
MEMORANDUM

To: APB
From: Raina Killspotted, Commissioner of Education
Subject: Higher Education Policies Update
Date: 2/24/2025



We are excited to announce several important updates to our scholarship policies designed to enhance accessibility and support for our students. Please carefully review the changes outlined below:

Online Scholarship Application: We are introducing an **online application process** for all scholarship applications. This new system is aimed at simplifying the application process, making it more accessible to students, and improving our administrative efficiency.

- **Application Portal:** Students can access the online application through the Mille Lacs Band's official website.
- **Documentation:** Required documents can be uploaded directly through the portal in PDF format.

We encourage all students to take advantage of this streamlined application process and submit their applications on time.

Cannabis Track Funding: recognizing the growing importance and academic interest in the cannabis industry, we are pleased to introduce a new scholarship track specifically for students pursuing studies in this field. The use of self-governance funds will not be allowed for those pursuing this program pathway.

- **Eligibility:** Open to students enrolled in programs related to cannabis studies, including but not limited to agriculture, business, law, and health sciences.
- **Award Amount:** Recipients will receive a scholarship of up to \$2,000.00 for (AA or AAS) or 60 credits within BA/BS programs or Bachelor Degree (BA or BS) - \$4,000.00.
- **Criteria:** approval for these students will be done by the Commissioner of Education.

This scholarship aims to support students passionate about contributing to this emerging industry.

We are introducing additional awards for students who achieve certain degree milestones to recognize academic excellence further.

- High School Diploma & GED: We have increased the award amount to \$1,000.00 for qualified students with the policies.
- Bachelor's Degrees that focus on the Ojibwe Language have been added to the eligibility criteria for an award of \$10,000.00. The additional requirement is a commitment to work for the band for five years (\$5,000.00 will be issued upon diploma submission and \$5,000.00 upon starting work).

Academic Award changes: These awards are intended to honor academic performance and encourage continued excellence in furthering student's lifetime academic pursuits.

For further information on any of these updates, please get in touch with the Scholarship Director at mlbshscholarships@millelacsband.com or visit the scholarship office during regular business hours. We are committed to supporting our students' educational journeys and look forward to seeing the positive impact of these changes.

MILLE LACS BAND OF OJIBWE HIGHER EDUCATION OFFICE

TERMS AND POLICIES

PURPOSE:

The Higher Education Scholarship Office assists Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe enrolled members and their Direct Descendants in pursuing their higher educational goals.

A. Eligibility Requirements

1. Scholarship funds may be awarded to enrolled Mille Lacs Band members or Direct Descendants of a Mille Lacs Band member. Enrollment status will be verified against MLB enrollment records.
2. Band members and their children are eligible for “unmet need” as determined by the financial aid office of the accredited learning institution the student will attend with limited funding of \$100,000.00 per student academic lifetime.
3. An applicant who is of full-time student status must complete a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and seek other sources of scholarship assistance.

B. Required Documents

1. Submission of high school diploma or General Education Diploma (GED).
2. Acceptance letter from an Accredited Vocational program or Degree Granting College/University.
 - a. Admission fees to colleges, universities and technical schools are the student responsibility.
 - b. Students returning to education must have transcripts from each school previously attended on file with the Higher Education Office.
3. A completed Student Education Plan (SEP).
 - a. The SEP is required for every student and is not dependent upon whether or not the student has chosen a major or specific program of study. The SEP must be updated and resubmitted each academic year. Student progress is monitored by the Higher Education Scholarship office.
 - b. Undergraduate students who attend full-time are expected to complete an Associate Degree program within eight (8) quarter or five (5) semesters. Students who are attending a bachelor program full-time are expected to complete a program

in fifteen (15) quarters or ten (10) semesters. Part-time students' progress requirements will be determined on a case-by-case basis according to their individual SEP.

4. A completed Mille Lacs Band Higher Education Application.
 - a. Application must be completed once a year prior to the quarter/semester for which the student wishes to receive funding. The student must indicate on the form all semesters/quarters the student intends to take classes in that academic year.
5. A completed Consent for Release of Confidential Information Form.
 - a. The student must sign this form and submit the Higher Education office. Anyone calling on behalf of a student must have a signed *"Consent for the Release of Confidential Information form."*
6. A completed Authorization and Agreement Terms form.
 - a. The student must sign and submit this form to the Higher Education Office, which is the student's acknowledgement that (s)he understands the terms and policies of the program.

