



NNCEA Post-Secondary Sponsorship Guidebook

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*Nisichawayasi Nehetho
Culture and Education Authority Inc.*

NISICHAWAYASIIK CREE NATION

A Message from Chief and Council

EDUCATION IS THE GREAT EQUALIZER

One of the dreams of any Chief and Council is to provide more than just the basic needs of our members, but also to help them realize satisfying and fulfilling lives. Developing our members' potential and the collective brainpower of our people, is one of the greatest untapped resources we must work with to build a brighter and more prosperous future. Higher education is the key to unlocking that potential, but education can do much more for individuals who take part. Education is a great equalizer that can allow our Members to compete and contribute to society on the same basis as other Canadians. It can also be a great liberator in providing Members

with greater opportunities and choices in their lives. Higher education can lead to satisfying, good-paying jobs and the ability for our Members to make direct contributions to our First Nation, something Chief and Council strongly support. The Nisichawayasi Nehetho Culture and Educational Authority Inc. (NNCEA) Post-secondary Education Program provides the opportunity and financial assistance for our Members to pursue their educational dreams. We encourage our Members to use the program to make that possible.

Left to right top: Councillor Kim Linklater, Deputy Chief Marcel Moody, Councillor Jeremiah Spence, Councillor Ron D. Spence,
Bottom: Councillor Shirley Linklater, Chief Angela Levasseur, Councillor Cheryl Moore



A message from Nisichawayasi Nehetho Culture Education Authority Inc. (NNCEA)

Congratulations on your interest in pursuing a higher education. The goal of the NNCEA Sponsorship Funding Program is to provide higher education financial assistance to as many NCN members as possible within the financial limits of our sponsorship budget. Unless you are pursuing programs at the new Atoskiwin Training and Employment Centre (ATEC), a higher education inevitably means leaving the community to go to school. This is very costly, not just for tuition and books, but for the additional expenses of living away from home – accommodation, food, and transportation. These expenses are difficult for most families to afford. That's where the sponsorship program comes in. It is designed to provide eligible

members with financial assistance to cover tuition, books and living expenses to make higher education more accessible. Some people believe that all First Nations people are entitled to a higher education at government expense as part of our treaty rights. This is not the case. While the federal government provides our First Nation with funding to support the sponsorship program, the annual budget is fixed. Once funding is allocated to the most eligible applicants, there is no more available until the following year. The Board encourages you to apply for sponsorship and wishes you good luck with your application and educational pursuits.



Post Secondary
Counsellor – Craig
Linklater



Post Secondary
Counsellor – Ingrid
Gosselin

Trustees of NNCEA:

Chair, Jerry Primrose
Trustee, Lou Moodie
Trustee, Melody Wrightson
Trustee, Shirleena Spence
Trustee, L. Gail Gossfeld
McDonald

Former Trustees:

Trustee Wanda Bunn

Current Post Secondary Committee

Executive Director – Nic Campbell
NCN Chief and Council – Councillor
Ron D. Spence
NNCEA Board Trustee – Lou Moodie
Human Resource Development
Authority – Mandy Spence
NCN Trust Coordinator – Kelly Spence
NNCEA Finance Comptroller –
Stephanie Austin
ATEC Director – Jim Moore



A Message from the Director of Education

NNCEA's primary objective is to deliver a fair, thorough and unbiased application and evaluation process to ensure the most qualified NCN applicants receive financial assistance. Our committee must be satisfied to the greatest extent possible that the candidates selected have the greatest potential for success. This guidebook is designed to provide you with all the information you need to apply. The requirements are strict and precise, to ensure the evaluation committee has the same information about every candidate for fair and balanced assessments and selection. The application deadline for sponsorship is April 30 each year for intake #1, so please make sure you submit all required documents to NNCEA in time. If you are unclear about some of the requirements, please contact the NNCEA Sponsorship Post-secondary Counsellor Program to answer your questions. It is our hope that we can utilize our budget to the best of our ability to support as many students as possible with the proper tools. Furthermore, the NNCEA Post Secondary Committee also must seek to meet the needs of the community and align our decisions with Nisichawayasihk's Strategic planning.



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HOW THE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAM BENEFITS STUDENTS

What services does NNCEA's post secondary education program provide?

