



AND

Laguna Department of Education



Partners for Success

Mission:

Hanu He 'ya Na'yuutsi Gunishe
(Helping) "People prepare for life's journey"

Direct Education Scholarship

Guidelines

Direct Education Scholarship Guidelines

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CONTACT INFORMATION

These policies serve as guidelines rather than expressed or implied contracts with the applicant (student). Policies adopted by the Pueblo of Laguna and Laguna Department of Education Partners For Success are subject to change or may be withdrawn by the PoL Council, without prior notice.

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Laguna, NM 87026-0207

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DIRECT EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

On April 5, 2014, the Pueblo of Laguna Council approved and authorized the use of a Direct Education Scholarship Allocation to fund education grants for enrolled Pueblo of Laguna members seeking higher education (Resolution No. 35-14). The Pueblo of Laguna Council increased the monetary resources available for distribution of educational grants to provide supplemental funds for tuition, books, supplies, travel expense, room and board and childcare for Undergraduate, Graduate and Vocational students attending regionally accredited higher education institutions and vocational schools (Resolution No. 27-95). A major objective of the Pueblo's support of higher education is to not only see students pursue higher education, but complete the process in a timely manner. In an effort to provide opportunity to as many Pueblo of Laguna members as possible, this program will focus on vertical support of higher education and not horizontal support. An example of non-eligible horizontal support is if an individual has a bachelor's degree, they will not be eligible for funding to pursue another bachelors degree. An example of the eligible vertical support is if a person has a bachelor's degree, they will be eligible for funding to pursue masters or higher-level degree. The goal is not to create professional students, but to inspire students to complete the higher education steps.

Laguna Department of Education's Partners for Success supports the pursuit of higher education for enrolled Pueblo of Laguna tribal members. Acceptance of scholarship funds implies a focused commitment to college studies or vocational schooling, and achieving the goal of earning a college degree or professional license/certification. The Pueblo of Laguna Council has authorized the LDoE, Partners For Success project to manage and administer the Direct Education Scholarship allocation.

The staff of Partners For Success along with the Laguna Board of Education extends our wishes for courage and perseverance to students and families as they take steps toward a college or vocational education. We are pleased that the number of students who want to pursue higher education has increased. As a result, the competition for scholarships becomes heightened. Students and families are encouraged to seek a range of resources to defray the costs of higher education. You may contact the Partners For Success for scholarship sources at (505) 552-9322.

Applicants seeking a Baccalaureate degree may be funded for a maximum of 10 semesters. Funds will be awarded for Fall and Spring semesters only.

Study Abroad Programs are acceptable options for college juniors and seniors who wish to broaden their educational horizons. A student seeking scholarship support must first be accepted into a study abroad program through their college or university. A formal letter of approval, along with official transcripts demonstrating a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher are required for scholarship support. A packet of information describing the study abroad program, area of study, time frame, country and the educational benefit must accompany the request. The scholarship amount will be the same for a study abroad program as it would be if the student were attending a regular term in the United States. ***All additional expenses beyond the amount of the scholarship award are the student's responsibility.***

Distance Education courses, at regionally accredited institutions, may be acceptable ways of earning a bachelor's degree. Eligibility for scholarship funding requires the student to be registered as a full-time college junior or senior. Exceptions to this basic requirement must be approved on a case by case basis prior to classes commencing. Factors considered are: (1) Cumulative gpa; (2) Access to computer, software and internet capacity; (3) Prior online experience and (4) Plan of Study;

MOU Merit Scholarships also known as a “Memorandum of Understanding” tuition waivers are given by colleges and universities entering into a higher education written agreement with the Pueblo of Laguna. The purpose of the MOU is to formalize the relationship between an institution of higher education and the Pueblo of Laguna, with goals to promote higher education opportunities leading to the retention and successful completion of degree programs by Laguna students.

One example of the MOU between the Pueblo of Laguna and New Mexico Highlands University is NMHU offers up to three MOU Merit Scholarships per year at the undergraduate and graduate levels. This scholarship covers the cost of tuition and fees (\$1,632 per semester in 2011) and cannot be utilized in conjunction with the New Mexico Lottery Scholarship. However, a Laguna Scholar may receive the merit based MOU award in addition to the Direct Education Scholarship. The student must carry 12 college level credits or more and earn a 2.0 gpa or higher in the undergraduate program and 3.0 gpa or higher at the graduate level.