***The Scholarship online application should be accessed OUTSIDE the Mille Lacs Band Network. Links are available on the Mille Lacs Band website:**

<https://millelacsband.com/government/resouces1/scholarship>

Paper copies of these forms will be accepted by email ONLY if the student has no access to the website or a printer. Email: MLB.Scholarships@millelacsband.com

****Students must make all inquiries to the Mille Lacs Band Higher Education office themselves. Anyone else calling on behalf of the student must have a SIGNED "Consent for the Release of Confidential Information Form" on file before an inquiry is made on the student's behalf.**

C. Funding Requirements

1. Part-time students must submit tuition statements to the Mille Lacs Band Higher Education Office.
2. Students must maintain an overall Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0 or better with no incompletes, withdrawals, or failing grades.
3. To receive a scholarship for upcoming terms within the same academic year, previous semester/quarter grades must be on file with the Higher Education Office.
4. Students must submit a class schedule every semester/quarter. The student must immediately notify the Higher Education Office of any changes to the schedule after it has been submitted.
5. Full-time/Part-time status determination is as follows:
 - a. Full-time status is enrollment in twelve (12) or more credits per semester/quarter.

- b. Part-time status is enrollment in less than twelve (12) credits per semester/quarter.
 - c. Summer enrollment: full-time is six (6) credits or more, part-time is less than six (6) credits.
6. Tuition for Undergraduate students may be granted up to a maximum of \$16,000.00 per academic year of full-time enrollment based on verified actual expenses.
- a. Part-time students will only receive the actual cost of tuition, books and tuition related fees not to exceed \$16,000.00 maximum for the academic year.
 - b. Fulltime students the scheduled disbursement is as follows:
 - i. Schools that use SEMESTER system: \$6,000.00 fall, \$6,000.00 spring and \$4,000.00 summer (only if attending and it is designated on the Scholarship Application).
 - ii. Schools that use QUARTERS systems: \$4,000.00 fall, \$4,000.00 winter, \$4,000.00 spring, and \$4,000.00 summer (only if attending and it is designated on the Scholarship Application).
 - iii. If the student does not check the "SUMMER OPTION" on the Scholarship Application and later decides to attend summer session, the student will not qualify for additional funding beyond the maximum funding of \$16,000.00.
7. Books and required supplies for classes PAID FOR BY THE STUDENT are reimbursed. Reimbursement for the actual cost of books and required supplies for classes (course syllabi required) will be a maximum of \$600.00 per semester or \$400.00 per quarter. Receipts must be submitted to the Higher Education Office prior to funds being disbursed. (Required supplies mean only supplies required for the course, such as clay, paint, brushes for an art class, or tools for mechanics. NOT COVERED are routine supplies like pens, pencils, notebooks, book bags, clothing, parking passes, or city bus passes.)
8. Computers/laptop assistance is \$1,000.00 for a one-time entry into an AA/AAS or BA program. If a student pursues a Master's or Doctorate program, another \$1,000.00 for a computer will be allowed (issued only twice per student education lifetime).
- **Note that the Higher Education Office will not reimburse state and city taxes or shipping and handling fees.**

D Trial Semester/Quarter Student Status

If a student is unable to submit the minimum standards of passing grades successfully and submits a Withdrawal (W), Incomplete (I) or Failing Grade (F) for a semester/quarter funded by the Mille Lacs Band Scholarship program, the student will still be allowed to attend the upcoming semester. However, the student will be placed on a TRIAL Semester/Quarter. During this trial semester, the Higher Education Office will ONLY pay for tuition, books, tuition-related fees, and required class-related supplies. Mille Lacs Higher Education will monitor the grades for this trial semester/quarter, and the student must submit passing grades to be placed back in good standing.

The second consecutive semester/quarter that a student does not complete a class (i.e., withdrawal, incomplete, or failing grade) will cause the student to be placed on ACADEMIC PROBATION.

E. Academic Probation

When a student is on Academic Probation Status, the student is NOT ELIGIBLE for funding through the Higher Education Office.

1. Funding will be the student's sole responsibility once (s)he is placed on Academic Probation.
2. According to the Higher Education Office Policy standards, students will remain on Academic Probation until they successfully complete one (1) semester/quarter.
3. If the student chooses not to attend college after being placed on probation status, (s)he will remain on academic probation for one (1) year, contingent on Higher Education Administrative review. Following the probationary period, the student is again eligible for funding on a TRIAL SEMESTER/QUARTER basis. The student can appeal the probationary period due to extenuating circumstances to the Scholarship Coordinator directly at MLB.Scholarships@millelacsband.com.