NNCEA's Post-secondary Program strives to ensure NCN students pursuing a post-secondary education succeed in their education. NNCEA prides itself in providing support resources and staff to assist all current and prospective post-secondary students with any inquiries, directions, counselling, or other needs including difficulties with course work, scheduling, etc.

NNCEA administers the following services:

A comprehensive Post-secondary Sponsorship Program that provides:

- ▶ Fair, unbiased selection process to ensure all students applying for post-secondary funding begin on a level playing field and are treated equally. To do that, all students are asked to provide the same information and comply with same guidelines for funding.

- ▶ A one-time moving subsidy to assist students required to relocate
 - NCN to Thompson – \$100
 - NCN to The Pas – \$250
 - NCN to Brandon – \$350
 - NCN to Winnipeg – \$350
- ▶ A one-time moving subsidy to assist students required to relocate to attend a post-secondary program in a different community Max Limit: equal to travel from NCN to Winnipeg, MB)
- ▶ Christmas travel – equivalent to bus fare to and from your respective school to home community. Max allowable is the rate from Winnipeg to NCN.
- ▶ Arranging and providing student counselling services for academics, personal issues, finances, and other issues affecting performance
- ▶ Moral support and encouragement for NCN students to help them achieve success.



HOW THE SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM WORKS

What is the post-secondary program's mandate?

The mandate of the Post-secondary Education Program is to provide financial assistance in Canadian funds and within the limits of the program's available, budget each year, to eligible status treaty citizens of Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation and help them pay the costs of obtaining a post-secondary education.

What qualifications are necessary for sponsorship?

Qualifying for sponsorship requires meeting academic-programing and personal requirements.

For your chosen academic program to qualify, it must:

- ▶ Be offered by a public, accredited Canadian post-secondary institution or American/International (Certified private institutions will receive funding equivalent to average public institution costs)
- ▶ Be five months or longer in duration
- ▶ For programs shorter than 5 months, the program must accumulate the same or more credit hours/contact hours as a 5 month program

- ▶ Issue certificates, diplomas or degrees upon graduation

To personally qualify for sponsorship as a first-time applicant, you must:

- ▶ Be a registered treaty status of Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation citizen
- ▶ Meet the minimum academic requirements for acceptance in your chosen program and have received a letter of acceptance from the institution
- ▶ Submit a fully completed sponsorship application package (see below) by the Intake Deadline
- ▶ **Late applicant:** failure to submit an application properly will result in later consideration if funds are available during a different intake period

For continuing support during your post-secondary academic studies, you must:

- ▶ Apply each year by April 30th for intake #1
- ▶ Obtain a current or most recent "official" transcript from your post-secondary institution

- ▶ Complete the academic program within the time frame designated by the academic institution and or Post-secondary Counsellor
- ▶ A minimum of 3 courses must be taken by your second year of sponsorship in order to maintain sponsorship.

Funding Supports

NNCEA Post Secondary funding provides two types of supports:

- ▶ **Full sponsorship** consisting of Tuition, Books, and Student Allowance. This sponsorship is typically only available to category 1 and 2 students, dependent on our budget. If our budget permits us to accommodate another category with student allowance we will do so.
- ▶ **Tuition and Books**-This funding covers the Tuition and Books of the students. This funding is typically allocated to category 3, 4, and 5 students.

How much will sponsorship pay?

Amounts for tuition, student fees and books vary depending on the academic program selected and the educational institution you will be attending. For full sponsorship, fixed bi-weekly amounts are allocated to students for living allowance. Students who are enrolled in a residence with a meal plan will have their costs associated deducted from their student allowance. The amount a student receives for student allowance may vary depending on their programs

overall cost, however the base rate is set in July of each year. Below is an example of a student's sponsorship for your reference (these numbers are an example and may vary):

Budget per student – \$20,000

Tuition – \$8,000

Textbooks – \$700

Travel – \$700

Student Allowance – \$10,600

For the above example, NNCEA would be directly billed for the students tuition and text books. The student would request travel funds when needed to go to their destination, if applicable. The student would also receive their student allowance paid bi-weekly during the duration of their program.

As another example, the same student may have fees for their program such as residence and meal plans:

Budget per student – \$20,000

Tuition – \$8,000

Textbooks – \$700

Travel – \$700

Residence and Meal plan – \$8,000

Student Allowance – \$2,600

For the above student, their residence and meal plan is billed to NNCEA therefore it is deducted from their overall budget. The student receives the balance payable bi-weekly as student allowance which is lower than someone living outside of residence. Please note both examples equate to the same amount however one student is paying rent to a landlord and buying groceries, where the

second students school is billing NNCEA for residence and a meal plan.