The Laguna Pueblo Tribal Council selects the MOU Merit Scholars from a list of possible candidates based on character, previous academic performance, community and professional recommendations and motivation of the scholars. The MOU award is good for up to two semesters for each awardee, provided academic standards are maintained or exceeded.

Currently the University of New Mexico, New Mexico State University and New Mexico Highlands University have formal MOU agreements with the Pueblo of Laguna.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Individuals who meet the following criteria will be considered for Direct Education Scholarship funding:

1. Be a regular enrolled member of the Pueblo of Laguna. ("Naturalized" Laguna tribal members and descendants are ineligible for funding);
2. A high school or GED graduate.
3. Pursue a Vocational Certificate, Associate degree, Bachelor degree or Graduate Degree at a regionally accredited college or university in the United States. This includes "transferable" associate degree as a full-time undergraduate student

Note: The full-time status may be adjusted for individuals with disabilities or Tribal members serving in an official full-time capacity for the Pueblo of Laguna. Determinations will be made on a case-by- case basis. For individuals with disabilities living on or near Laguna reservation, support will be coordinated with Laguna Acoma Connections.

Individuals are considered *ineligible* for Direct Education Scholarship funding for any one of the following reasons:

- a) Is a "naturalized" or descendant member of the Pueblo of Laguna.
- b) Did not receive a high school diploma or GED certificate.
- c) Plans to attend a college or university *that is not regionally* accredited.
- d) Did not submit required documents by the specified deadline(s) for the academic year or term for which funding is requested.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

1. **Direct Education Scholarship** application for the academic year for which funding is requested, (i.e., fall and spring term). Students must complete an application each year for which funding is requested. Applications available online at www.idoe.org.
2. **For undergraduate and vocational school students, official high school /GED transcripts are required. ACT/SAT scores may be requested for first time 2 or 4 year colleges. For graduate students, official undergraduate transcripts are required.**
3. **Copy of official admissions letter and enrollment verification** on institution letterhead from a **regionally accredited** institution stating the degree program.
4. **Certificate of Indian Blood (CIB)** or copy of tribal membership card from the Pueblo of Laguna Tribal Enrollment Office. ("Naturalized" and descendent Laguna tribal members are ineligible for funding). Census Identification from the BIA Laguna Agency is unacceptable. Contact the Tribal Enrollment Office (505) 552-6654 Ext. 1205 or 1206 to request a CIB.
5. Students must provide **official college transcript** (at their expense) of previous undergraduate work to determine continued eligibility. All students must submit a legible copy of grades at the completion of each term. (semester and quarter).
6. **Personal Statement.** Each applicant is required to submit a written personal statement. The statement includes the purpose for pursuing a college degree in their chosen field of study and career or profession. Statement should be at least 1 typed page double spaced.
7. **Degree plan.** Each applicant, in conjunction with their academic advisor, is required to submit a written plan of study. The degree plan should list the course work to complete degree requirements.
8. **Individual Plan for Success.** The IPS delineates commitments by the applicant (student) and the Partners For Success. Once all other paperwork is completed and submitted to PFS the IPS/ Award Letter is sent to the applicant for completion and signature.

The IPS/Award Letter announces the amount of the scholarship award. **A completed copy must be returned to PFS prior to the disbursement of funds.**

Submit all required documents to Partners for Success Office BY THE DEADLINE.

PROGRAM/INDIVIDUAL PLAN FOR SUCCESS REQUIREMENTS

1. Be enrolled as a full-time student (e.g. 12 credit hours or more) and earn full-time credit hours for each academic term at a **regionally accredited post-secondary institution in the United States.**
2. Maintain at least a **2.0 grade point average (GPA)** for a full-time course load for each academic term (see probation sections).

