Education COVID-19 Relief Fund FAQ

The Education COVID-19 Relief Fund is made available to Enrolled Oneida Tribal Members from monies received as part of the CARES Act. This is a separate program from Oneida's Higher Education Scholarship Fund with a separate application and criteria. This program falls under the auspices of the Oneida Nation General Welfare Act.

Q1:What is the program and when can I apply?

Answer: This is an Education Relief Fund aimed at assisting students affected by the Public Health Emergency. Students who have had a decrease in financial aid funding, have been affected by unemployment (student and/or family), or have otherwise had their educational goals altered by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Q2:Where can the application be found?

Answer: Online applications can be found on the Oneida Nation's website. Due to the short time frame of this program, students are encouraged to submit their application and documentation online. https://oneida-nsn.gov/resources/economic-support/covid-19-pandemic-college-assistance-program-application/

Q3: Is there a deadline?

Answer: Complete applications must be received by Friday, October 16th. No documents or applications will be accepted after the October 16th deadline.

Q4: What if my application is submitted incomplete?

Answer: Students who submit incomplete applications prior to the deadline, will have their applications sent back to them for re-submission prior to the October 16th deadline. A complete application consists of a signed application, completed Student Expense Worksheet (page 2 of application), copy of acceptance letter, and proof of enrollment (enrollment verification, course schedule, etc.).

Q5: I wasn't planning on attending school but would like to now. What do I do?

Answer: Students must be accepted and enrolled in order to be funded. Students who have been affected by the Public Health Emergency and could utilize these funds to meet their educational goals, should contact the school/program/institution they are interested in attending immediately to ensure you are able to provide all necessary paperwork prior to deadline of October 16, 2020.

Q6: The program I want to attend isn't a "traditional school" will this be covered?

Answer: Maybe. Within the law for the specific program, the definition of accredited was extended to include: "qualified and approved by a United States Department of Education recognized accrediting body, state-approved accrediting body, or recognized through a

professional affiliation." Students applying for funding at a state-approved program or a program recognized by professional affiliation should include accreditation information with their application. *Please see note below regarding potential delays in the process if this is not a vendor set up in our system.

Q7:   How soon will the funds be available?

Answer: Once an applicant has submitted a complete application, it will be reviewed by the Higher Education Pandemic Relief Counselor within 7-10 business days from receipt. Applications will be reviewed on a first come first served basis. If approved, an award letter will be sent to the student and payment sent to accounting for processing. Please allow up to four weeks from the time you receive the award letter for the funds to be received.

Important Note: If students are attending a program that is not already set up in the accounting system, the process may further be delayed as there are additional forms we will need to obtain from the institution.

Q8: How will it be paid?

Answer: Tuition will be sent directly to the student's higher education institution. Funds for student expenses (room and board, transportation, etc) will be sent directly to the student.

Q9:   What do the education COVID-19 Funds cover?

Answer: The funds provided from the relief program will cover: Tuition, Books, Housing (on or off campus), and necessary education related expenses (e.g. ink, storage devices, wifi, computer programs, etc.).

Q10:   Will it be for the full academic year?

Answer: No. The funds can only cover expenses incurred during the Fall 2020 term. (Courses falling between August – December)

Q11:   Will it match Higher Education 2019-2020 academic funding allocations per degree level?

Answer: No. This is a separate program from Oneida's current Higher Education Scholarship fund. The funding maximum for all students is $20,000.

Q12:   How does it impact the $3K Trust Scholarship? $5K through normal Higher Ed grant?

Answer: This is a separate program from Oneida's current Higher Education Scholarship fund. There is a different application and criteria. Students utilizing both programs are advised to work with their school's financial aid office to discuss potential impact on their financial aid.

Q13:   Will the expectations/grade submission, etc. be the same as previous Higher Ed scholarship?

Answer: The Education COVID-19 Relief Fund is a separate program from Oneida's current Higher Education Scholarship fund program. Students will not be required to submit grades or maintain a specific GPA for these funds.

Q14:   Is previously submitted application for 2020-2021 academic year sufficient to receive CARES funded Higher Ed grant or does another application need to be submitted?

Answer: The Education COVID-19 Relief Fund is a separate program from Oneida's current Higher Education Scholarship fund program. Students should submit a COVID-19 Pandemic College Assistance Program Application to apply for the CARES related funding.

Q15:   Is this funding considered financial aid?

Answer: Yes. Students should work closely with their financial aid office regarding the receipt of these funds. Students current term and future terms financial aid may be affected.

Q16: Does this funding have tax consequences?

Answer: Funds allocated to students through the Oneida Higher Education Pandemic Relief Fund are a general welfare exemption and not subject to taxation. However, students may be audited by the Oneida Nation and/or the Internal Revenue Services. It is advised students keep a copy of their application and any receipts of their purchases/payments.

Q17: What needs to be submitted after I receive the funding?

Answer: Students will need to submit receipts showing bills/items paid prior to December 15th. It is advised students keep a copy of their application and any receipts of their purchases/payments.

Q18: Where do I submit receipts prior to the deadline of December 15, 2020?

Answer: Students can mail (COVID-19 Pandemic Education Assistance Program, PO Box 365, Oneida, WI 54155), email (C19_Edu_Program@Oneidanation.org), drop off at Oneida Higher Education Drop Box (3759 W Mason St, Suite 3, Oneida WI 54155 – please clearly mark as COVID-19 Pandemic Education Assistance Program documents), or submit receipts and documents online.

Q19: What happens if I do not submit receipts by December 15, 2020?

Answer: Both the Nation and the student may be subject to an audit. The student will want to retain their receipts to show they received the funds pursuit to the Oneida Higher Education Pandemic Relief Fund Law, a general welfare exemption. The Nation requires the receipts to substantiate it spent the CARES Act Funds in a legal and proper manner.