F. Cannabis Programs

Students who intend on enrolling in a Cannabis Program see Federal restrictions that can complicate funding for programs associated with cannabis, particularly those involving federal student aid. Investing in cannabis education through scholarships is crucial for preparing the next generation of leaders in this dynamic industry. By addressing challenges and expanding funding opportunities, the Band can ensure a diverse and well-educated workforce capable of driving innovation and growth in the cannabis sector. Self-governance funding will not be used for these programs.

Students enrolling in these programs will be subject to the following criteria:

1. Proof of enrollment in courses is from an accredited college/university.
2. Subject to review and prior approval by the Commissioner of Education.

G. Study Abroad Criteria & Requirements

College students- Post secondary:

1. Must be at full-time student status.
2. Must have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher and be a college sophomore or higher.
3. The program must be related to the Student Education Plan (SEP). The courses taken must be relevant to the degree program.
4. The student should alert the Higher Education Office before the Fall semester of the prospective school year if (s)he intends to participate in Study Abroad and January Term programs.

5. Students who travel abroad will represent the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. Each student will be required to write an essay and provide photos for publication in the Inaajimowin and on the Band's website.
6. Subject to review and approval by the Commissioner of Education.

H. Graduate and Post-Graduate Degree Programs

Eligibility Requirements:

1. Must be an enrolled Mille Lacs Band member or Direct Descendant of a Mille Lacs Band member.
2. Proof of Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university.
3. Proof of acceptance to an accredited graduate degree program.
4. Submit a Scholarship application through the Online portal for the current year at <https://millelacsband.com/government/resouces1/scholarship>.
5. Students must maintain a grade point average (GPA) of no less than 2.0 to be eligible for the succeeding semester. Proof of grades must be returned to the Higher Education Office immediately upon receipt.
6. Students must have a Student Education Plan (SEP) for the program, which must be on file with the Department of Higher Education.
7. Students are eligible for "UNMET NEED" as determined by the Institutions Financial Aid Office, with a maximum of \$100,000.00 per student.
8. The student MUST complete a FAFSA and seek other sources of scholarship assistance as the MLB Scholarship is a resource of last resort.

Maximum award amounts:

1. The maximum award is \$24,000.00 per twelve (12) month school year for eligible students and is broken down as follows: \$9,000.00 fall semester, \$9,000.00 spring semester. If attending summer full-time, \$6,000.00.
2. Students enrolled in a fast-track program may be eligible for additional funding. This funding will be based on the additional tuition and book costs incurred due to the higher volume of coursework in a reduced timeframe.
3. Students may request a reimbursement for books and required supplies (course syllabi required) up to \$800.00 per semester or \$600.00 per quarter. Receipts are reimbursable to the student OR the Institution if charged to the student's school account.

I. Academic Achievement Awards

Mille Lacs Band takes great pride in students who complete their steps in their academic journey and will award students when they notify the Higher Education Office of those achievements. The student must submit the degree and an application for an achievement award to the Higher Education Office. Payments will not be processed without a copy on file.

The following awards qualify:

1. High school Diploma - \$1,000.00

2. GED Diploma up to age 25 - \$1,000.00
3. Vocational/Technical Diploma/Certification with minimum of 24 credit hours: \$1,500.00
4. Associate Degree (AA or AAS) Or 60 credits within BA/BS program- \$2,000.00
5. Bachelor's Degree (BA or BS) - \$4,000.00
6. Graduate Degree (Masters or Doctoral) - \$6,000.00
7. Ojibwe Language Bachelor Degree - \$10,000.00 and a commitment to work for five years within the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. (\$5,000.00 will be issued upon diploma submission and \$5,000.00 upon starting work)

*Only one award in each category will be paid. For example, if a student receives an AA and AAS degree, only one will be awarded. The same applies to Bachelor's and Master's degrees.

If students have questions regarding scholarships or awards, please contact:

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Higher Education Office

MLB.Scholarships@millelacsband.com

(800)709-6445/(320)532-4181 EXT. 4775

Fax: (320)532-7826

Online forms: <https://millelacsband.com/government/resouces1/scholarship>