Note: Eligibility is based on the student's term GPA, not cumulative GPA.
3. Submit copy of grades upon completion of each term and an **official transcript** at the end of the school year. The PFS Case Manager will release the scholarship grant for the next term to the student upon receipt of grades and review of eligibility. **Any delay in submittal of grades may delay scholarship disbursement.**
4. Maintain contact with Partners For Success and provide information (change in degree major, program requirements, address, phone number, e-mail address etc.) as required.
5. Declare a major by the completion of the first year of study.
6. Become familiar with the institution's policies, procedures and deadlines to ensure that academic, financial, and graduation standards are met for continued funding eligibility.
7. Meet requirements specified in the Individual Plan for Success (e.g. completion of courses, which include: (a) Proof of participation in a financial literacy class (b) College Success 101; (c) College Orientation or (d) College Personal Finance)

8. Male students 18 years of age or older, must notify annually their respective village officer(s) relative to village meetings and other obligations while in college. Copy of excuse letter or presentation form should be provided to Partners for Success.
9. Students with college junior, senior or graduate level academic standing, at an approved regionally accredited institution, may be considered for funding for distance education courses. Exceptions to this basic requirement must be approved on a case by case basis by the PFS Director.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

FALL

<u>DOCUMENT</u>	<u>DATE SUBMITTED</u>
Direct Education Scholarship Application	_____
Official college transcript	_____
If not previously submitted:	
Official high school transcript or GED certificate/scores	_____
Copy of admissions letter/ enrollment verification.	_____
Certificate of Indian Blood (CIB) or tribal membership card	_____

SPRING

<u>DOCUMENT</u>	<u>DATE SUBMITTED</u>
Direct Education Scholarship Application	_____
Official college transcript	_____
If not previously submitted:	
Official high school transcript or GED certificate/scores	_____
Copy of admissions letter.	_____
Certificate of Indian Blood (CIB) or tribal membership card	_____

MAXIMUM TERMS OF FUNDING

Applicants seeking a baccalaureate, masters or doctoral degree: may be funded for a maximum of 10 semesters.

Classes should be scheduled carefully. Be mindful that enrollment in developmental and/or remedial classes does not typically result in earned credits. Enrolling in more than 12 hours per term is the norm to receive your undergraduate degree within a reasonable time frame.

College seniors must submit a plan for graduation that defines the coursework completed, remaining courses for graduation, and a timetable for completing the degree. This is meant to ensure completion of degree requirements within a timely manner.

Applicants seeking vocational licenses/certifications or transferable associates degree: are funded for a maximum of two (2) academic years, four (4) semesters, or six (6) quarters or a combination equaling the same. The “fifth” year appeal rule applies for upper division work.

Note: Funding for a non-transferable associate degree or certification is available through the PFS Employment & Training Program, (505) 552-9322.

FUNDING MODEL

Term of support: 10 Semesters, Max. *(Based on a full time student.)*

Undergraduate/Vocational

- Freshman (1st year) \$2,000/semester
- Sophomore (2nd year) \$2,500/semester
- Junior (3rd year) \$3,000/semester
- Senior (4th year) \$4,000/semester

Graduate/Professional

- 1st year \$2,500/semester
- 2nd year \$3,000/semester
- 3rd year \$3,500/semester
- 4th year \$4,500/semester

Student Class: The following criteria are used when referring to undergraduate students by class. Typically, these are used only for students who began their college careers.

Class	Earned Credit Hours
• First- Year / Freshman	0-29
• Sophomore	30-59
• Junior	60-89
• Senior	90+

Incentive: Full time students with a 3.0 gpa or better are eligible for an additional \$1,000.

GRADUATE AND DOCTORATE DEGREE FUNDING

Funding is available for tribal members pursuing graduate and doctoral level (M.D., J.D., PhD, etc.) degrees. The level of funding for each year is provided per the funding model described on page 9. Funding will be provided fall and spring semesters only. Funding is contingent upon maintaining a minimum 2.0 gpa and submission of grades after each semester completed.

AWARD NOTIFICATION

Applicants awarded will receive a letter of notification of an official award. *Award letters are mailed subject to submittal of all required documents:*

<u>Term</u>	<u>Award Letters Mailed</u>
Fall	August - September
Spring	January – February

The award letter states the total amount of the award for the academic year (AY) and disbursement per term (semester/quarter).