Number of students to be sponsored:

The overall goal is to sponsor students in fields that will lead to immediate employment after graduation. NNCEA seeks to accommodate as many students as possible however does have some restrictions due to budgeting. NNCEA receives funding from Indigenous Services Canada based on NCN census data for on reserve members. Therefore, any individual with Nisichawayasihk band membership can apply, however preference is given to on reserve members. NNCEA reviews all applicants, categorizes their application, and approves or denies an application depending on the overall budget and category placement. The committee may take direction from NNCEA Board of Trustees to minimize the amount of students sponsored in order to increase student allowance, and contrary reduce student allowance in order to sponsor more students.

Budget

As mentioned, the NNCEA Post Secondary budget is provided by Indigenous Services Canada. This budget determines the amount of students we can sponsor and the amount of student allowance we can accommodate. Our goal is to not run a surplus, so it is important that we review our budget throughout the year to disperse funding.

Application Intakes

The Post Secondary Committee understands that students wish to enroll in programs at different times to meet their needs. The Post Secondary committees priority is to fund learners during the regular academic year (September through April). Throughout the year, the Post Secondary committee will accept applications on the following intake dates:

Intake #1: Deadline April 30 – This intake is regarding learners who wish to enroll in programs for September. This intake date has the highest





probability of being funded as we will seek to accommodate learners during this time. Learners who are beginning or continuing their education in September must apply by April 30. Any applications submitted after this date will be deferred to intake #2.

Intake #2: Deadline August 25-This intake is regarding students who are seeking to register for courses in September. This intake is not guaranteed funding, but will be considered depending on availability of funding. The Post Secondary Committee will meet to review any applicants prior to August 30 for Intake #2.

Intake #3: Deadline November 30 – This intake is regarding students who wish to enroll in classes only for the Winter semester (January through April). This intake is not guaranteed funding, but will be considered depending on availability of funding. The Post Secondary Committee will meet to review any applicants prior to December 5 for Intake #3.

Intake #4: Deadline April 15 – This intake is regarding students who are seeking to register for spring and or summer courses. This intake is not guaranteed funding, but will be considered depending on availability of funding. The Post Secondary Committee will meet to review any applicants prior to April 20 for Intake #4.

Submitting your application

Applications can be found online at <https://nncea.ca/wp-content/uploads/>

NNCEA-PSE-Sponsorship-Application-Package.pdf

Applications can be emailed to postsecondary@nncea.ca or faxed to 204-484-2257. Hard copies can be dropped off at the Alice Moore Education Centre located in Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation. The deadline for each intake is at 4:30 pm of the stipulated business day for each intake. (Thompson Sub Office, 3 Station Road, Thomson, MB and Winnipeg Office, 19-395 Berry St., Winnipeg, MB)

What should you expect following your submission

- ▶ Expect a confirmation of your submission from one of our Post Secondary Counsellors within 5 business days.
- ▶ For intake 1 expect a decision on your application by June 5 of the current year which may either stipulate Full Approval, Approval with contingencies, or Denial. For all other intakes, the decision dates are identified in the intake description.

Committee:

Our committee consists of a variety of different stakeholders who play a role in our education system. Our committee reviews each application and finalizes our budget. Our committee consists of

- ▶ Executive Director of Education, NNCEA

- ▶ Finance Comptroller, NNCEA
- ▶ Post Secondary Counsellor, NNCEA
- ▶ Post Secondary Counsellor, NNCEA
- ▶ Human Resource Development Authority
- ▶ ATEC Director
- ▶ NNCEA School Board Trustee
- ▶ NCN Chief and Council Portfolio Holder
- ▶ NCN Trust Coordinator

Does the committee ensure decisions reflect different circumstances?

Applicants' circumstances differ and rather than impose a strict yes-no decision, a four-tier decision ladder provides the Committee with greater flexibility after a full and thorough evaluation of the application.

The Committee's decision will be either:

- ▶ Full Approval
- ▶ A conditional approval
- ▶ An approval of partial sponsorship
- ▶ A denial of sponsorship.
Realistically, sponsorships are always provided on a conditional basis, subject to meeting the NNCEA guidelines established for each funding period. For example, at the time of application in April, current Grade 12 students do not have their final grades, which will be a condition for approval

APPEALS

What options for appeal are available if you 're not awarded a sponsorship?

