

Opaskwayak Education Services Inc.

Pre-Sponsorship Guidelines

Post-Secondary/Employment & Training



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Pre-Sponsorship Guidelines

Please review the following guidelines prior to sending applications for funding. These guidelines are provided to ensure all aspects regarding sponsorship are provided to all Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN) members, regardless of residency.

The Board of Directors of Opaskwayak Education Services Inc., has a sub-committee called the Sponsored Student Committee (SSC). The SSC reviews all “complete” applications. Based on priority listing (#7 of Guidelines) and budget, the SSC will select sponsored students after each application deadline.

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1. Eligibility

Eligible OCN members can apply for full-time or part-time sponsorship;

- Eligible refers to members with confirmed treaty status;
- Eligible also refers to previously sponsored post-secondary students who completed the two (2) year waiting period, or as determined, after discontinuance for one reason or another;

2. Levels of Education

- UCEP – university/college entrance program (transition)
- Level 1 – community college programs including trades and apprenticeship
- Level 2 – university undergraduate (Bachelor) degree program
- Level 3 – university graduate (Master/Doctorate) degree program
- Accredited community-based program (local OCN only)

3. Sponsorship Options

Complete applications are required from OCN members. There will be an individual assessment regarding which category they will be funded under. There are four (4) sponsorship options:

Post-Secondary – (certificate, diploma, degree) Potential students accepted into accredited educational institutions for:

- College programs (minimum of 5 months);
- University programs (minimum of 1 year);
- Specialized programs (non-accredited will not be eligible for “laddering”);
 - Tuition and books only;

Trades - potential students accepted into accredited educational institution for:

- Trades & Technology programs of one (1) to two (2) year(s) in length or less. This does not include university courses.

Short Term Training – potential students accepted into programs four (4) months or less in duration;

Apprenticeship – (Level 1, 2, 3, 4 toward Journeyperson or Red Seal – technical training) potential students registered for in-class level training as an apprentice. There are no deadline dates to apply for funding.

4. Application Deadlines

There will be 2 application post-secondary deadlines per calendar year.

- May 31st - Programs beginning in:
July
August
September
October
November
December
- November 30th - Programs beginning in:
January
February
March
April
May
June

Short-term Training - Deadline date for short term training (maximum of 4 months), will be two (2) weeks prior to start date, and will be based on OCN's list for high demand local capacity building for OCN.

- Apprentices –must apply one (1) month prior to next level toward Red Seal status.

Selection will be based on:

- budget availability;

5. Application Process

Required documentation will be included with the application. OCN members seeking sponsorship will provide copies of the following:

- *Acceptance letter*
 - Official acceptance letter from an educational institution;
 - high school students may not have an official acceptance letter, but rather a conditional acceptance letter. Once the high school student receives the final transcript, it will be forwarded to the educational institution. In this instance,

the SSC will review high school applicants awaiting official acceptance letters;

- Conditional acceptance letters may be accepted for a regular program. This occurs when a program requires confirmation of sponsorship or a seat deposit. Once received, copy must be forwarded to OES. In this instance, the SSC will review the conditional acceptance letter;
- Trades/apprenticeship programs may require employment offer letter;

* *Treaty card or letter from OCN Registrar*

* *Career or higher learning goals*

* one half page in length;

- *Social insurance number*

- will accept government documentation ie. Tax notice, Child Care Credit;

- *Child abuse/criminal records checks, if applicable*

- Federal and Provincial regulations require persons, working in occupations having trust or custodial relationships with other people, must fulfil the above requirements for their chosen careers. These include, but not limited to, potential students in education, nursing, social work, law enforcement, child care, dentistry, and counselling. These students must fulfil these requirements prior to applying for sponsorship and before any placements and/or employment in their chosen career.

1. Proof of ordering will be accepted and a copy once received;
2. If a potential student did not fulfill a satisfactory check, the student will not be approved. However, a student may be approved for an accredited community-based program or if a charge or conviction is over 10 years.

- *Bank deposit slip*

- Required for full-time and part-time;

- *Medical/Clinical assessment, if applicable*

- Assessment/diagnosis of an exceptionality (once referred to as special needs) requires supporting documentation for accommodation purposes;
- Potential sponsored students with exceptionalities may require annual follow up with doctor/clinician and any recommendations regarding continuance, deferral, or discontinuance will be recommended;
 - Students selected for sponsorship may be affected with an

exceptionality after beginning a program; in this instance, students may be deferred until a doctor/clinician assessment is completed with recommendations for continuance, deferral, or discontinuance, accommodations, etc. If there are changes in this area, the student will advise/discuss with their Counsellor.

- Students with exceptionalities are required to ensure accommodations are in place at the educational institution prior to the start of program;

6. Selection of Sponsored Students

The SSC will review applications five (5) days after the deadline date and all applicants will be provided with an official letter.