- ◆ **Neither Partners For Success employees nor members of the LDoE Board may enter into any agreement to assume financial obligations for a student.**

FAILURE TO MEET FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

Academic Probation for a semester or term will be grounds for suspending scholarship funding. However, a student may request, in writing (letter or email), a review of their circumstances and why they

should be considered for continued funding. The request should specify a plan and strategies for improving their grades. ***Please allow 20 business days for the review to be completed.***

Factors, which will affect adversely any consideration for scholarship awards, include:

- Failure to notify the PFS Case Manager of any changes from full-time to part-time status (e.g. less 12 hours).
- Failure to attend classes.
- Falsification or attempts to falsify grades.
- Refusal to seek academic support (e.g. tutoring)
- Excessively low GPA resulting from lack of effort or performance.
- No earned credits for a term.

REINSTATEMENT OF SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY

In order to be reinstated for scholarship eligibility resulting from academic probation, a student must submit **official transcripts** as evidence that they have completed a semester or term on their own and met the following requirements:

- Earn at least a 2.0 grade point average (GPA) as a full-time student (submit official transcript).
- Complete and submit a Direct Education Scholarship application and submit documents as required.

NON-ACADEMIC SUSPENSION OR INVOLUNTARY DEPARTURE

Non-Academic suspension or involuntary departure of a student from college/university will result in suspension of scholarship funding. Consideration for reinstatement will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

WITHDRAWAL

A student who withdraws from college, must notify Partners For Success in writing, stating the reason(s) for withdrawal. Documentation must be submitted to substantiate the withdrawal (i.e. medical report, letter from advisor or college dean, etc.). Student must meet with the PFS Case Manager to reestablish eligibility for scholarship and satisfy all requirements. Early withdrawal may also affect student loans and grants and other scholarships. Contact your Financial Aid Department about possible consequences of early withdrawal from college.

APPEAL PROCESS

An applicant has the right to appeal a denial of funding for cause according to the appeal process below:

1. Upon receipt of a letter of denial from the PFS Director, a student may appeal the decision in writing to the PFS Director or designee. Any additional documents to substantiate the appeal should be included (e.g., medical reports, transcripts, letters from college personnel, etc.) not included in the original appeal.
2. If the appeal response from the PFS Director or designee is unsatisfactory, the student may further appeal in writing to the Superintendent of Laguna Department of Education or designee. The letter should state specific reason(s) he/she merits reconsideration for funding.
3. If the appeal response by the Superintendent or designee is unsatisfactory, the final appeal may be submitted in writing to the Laguna Department of Education Board of Directors (BoD). The student may appear before the LDoE BoD and the appeal will be scheduled for the next meeting. The LDoE

Board will make the final decision. A full appeal may take up to one month until next regularly scheduled meeting.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Academic Year (AY): typically defined as August through May of a given school year.

Accredited Post-Secondary Institution: Certification by regional associations as meeting set standards of education. Accrediting associations include:

MSA	Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
NASC	Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
NCA	North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
NEASC-CIHE	New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc., Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
NEASC	New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.
SACS-CC	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commissions on Colleges
WASC-Jr.	Western Association of Schools and Colleges-Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
WASC-Sr.	Western Association of Schools and Colleges/Accrediting, Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities

Associate degree: a two-year degree conferred and defined by a college or institution.

Baccalaureate degree: a bachelor degree (4 yrs.) conferred and defined by colleges or universities. *A two-year Baccalaureate degree will not be eligible for Direct Education Scholarship allocation funding.*

College Admissions Letter: Notification of matriculation (to enroll as a student in a college/university) into an accredited institution.

Continuing student: A student previously funded by the Laguna Higher Education Program and is reapplying for continued funding.

Distance Education: A variety of mediums for delivery of instruction to students, including: Internet, video conferencing, teleconferencing and correspondence.

Full-time student: a student who enrolls for and completes 12 credit hours per term in an accredited post-secondary institution or as defined by the institution's registrar or financial aid office.

Good Academic Standing: student who holds a 2.0 grade point average (GPA) or above as a full-time student at an accredited post-secondary institution or as defined by the institution.

