

April 20, 2020

Dear Oneida Higher Education Students,

Since 1996 the Oneida Nation has prided itself in our ability to provide an excellent Higher Education Scholarship Fund. It is with a heavy heart, that we are notifying you the Nation has had to make a very difficult decision to alter the funding levels of this program due to circumstances beyond our control. The funding amount to each student is lowered from \$20,000/\$30,000 to \$5,000 per student.

Income generated from Gaming operations is what funds 100% of the Higher Education Scholarship. Unfortunately, Oneida's gaming operations have been closed to the public since March 18, 2020. Gaming's closure results in a lost income of approximately \$585,000 per day and resulted in the Nation entering a Tier V budget under the Nation's Budget Management and Control Law. Tier V means, the Nation's budget needed to be realigned to support only operations critical to protect the Health, Safety and General Welfare of the Nation and continuity of government. However, the Higher Education Scholarship is one funded program the Nation wanted to keep, at least in part.

The Oneida Business Committee adopted Resolution #4-08-20-G on April 8th, titled – Reducing the General Tribal Council Higher Education Scholarship Payments for FY 2020 and FY 2021. This resolution cites the Corona Virus Public Health Emergency and the need to carefully manage funds during this critical time as rationale for the action taken. The action was to reduce the scholarship funds to \$5,000 per student, per year immediately. The Oneida Casino being the largest revenue source for the Oneida Nation had to be closed as of March 20, 2020 due to a Safer at Home Declaration. This action has had a severe impact on our Nation's cash flow.

The Oneida Nation Higher Education Student Handbook identifies the Academic School Year as August 1 through July 31st. The Resolution became effective immediately on 4-8-20. In light of the need to manage the outflow of cash in this critical time, it is determined that Awards will be equally applied per semester/term or quarter. Any students having received over the maximum of \$5,000 in the current school year is ineligible to receive any additional funds until the Fall Term. Any student having received less than \$5,000 in the current school would be eligible for an award that would bring them to a maximum total of \$5,000 for the school year or an equally applied amount per school term (i.e., tri-semester terms would be equally applied as \$1,667.00).

Due to financial restrictions created by Covid 19, etc. effective immediately the following application of Oneida Higher Education Scholarship applies:

- **Traditional colleges** that have Fall and Spring Terms, and an optional Summer term, may be able to receive prorated funding for spring (academic year 2019-2020) if the student has not received more than \$5000 this academic year. In addition, students may begin being funded this Summer Term, e.g., Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, University of Wisconsin Green Bay, or UW Madison.
- **Quarter based college's**, e.g., Rasmussen College, that have an early fall term that start on or after July 1st and run until September may begin funding at that time.
- **Online programs with no semesters/terms**, may be eligible for funding classes that start on or after July 1st.

Beginning immediately the maximum amount each student is eligible for is \$5,000 per Academic Year. The past practice of tiered funding (\$20,000/bachelors, \$25,000/masters, and \$30,000/doctorate) is suspended until further notice. Awards will be equally applied per semester/term or quarter.

As a pre-caution, funds may be limited so students are encouraged to apply and complete your full application as early as possible.

The Higher Education Office will begin processing awards for Academic Year 20-21 as soon as files are complete. All other applications, formulas, requirements remain the same.

We would like to offer our words of encouragement to each of you as students. Please know that we continue to wish you well in your educational endeavors and that the Nation has also declared in the 4-8-20 resolution that upon returning to an improved financial status, it will be a priority to increase the Higher Education Scholarship Fund.

We will keep you informed of any new developments as they arise in as timely a manner as possible.

Yaw^ko,

Deborah Thundercloud
Oneida Nation General Manager

cc: Oneida Higher Education Department
Oneida Education & Training Area Manager
Governmental Services Division Director