netbooks, iPods, iPads, and special software, which are required according to the course syllabus for the class or program for which the student is registered. Specialized tools are allowed on a reimbursement basis only, and must be required as per the class syllabus. Proper documentation must be submitted in order to be reimbursed.
- G. **Tribal Member** means an enrolled member of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.
- H. **Tribe** means the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

Section II. Eligibility

A. Student Eligibility

In order to be eligible for tuition assistance under the various sections of this Program, the FGID student must meet certain eligibility criteria for the particular type of assistance for which he/she is applying.

1. **For students applying for assistance with special educational needs:**
 - a. **Student must be at least 5 years of age and meet the criteria for special needs in order to access industry recognized intervention services.**
 - b. **All services under this heading must be approved by the Education Director and Tribal Administrator.**
2. **To be eligible for the Loan Repayment Assistance portion of this Program, students must be:**
 - a. **Between 16 and 26 years of age;**
 - b. **A graduate of an accredited certificate or degree program; and**
 - c. **An FGID student with outstanding student loan balances.**
3. **To be eligible for the Tuition Assistance section of this Program, students must:**
 - a. **Be at least 16 years or older;**
 - b. **Be enrolling in or already enrolled in an accredited community/vocational college, university, or certificate program and pursuing a certificate, or an associate's, bachelor's, master's, or professional degree; and**
 - c. **Have a cumulative GPA of at least a 2.0.**

B. Application

1. **For each FGID student meeting the eligibility criteria, an application for assistance must be filed with the Tribe's Education Department. Applications are available at the Education Department and may be printed from the Tribe's website, www.pci-nsn.gov. Upon request, applications may be faxed or mailed.**
2. **A new application must be filed annually in order to ensure that the Education Department has updated contact information. An official transcript must also be submitted at least annually. Both are due to the Education Department in December of each year.**
3. **Waiver. Along with each application filed for tuition assistance, the parent/guardian of the student or the adult student must sign a waiver allowing the Tribe to obtain information regarding the student's:**
 - a. **Academic progress, including all grades received;**
 - b. **Financial account; and/or**

- c. Behavior and/or disciplinary problems.
4. This program will operate on a continuous cycle. Applications will be accepted at any time during the year as long as funding is available.

Section III. Eligible Amounts and Distributions

A. Total Eligible Amount

Each FGID student who participates in this program will have access to a total of \$50,000.00 for eligible expenses as identified herein, subject to the limitations contained in this Section.

B. Limitations

1. Allotment Based Upon Education Level

There shall be limits to the total funds that may be accessed by the student, based on the educational level and type of degree that the FGID student is working towards or has earned. Thus, the following sub-limits shall apply:

\$5,000.00 limit for certificate programs not culminating in a degree and which DO NOT participate in the Federal Student Aid program.

\$10,000.00 limit for a certificate programs not culminating in a degree, but offered through a program participating in the Federal Student Aid program.

\$20,000.00 limit for an Associate's degree.

\$50,000.00 limit for a Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, or professional degree.

These limits are cumulative, meaning that if a FGID student spent \$10,000.00 in pursuit of an associate's degree, he or she would have \$40,000.00 to use for his or her Bachelor's degree.

2. If an eligible FGID student has earned a particular degree but has not spent all of his or her limit for that degree level, the FGID student may petition the Education Department to use the remainder of his or her limit to pursue another degree. For example, if a FGID student earns a Bachelor's degree and has spent \$30,000.00 of his or her allotment, then the FGID may use the remaining \$20,000.00 to earn an Associate's degree, another Bachelor's degree, or a Master's degree. In approving this second degree, the Education Department shall take into consideration the FGID student's prior academic performance and the likelihood that the FGID student will be able to complete the second degree.

3. For a loan to be repaid, the FGID student must complete the degree that the loan was used to finance. If a FGID student did not complete a degree but completed an equivalent or higher educational level after the date of the loan, then the FGID student's loans may be repaid. Student loans must not be in default for a period of one year prior to the Tribe making a payment.

C. Eligible Expenses

The following expenses are eligible for payment:

1. Students enrolled in an accredited post-secondary institution are eligible for assistance with tuition, books, mandatory fees, specialized tools as required by the course syllabus, and on-campus housing (including meal tickets).
2. All eligible students enrolled in an accredited post-secondary institution may receive up to \$1,000.00 for a computer, printer, and word processing software. Students may receive one replacement computer four (4) years after receiving the initial computer, but only if they are still enrolled in school. All computers and related equipment must be purchased by the student and will be reimbursed by the Education Department. Original receipts are required.
3. Once the student has graduated, he/she is eligible for repayment of loans for tuition, books, and mandatory fees while enrolled in an accredited post-secondary institution. There shall be no repayment of loans for living expenses.

D. Distribution

1. All funds are paid directly to the accredited educational institution, with the exception of reimbursements. Reimbursements meeting all requirements set by the Education Department may be paid directly to the student.
2. All loans shall be repaid to the lending institution. Individuals shall not be repaid. Loan repayment will be made in a lump sum, up to a student's total eligibility limit.
3. Reimbursements are allowed for eligible expenses paid by the student or parent/guardian through a reputable source, as long as appropriate receipts and other necessary documentation can be provided to the Education Department. Students may not be reimbursed for any expenses that were paid prior to entering the Program or that were purchased from an individual or a business that cannot be verified as legitimate. Receipts for reimbursement may only be submitted when the accumulated total is more than \$150.00. Receipts for lesser amounts should be held by the student the \$150.00 amount has accrued or until the end of the semester for which the item was purchased.