Graduate Funding: Contact Partners For Success about graduate scholarship funding. Also contact the American Indian Graduate Center (AIGC). Address is: 4520 Montgomery Blvd, NE, Suite I-B, Albuquerque, NM 87109-1291, (505) 881-4585, (505) 884-0427 (Fax). www.aigc.org.

GPA: Grade Point Average

Honors. A recognition given to student's who achieve high academic standards, usually above a 3.5 Grade Point Average. *Additional merit scholarships may be available for students who achieve honors status.*

Incentive: Full time students with a 3.0 gpa or better, are eligible for an additional \$1,000.

Institution: College or University

Maximum Terms of Funding: The Direct Education Scholarship allocation funds for a maximum total of 10 semesters.

Merit Based Scholarships: A merit scholarship is based on high levels of academic performance and sometimes-additional criteria. Typically merit scholarships are awarded to full time college students earning grade point averages in mid to high “B’s” (3.0) or higher.

MOU Merit Scholarship: A Memorandum of Understanding scholarship, also known as MOU Tuition Waiver is a scholarship awarded by higher education institutions participating in a formal agreement with the Pueblo of Laguna. The scholarship is merit based and normally is for a semester or academic year. It may also have other specific requirements. See a Financial Aid Officer or contact the Partners for Success Director for more details

National Accreditation: An institutional approval of a college or institution that attests to meeting acceptable levels of quality and performance. It’s advisable to check the transferability of credits between postsecondary institutions. ***Not all colleges and universities accept the transfer of credits. i.e. national accreditation versus regional accreditation.***

Over-award: Is the amount of funding as determined by the institution that exceeds the total amount of the cost of attendance per semester.

Part-time Student: A student with a course load of less than 12 credits, by an accredited post-secondary institution or as defined by the institution's Registrar or Financial Aid Office.

Personal Expenses: As defined by the Financial Aid Office, items such as, but not limited to, clothes, medical costs and recreation, etc.

Personal Statement: A typed double spaced one-page explanation of the purpose for pursuing a college degree in one's chosen field and career.

Plan of Study: A degree plan which presents the list of courses and descriptions in a specific field of study. Supporting documentation to the plan may include: Program outlines, letters of support and college catalog course descriptions which map out the student's program toward the bachelors degree.

Probation: Status of a student with a grade point average (GPA) less than 2.0. Refer to the institution’s academic policies.

Regionally Accreditation: An institutional approval of a college or university that attests to meeting acceptable levels of quality and performance. A regionally accredited institution has the authority to confer the bachelors, masters and doctoral degree to students meeting all academic requirements.

Regular-Enrolled Tribal Member: As defined in the Pueblo of Laguna Constitution (“naturalized” and descendent Laguna tribal members are ineligible for Direct Education Scholarship allocation funding).

Satisfactory Progress. The minimum standard by which a student is considered in good academic standing in pursuit of a full-time degree. Normally it means a person maintains or exceeds a 2.0 (“C”) or better overall grade point average (GPA) and earns 12 credits (full time) or more of college course work in the term they are enrolled.

Suspension: The status of a student for failing to remove probationary conditions. A student on suspension is ineligible to receive Direct Education Scholarship allocation funding.

Transcript: An official record of a student’s academic courses and grades, which is maintained by the school registrar. Laguna scholars are required to have the institution forward official transcripts to the Partners for Success office at the end of each term.

Transferable Degree: Typically, an Associate’s Degree that can readily transfer to a Baccalaureate degree.

Undergraduate Student. A student pursuing an associate degree (transferable into a bachelor’s) or a bachelor degree.

Under-award: Is the amount of funding determined by the institution that does not meet the needs of the total cost of attendance per semester.

Unofficial Transcripts: A student's academic courses and grades which can be obtained either on-line or from the registrars' office. Unofficial transcripts must be verified with official ones.

Unsatisfactory Progress: A status given to a student who falls below a 2.0 ("C") or fails to earn less than 12 credits (full time) of college credits. If a student falls below the minimum standard they are placed on academic probation and allowed one additional semester to improve their grades and earned credits. *Direct Education Scholarship allocation funding is suspended during this time.*