Please note the following:

- Short term training requires two (2) weeks notice;
- Dual programs may not be eligible;
- Students accepted into non-accredited programs or institutions may not be eligible;
- OES employees granted education leave with pay will not be eligible for a student allowance;
- Applications may not be eligible if they do not fall under the “priority list”;
- Staggered start dates, other than January and February, may not be considered;

7. Priority Listings for Selection

The priority list as follows:

(7.1) Continuing OES Sponsored Students who maintain the required GPA for their programs and are continuing with their current program.

(7.2) Deferred Students who are returning after one (1) term or one (1) year;

(7.3) Potential students accepted into programs including short term training:

- High school graduates, previous or present year;
- mature graduates, present year;
- High demand profession/career required (local only as confirmed by OCN Education & Training Steering Committee’s annual process – top 5);
- Applicants accepted into short term training (4 months or less) with tuition/fees over \$1,000;

- Short term training costs less than \$1,000 will be at the discretion of OES staff (PSP Supervisor and E&T Coordinator).

(7.4) Continuing students, who funded own program (previous or present year), who demonstrated commitment to their education by successfully completing at least one (1) course per term, either full-time or part-time;

(7.5) Students who have never been funded by OCN or graduated over five (5) years ago.

(7.6) Students who were sponsored over two (2) years ago which include students who quit, voluntarily withdrew, and students who were required to discontinue.

(7.7) Students who have recently graduated between two (2) years and four (4) years ago, on or off reserve, regardless of funding resources.

(7.8) Students who graduated and have been funded by OES for two (2) previous programs;

Not eligible for sponsorship – applications received may not fall in the priority listing and will not be considered for sponsorship. These are:

- Potential students who missed the deadline date.
- Potential students who funded their own and did not meet the criteria for sponsorship which includes successful progress;
- Potential students who do not have an official or conditional acceptance letter; including incomplete applications with minimal information, ie. no documentation attached to the application, no signatures, no pertinent information, etc.;

Wait List – During the annual selection process, there may be a wait list. Approval is pending student attrition.

8. Mandatory Orientation

Students selected for sponsorship, full-time or part-time, will be required to attend a mandatory orientation, either through zoom/teams or in-person.

Non-attendance will result in sponsorship being rescinded.

9. Application Fees

Current year, High school/Mature Grad students will be eligible to receive reimbursement for one (1) application fee.

OCN member starting or returning to post-secondary will be reimbursed for half of the application fee.

10. Tuition Deposit/Seat Deposit/Registration Fees

Students accepted into programs which require deposits and/or registration fees must pay for these costs. Students approved for OES sponsorship will be eligible for reimbursement.

Exception will be high school graduates; OES will be responsible.

11. Tuition

Public institution (non-profit, partial government funded) - There is a maximum tuition of \$9000 per academic year (8 months) or \$4500 per academic term (4 months) allotted for public institutions. Tuition costs exceeding \$9,000 may be considered for additional funding.

Private institution – (for profit, derived from tuition) - There is a maximum tuition of \$9000 per fiscal year (8 months). The student must provide confirmation of “over and above” tuition payment, prior to OES releasing payment of \$9000 per fiscal year.

Athabasca University - If a sponsored student chooses Athabasca University, completion of courses will be funded in unison of regular terms with other universities. Athabasca University courses are six (6) months in length and other universities are four (4) months in length. Therefore, full-time and part-time students should complete required course work within four (4) months.

- Full-time students will be allotted a maximum of four (4) months student allowances. Students not completed within this time frame will not receive student allowances.
- Part-time students will complete their program of studies based on the regular academic time frame which is a 10-year maximum.

Professional programs - will receive \$12,500 for the Fall/Winter and/or \$6,250 for Spring and Summer. Examples include, but not limited to:

- Medical Doctor
- Law
- Optometrist
- Dentistry
- Pilot
- Helicopter

International sponsored students will be assessed on an individual basis. Acceptance into out-of-country programs is an individual choice and may affect financial sponsorship. A maximum of \$9,000 per academic year (8 months) may apply, equivalent to regularly sponsored programs in Canada; however, an individual assessment may determine otherwise and the following will be considered:

- Canadian dollars vs foreign currency, as to not foster hardship;
- Sports related students will be required to provide information regarding awards, scholarships, signing bonuses, tuition/books, etc.;
- May be required to pay for their own tuition and books and submit receipts for reimbursement;

12. Unacceptable Behaviour (Severe or Threatening)

Unacceptable behaviour prior to selection sponsorship process will not be tolerated. OES will support post-secondary/trades staff to ensure a safe work environment. OCN citizens who subject such behaviour to Post-Secondary or Trades employees will not be considered during the selection process. They may be eligible to apply after one (1) year.

Administration process:

1. Employee to complete “incident form” available with Human Resources, OES.
2. Forward to Sponsored Student Committee for review and action.