E. Refunds

If there is a refund of money paid to the student following his/her withdrawal from a class or school, then it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the refunded money is returned to the Education Department immediately. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in the denial of future tuition payments until such time as the account issues are cleared up by the student. Questions regarding refunds received from student loans or Pell grants should be addressed to the financial aid office at the school.

Section IV. Continuing Obligations of Participating Students

A. Submission of Grades

Students in this program shall submit grades from the previous semester prior to the beginning of the next semester. This submission of grades does not have to be an official transcript. An OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT is required annually in order for the student to remain in the program and is due each year in December. Tuition will not be paid for the following semester until the official transcript for the previous year is received.

B. Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirements

Students in the tuition assistance section of the program must maintain at least a 2.0 (or its equivalent) cumulative GPA for each academic year. If a student fails to meet this requirement, he or she will be placed on academic probation by the Education Department for one semester. If the student should fail to achieve at least a 2.0 GPA a second time during a semester, the student will be ineligible for the program for a period of one (1) year. In order to be reinstated to the program, the student must first obtain a GPA of at least 2.0.

C. School Withdrawals

1. ***Notification.*** FGID students in this program who withdraw from a class must notify the Education Department in writing immediately. (This notice does not have to be given if all the student is doing is dropping or adding classes.) The notification must include the reason(s) why they are withdrawing. An email to the Department is sufficient notification. Copies of all paperwork submitted to the school or given to the student by the school must be sent to the Education Department within ten (10) business days of notifying the Education Department.
2. ***Withdrawing from two (2) classes shall result in the FGID student being placed on probation by the Education Department. (Again, this does not include dropping or adding classes.) If the FGID student should withdraw from a third class, then he/she shall be ineligible for this program for a semester/quarter unless the FGID student can demonstrate to the Education Department that withdrawal was based on exceptional circumstances. Withdrawing from a fourth class shall result in the FGID student being ineligible for this program for a period of two (2)***

years unless the FGID student can demonstrate to the Education Department that withdrawal was based on exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances shall include, but not be limited to: serious, debilitating illness; a serious, debilitating illness of an immediate family member; and/or death of an immediate family member. Once ineligible for the program, the FGID student must petition the Education Department for reinstatement to the program.

D. Reinstatements

In making the decision about reinstatements under this subsection, the Education Department shall take into consideration whether the FGID student is likely to fail to follow program requirements in the future, whether the FGID student will be able to complete the degree within the allotted amount of financial assistance, and whether the FGID student continued to pursue his/her educational and career goals even though ineligible for the program.

E. Updated Information

The student is responsible for keeping the Education Department apprised of changes to his or her information.

Section V. Termination

A. Terminating Participation in the Program

A FGID student may be terminated from this program by a majority vote of the Education Advisory Committee. Cases which might be considered for a declaration of ineligibility include, but are not limited to the following: extreme violence against students or faculty, bringing weapons or illegal substances onto campus, or repeated academic failure. Once terminated from the program, only the Education Advisory Committee or Tribal Council may restore eligibility.

B. Terminating the Program

Funding for the Tuition Assistance Program for First Generation Indian Descent Students is made available through the Education Discretionary budget. The amount allocated to the Education Department is determined yearly by the Tribal Council. In the event that the funding source should end and no replacement funding source(s) can be located, this program may be terminated by a vote of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians Tribal Council.

Section VI. Policy Interpretations and Revisions

A. Interpretations

When processing an application under this Program, the Education Director may encounter ambiguities in the language of the policy. If so, the Education Director shall present the question and his/her proposed interpretation to the Education Advisory Committee within two (2) working days of the question being raised. The Education Advisory Committee shall then issue its concurrence or non-concurrence with the Education Director's interpretation no later than three (3) working days after receiving the question. If the Education Advisory Committee issues a non-concurrence, then the Education Director shall immediately submit the question, the Education Director's proposed response, and the Education Advisory Committee's non-concurrence to the Tribal Administrator, who shall no later than two (2) working days after submission, issue the final interpretation.

B. Revisions

This policy shall be reviewed at least annually to determine effectiveness and the need for revisions. Requests for changes to this policy must be submitted to the Education Department, Education Advisory Committee, and the Education Legislative Committee. No changes may be implemented without the approval of the Tribal Council.

Section VII. Appeals

Any FGID student who disagrees with any decision made by the Education Department under this Program shall file a written request for reconsideration with the Tribal Administrator. If the Tribal Administrator was involved in the final decision under Section VI, A. above, then the Tribal Administrator shall forward the appeal to the Executive Employees. The Tribal Administrator or Executive Employees shall issue a final decision no later than five (5) working days after the Tribal Administrator received the request.

Section VIII. Tax Consequences

Payments made under this policy may be considered taxable by the IRS. FGID students are strongly advised to seek the advice of an attorney and/or accountant regarding these payments. The Tribe is in no way responsible for any decisions regarding the reporting of these payments to the IRS and does not bear any responsibility for any fines, penalties, court costs, or attorney's fees that the student may ultimately bear.