



Soda Creek Indian Band

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

LOCAL OPERATING GUIDELINES

PREFACE

In accordance with the funding agency, Indigenous and Northern Development Canada's (INAC), Soda Creek Indian Band (SCIB) has developed the following Post Secondary Education (PSE) Local Operating Guidelines. These guidelines are in compliance with the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) and University and College Entrance Preparation (UCEP) Program National Program Guidelines.

Note: SCIB may make necessary amendments to the PSE Local Operating Guidelines to comply with any program or policy changes in the INAC National Program Guidelines

1. OBJECTIVES

To support as many eligible Soda Creek Indian Band member students as possible to access post-secondary education and graduate from their respective program of study with the skills, qualifications and credentials required to pursue their chosen career path and to realize their individual potential to contribute to the community and society.

2. ADMINISTRATION

The Education Department is mandated by Chief and Council to administer the PSE Assistance Program and works closely with the Education Committee to ensure applications undergo a fair review process.

Soda Creek Indian Band members seeking PSE funding will be provided a copy of these Guidelines upon request. They may submit their applications in accordance with these Guidelines at anytime throughout the year. The Education Department will review all applications for completeness and to ensure that they meet INAC's terms of eligibility. The Education Committee will then review completed applications at set times during the year, to ensure adequate time for follow up and possible sponsorship before regular program start times (September and January for the Fall and Winter Semesters). The Education Department will advise applicants within 5 business days as to whether his or her application for sponsorship has been approved.

Where an application is not deemed eligible, the student will be notified and all pertinent documentation requested. Eligible applications that are not approved due to limited funding will be waitlisted.

An applicant that has met all criteria, submitted an eligible application and met all deadlines and is put on the waitlist or does not receive funding, can appeal the decision by following the appeal process set out in these Guidelines.

All enquiries about the PSE program should be directed to:

Title: Education Coordinator
Address: 3405 Mountain House Road
Phone: 250-989-2323 Ext 104
Email: education @xatsull.com
Fax: 250-989-2300

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY & PRIORITY

a. Student Funding Eligibility

To apply for PSE financial assistance, students must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Be a registered member of Soda Creek Indian Band;
- Be a Canadian resident for the past 12 months prior to application;
- Be accepted by an Eligible Post-Secondary Institution (see below);
- Be accepted into an eligible program of study (i.e. certificate, diploma, degree, or University College Entrance Program UCEP)(see below); and
- Maintain academic standing with the Post-Secondary Institution, in accordance with the Institution's definition or description of satisfactory academic standing.

b. Priority for Funding

The Soda Creek Indian Band wishes to support as many students as possible who demonstrate the greatest chances of success and who will use their skills and knowledge for the betterment of the First Nation as a whole.

The Soda Creek Indian Band receives limited funding from INAC for the delivery of the PSSSP and UCEP programs. In the event that there are more applications for funding than available money in the PSSSP and UCEP budget, the selection of applicants will be based on the following order of priority:

- Continuing students (e.g. students already being funded through the PSE Financial Assistance Program who remain in good standing and have re-applied with all supporting documentation as required);
- Recent high school graduates (that apply with all supporting documentation as required);
- Returning students (i.e. students who have stepped away from their post-secondary studies and now wish to return and have applied with all supporting documentation as required);
- New applicants who have already completed a portion of a post-secondary level program (i.e. students who have already completed part of their program but were not previously funded by the PSSSP at that level or higher and have applied with all supporting documentation as required);

Other types of factors will be considered in the prioritization of the above. For example, a student that has completed a minimal level of Post Secondary Education and is unemployed due to lack of credentials may be given higher priority than a student that has already completed a full program and is gainfully employed.

APPLICATION PROCESS & DEADLINES

Students must complete and submit the Application Form in Appendix A by the second Friday in May of each year for a September start date. A second application deadline for a January start date may be provided if there are funds available.

Students are responsible for ensuring that their application form is **complete, signed and received on or before the deadline. All supporting documentation must be provided.** Incomplete applications are not considered eligible until all documentation is provided and the Education Department is not required to do a complete review of the application until the application is complete. The Education Department is responsible for letting applicants know immediately upon discovery, of missing information or documentation. Students will be given reasonable time to provide information that was not available to them at the time of application and should note this directly on the application.

Late applications may be considered if there are sufficient funds available after processing completed applications that are received on time. However, completed late applications may be considered “early” for the next deadline/start date.

All eligible applications that are waitlisted will be kept on file with the possibility of funding provided should funding become available (such as through the withdrawal of students who were approved for funding).

Applications that misrepresent the student’s circumstances may result in denial of funding or cancellation of funding. For example, if a student claims they are accepted into a program but have not yet met the requirements. All students must meet the eligibility requirements as outlined by INAC at all times during their programs.

Deliberate misrepresentations or false statements can potentially harm the funding available for all students and are not tolerated.

Any changes to a student's circumstances must be communicated with the Education Department immediately to ensure this does not affect the information provided in their initial application and to ensure there will not be an interruption of services.