If you are unsuccessful in obtaining a sponsorship, NNCEA operates a two-level appeal process for decisions made by the Post-secondary Committee. The Director of Education alone adjudicates level-one appeals and the NNCEA Board of Trustees adjudicates level-two appeals.

Appeals will only be considered if you were incorrectly ranked from the application information Applicants are eligible to appeal if the Committee's initial ranking of your application resulted from receipt of insufficient information or pertinent facts, or was based on an erroneous categorization

of the applicant. If corrected information improves your ranking so that it now falls within the ranks of approved applications, an appeal will be considered if funding is still available.

Applications in categories where sponsorship funding is not available cannot be appealed.

In the application-approval process, applicants in lower-priority categories often cannot be sponsored because limited available funding resources have already been assigned to higher-ranked applicants. If your basis for appeal does not change the category you've been assigned to, and your category was not supported for sponsorship due to lack of available funding, the option of appeal is not available since no other candidates in your category were approved for sponsorship.



How do you appeal?

Start with the first level of appeal. When the appeal process is available, a written letter of appeal that clearly outlines the specific reason for the appeal must be submitted before the August 31 annual appeals deadline and addressed to:

Director of Education

**Chair, of the Post-secondary
Committee**

Alice Moore Education Authority

2 Otetiskiwin Drive

Nelson House, MB R0B 1A0

The level-one appeal letter may be mailed, delivered in person, or faxed to the Executive Director of Education at 1-204-484-2257. To maintain confidentiality, before sending the fax, call toll free to 1-866-233-6432 to ensure someone is available to receive the fax. Be sure to include a fax cover sheet with the number of pages indicated and the phone number where you are faxing from in case all pages are not received.

A second and final level of appeal is also available. If your level-one appeal is not successful, you may submit a second and final written appeal to the NNCEA's Board of Trustees. Again your appeal letter must clearly outline specific reasons for the appeal. Your level-two letter should be addressed to:

NNCEA Board of Trustees

Attention: Board Chair

Nelson House Education Authority

2 Otetiskiwin Drive

Nelson House, MB R0B 1A0

Again, the level-two appeal letter may be mailed, delivered in person, or faxed to the Executive Director of Education at 1-204-484-2257. To maintain confidentiality, before sending the fax, call toll free to 1-866-233-6432 to ensure someone is available to receive the fax. Be sure to include a fax cover sheet with the number of pages indicated and the phone number where you are faxing from in case all pages are not received.

You should also be prepared to appear in person or virtually via zoom or another platform before the Board to present your case for appeal. After receiving your appeal letter, the Board will notify you of the time and date for the appeal hearing. If you are unable to attend in person, you must provide the Board with a contact phone number and be available for a telephone conference call presentation on the final appeal date.

What performance requirements are expected of you to maintain funding?

Following approval for sponsorship funding, to maintain support, you must comply with all terms and conditions of the Sponsorship Performance Agreement (Form 3) you signed as part of your application package and any additional expectations the committee may establish. NNCEA's minimum performance expectations for sponsored students require you to:

- ▶ Carry a full course load as determined by the institution

- ▶ Attend all classes on time every day
- ▶ Complete and submit required course work on time
- ▶ Perform to the best of your ability, meet the academic standards of the institution and maintain marks above or equivalent to a 2.0 grade point average
- ▶ Complete your program of studies in the time period specified by your educational institution (NNCEA is not responsible for funding an extension of a student's program of studies)
- ▶ **Consult with and obtain approvals from the instructor/advisor and the NNCEA Post-secondary Counsellor BEFORE withdrawing from courses or changing courses and programs** (failure to consult and obtain these approvals may jeopardize your future sponsorship funding and could make you liable for any costs associated with unauthorized changes to courses and/or programs)
- ▶ It is your responsibility to ensure course/program changes take place before deadlines set by the institution
- ▶ Report absences that exceed two days to the NNCEA Post-secondary Counsellor and be prepared to submit medical certificates upon request
- ▶ Provide an "unofficial" transcript no later than January 15 of each year and an "official" transcript no later than May 30 of each year.