Required Documentation

Please note that the following documents must be submitted with your complete and signed Application Form:

- Copy of Status Card, or status number if copy is already on file;
- Original acceptance letter from Post-Secondary Institution;
- Most current Official Transcripts from ALL Institutions attended;
- Release form(s);
- Letter of Intent and Resume (for Masters and PhD Students)

Proof that Students are able to meet the long-term requirements of the Program they are applying to attend may need to be provided.

Students are required to have been living in Canada for 12 months prior to applying, so may be required to provide proof of residency (tax returns, rental agreements, copies of utility bills, etc).

Students may be required to provide proof of residency and custody agreements for any dependents they claim and request supports for.

Students may need to provide letters from their college or university showing the cost of required books/supplies.

Note for Students applying for assistance through UCEP:

Students applying for assistance through UCEP must obtain a letter from the college or university they have applied to, which attests that:

- The UCEP program will provide the student with the necessary courses to attain the academic level for university or college entrance within one year; **and**
- The student will be eligible for admittance as a student of a regular university or college credit program upon successful completion of the UCEP course of studies.

STUDENT FUNDING SUPPORT

The PSE Financial Assistance Program is not intended to cover 100% of student costs to attend post-secondary education programs. The Soda Creek Indian Band receives limited

funding for the delivery of the PSSSP and UCEP programs. In the event that there are more applications for funding than available money in the PSSSP and UCEP budget, the selection of applicants will be based on the order of priority set out above. All other eligible applicants will be placed on a waitlist.

There are maximum amounts of funding payable per student. However, no student is entitled to this amount. The actual amount of funding available to an Eligible Student will depend on the overall amount of funding the Soda Creek Indian Band receives for the program and the requirements set out in these Guidelines.

Types of Student Funding Support

The following student support funding may be available:

- Tuition and compulsory student fees at a standard cost for provision of the program at the nearest local Public Institute. (Medical/dental and Upass fees are not provided);
- **Required** books and supplies;
- Living Allowance at a rate set out for students based on their income/expense form, at the time sponsorship is approved; rates may be adjusted upon written notification to the Education Department, (a request for an increase due to changes in household income, will be considered by the Education Committee, based on available funding); and,
- Travel at a reasonable rate set out for the student at the time sponsorship is approved. Travel is intended to assist the student to returning home upon the successful completion of the Fall and Winter Semesters (usually provided in December and late March).

All students will receive a Sponsorship Agreement outlining the terms and conditions of their sponsorship along with amounts and dates they can expect to receive funding.

The Soda Creek Indian Band wishes to support as many students as possible who demonstrate the greatest chances of success and who will use their skills and knowledge. Students that are required to attend Spring and/or Summer Semester courses must ensure they apply for supports for all semesters.

Students are responsible for ensuring that the funding received is used for the intended educational expenses, as set out in these Guidelines. Students that do not attend or quit their program with or without informing the Education Department may be required to pay back some or all of a portion of any Living Allowance or Travel that has been provided to the student for that period of time.

APPEAL PROCESS

Where a student believes s/he has been unfairly denied access to post-secondary education funding opportunities by the Soda Creek Indian Band, under the PSE Financial Assistance Program, has met all guidelines and deadlines, and provided a complete and eligible application with all supporting documentation has the right of appeal in accordance with the following process:

- a) The student must discuss all relevant factors that have led to the decision with the Education Department in an attempt to understand how a decision has been made and how the decision affects all students. This discussion is hoped to help resolve any disagreement or misunderstanding and should help answer any questions regarding process and possible future outcomes;
- a) Where the student is still in disagreement regarding access to funding opportunities, the student may appeal, in writing to the Education Department. This Appeal Letter, including all relevant documents, should be written and provided to the Education Department within twenty [20] days of the funding decision. The Appeal Letter must clearly state the reason for the appeal and outcomes the student would like to achieve;
- b) The Education Department staff and the Band Administrator will review and respond to the Appeal Letter within 10 business days;
- c) If the reasons for the appeal are rejected without valid reasons, the student can then write an Appeal Letter, along with a copy of the original Appeal Letter and response to the Education Department, Band Administrator and Chief and Council of the Soda Creek Indian Band.
- d) The Chief and Council will review the Appeal and all related documents and information along with the Band Administrator. The student will be notified in advance and in writing of the date and time they can verbally discuss the Appeal with Chief and Council. The student will have the option of being present or attending through conference call and having a person attend along with them for support. The student should be prepared to present his/her position directly during this Appeal if attending in person or through Conference Call.
- e) The Chief and Council will then review the appeal and if it is found that there is a possibility that the student has been unfairly denied access to funds, the student's appeal will be placed on the agenda of the Chief and Council and dealt with as soon as possible.
- f) The decision of the Chief and Council must be in compliance with SCIB and INAC Policy and Procedures and will be final.

INAC will not accept appeals from students based on decisions made by SCIB.