Student Allowance

- ▶ Student allowance for all NNCEA Post Secondary students will be

determined by the Post Secondary Committee during the month of July. Once our Post Secondary budget is reviewed, finalized, and students are finalized, the committee will determine an appropriate student allowance that aligns with the available budget

- ▶ Students are required to submit pre-authored debit forms with the students name on it for direct deposit
- ▶ Students are required to submit email addresses for finance to prepare electronic payment remittance

Every December the Post Secondary Committee will review the Post Secondary budget financials to determine if an increase in student allowance is feasible for the Winter Semester (January through April). This rate will not be lower than the rate offered during Fall term (September through December)

Every April the Post Secondary Committee will review the Post Secondary budget financials to determine the rate of student allowance. This rate may be different than the regular academic year (Sept-April) contingent on available budget space. The Post Secondary Committee prioritizes meeting the financial needs of students during the regular academic year and will allocate a feasible amount to student allowance during spring and summer terms. Student allowance is not guaranteed for all students and will be allocated to Category 1 and 2 students first, followed by category 3, 4, and 5.



Student Categories:

Priority 1: Students who recently graduated from Grade 12 and are entering Post Secondary Education.

Priority 2: Students who are continuing their Post Secondary Education from the previous year, or moving onto a program with a higher qualification within the parameters of certificate, diploma, and degree.

Priority 3: Students who are seeking to complete a Masters, Doctorate, PH.D, or other Advanced Degree.

Priority 4: Students completing a second degree.

Priority 5: Students who withdrew from a previous program and wish to re-enroll.

Student Expectations

The NNCEA Post Secondary Committee values accountability from our students and strives to ensure that our students are utilizing their academic journey to the best of their ability. All Post Secondary students sponsored by NNCEA will be required to complete the following:

- ▶ Students must submit monthly reports to their respective Post Secondary Counsellor regarding their attendance and academic successes and challenges. Students who do not submit a monthly report will be provided with one grace period. Any further missed reports will result in

student allowance or funding being withheld until reports are submitted.

- ▶ Students must submit a monthly gradebook to their respective counsellor. Students can do this for each class by accessing their online student portal and taking a screen shot of their grades for each class. It is imperative to the success of this program that we can monitor student grades so we can provide assistance as needed. Students who fail to submit their grades at the end of each month will have their funding withheld until the report is submitted. These reports will be due between the 25th and 30th of each month. IE: A student can submit their grades on the 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, or 30th of the month.
- ▶ Students must sign the following documents and submit to their respective counsellor no later than September 30, 2024. Please reach out to your respective counsellor if you require assistance.
 - Release of Information (ROI): This document allows NNCEA to communicate with the Post Secondary Institute about your academic success and any issues with funding.
 - Authorization to Invoice (ATI): This allows your respective Post Secondary school to directly invoice NNCEA.

Funding Scores

In the event that our budget does not permit our committee to fund all applicants, the following scoring systems will be put in place to determine which student would be funded:

Ranking System 1

- ▶ Resides in NCN – 5 points
- ▶ Resides North of 53rd – 4 points
- ▶ Resides in Manitoba – 3 points
- ▶ Resides in Canada – 2 points
- ▶ Resides elsewhere – 1 point

Ranking System 2

- ▶ Returning student or first year – 4 points
- ▶ Masters or Ph.D. – 3 points
- ▶ Second degree – 2 points
- ▶ Previously withdrew – 1 point

The total sum of points will determine a tie breaker between students. In the event the points are the same, the students previous GPA will be used to determine the successful student. In the event one student is entering their first year and another is returning, the students degree of choice will be considered to determine which aligns with the Nations needs and strategic planning.

Post Secondary Gatherings

The NNCEA Post Secondary Committee values the interactions and celebrations of our students. The following schedule will occur for Post Secondary Student dinners:

- October – Winnipeg Dinner
- November – Thompson Dinner
- December – Winnipeg Dinner
- January – Thompson Dinner
- February – Winnipeg Dinner
- March – Thompson Dinner

Student GPA (Grade Point Average)

NNCEA has set the minimum Grade Point Average for students at 2.0 for the 2024-2025 academic year. Students who do not meet this GPA will be put on probation for 4 months. If a student is unable to achieve the required GPA after their probation the student will be suspended from funding for 1 academic year. NNCEA will increase the required GPA to 2.1 for the 2025-2026 Academic year and 2.2 for the 2026-2027 Academic Year.



*Nisichawayasi Nehetho
Culture and Education Authority Inc.*

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