

ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA



AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT EDUCATION INCENTIVE AND SUPPORT PROGRAM

Postsecondary - College/University/Vocational (Adult)

(ARPA EISP)

Effective March 2024

**PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES FOR ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBE
AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT
EDUCATION INCENTIVE AND SUPPORT PROGRAM (EISP)**

PURPOSE

These procedural guidelines have been established to guide the appropriate tribal staff with direction in determining educational assistance using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds designated to the Absentee Shawnee Tribe Education Department. The guidelines will aid in efficient and objective distribution of limited resources to eligible applicants. **These guidelines may be updated periodically for the duration of the program to meet the needs of tribal members.**

INTRODUCTION

The Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma recognizes the importance of providing educational services and opportunities to tribal members in their efforts to obtain the qualifications necessary to compete at every level and phase of today's technologically advancing employment market.

ARPA EISP shall provide to eligible applicants, services related to educational testing, training, counseling, guidance, and career enhancement opportunities.

BASIC ELIGIBILITY

Basic eligibility for participation in the ARPA EISP shall be as follows:

1. Be an enrolled member of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe.
 - a. **Provide a copy of valid Absentee Shawnee Tribal Enrollment Card**, if not on file with respective JTAEP, EIAP, or Graduate Scholarship application.
2. Have a current Job Training Adult Education (JTAEP), Education Incentive Award Application (EIAP), or Graduate Scholarship (EIAP) application on file with the Education Department. The Director of Education has 30 days from date of application completion to process JTAEP, EIAP, and Graduate Scholarship applications.

OR

Be enrolled and identified by an educational institution as a full-time or part-time student. Short-term vocational courses are also eligible. Adults enrolled in General Equivalency Development (GED) or high school completion programs are also eligible.

3. Applicants are liable for any expenses incurred before receiving an award letter from the Education Department. Reimbursements will be on a case-by-case basis. Applicants need to apply early to allow staff time to make payment arrangements for assistance.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

The following guidelines shall govern the application procedure for ARPA EISP assistance:

- A. Applicants must submit an ARPA EISP application each semester assistance is requested.

- a. Applicant must check the appropriate boxes relating to the assistance they are requesting.
- B. Applicant must submit any additional requested documentation to verify the assistance requested.
- C. Applicant must submit a completed IRS W-9 Form (Oct. 2018) if applying for a reimbursement.

Submission of any required documentation will be the responsibility of the applicant. Failure to submit needed documents shall result in a delay in issuing funding or no funding awarded.

APPLICATION REVIEW

The Director of Education, on an individual basis, will evaluate completed applications.

However, no decision will be made until all required documents are submitted to the Education Department. Assistance shall not be in excess of amounts established by the "Authorization of Assistance" section in these guidelines.

Applicant must provide requested information/documentation within 10 business days. Exceptions will be made in extenuating circumstances. Participants will be denied assistance if requested information is not submitted within the above mentioned time frame.

If an applicant is denied, the applicant shall be notified of the decision in writing, within 10 days of the above evaluation. The written notification will state:

- 1) Reason(s) for denial of ARPA EISP assistance.
- 2) The procedure for submitting a revised application for evaluation, if applicable.

AUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANCE

ARPA EISP may provide assistance to eligible participants, subject of the availability of funds, to pay expenses through direct payments, reimbursements, or gift cards for the following:

Educational Supports

1. **Tuition:** Fall/spring, summer semester will be awarded based on the availability of funds.
 - Maximum equivalent to award status per JTAEP, EIAP, or Graduate Scholarship program. Please review program guidelines for funding amounts.
 - Current semester
 - Past due balances at previous schools, colleges, or universities will be limited and reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
 - Funds will be disbursed directly to the school/college/university or reimbursed with an itemized receipt showing participant paid for the expense.
 - Students who are ineligible for JTAEP, EIAP, or Graduate Scholarship funds may still be eligible for ARPA EISP tuition assistance and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

2. **Required textbooks and required software:** \$1,000.00 maximum per semester fall/spring, summer semester will be awarded based on the availability of funds.
 - Funds will be disbursed directly to the school/college/university or reimbursed with an itemized receipt showing participant paid for the expense.
 - a) Textbooks – hard copy
 - b) Textbooks – online
 - c) Microsoft Office – student version, if required for course
 - d) Adobe Pro – if required for course
3. **Required Tools:** \$1,500.00 maximum per program
 - Funds will be disbursed directly to the school/college/university, reimbursed with an itemized receipt showing participant paid for the expense, or we will make arrangements for our Procurement Department to make the tool purchase.
 - a) Participant must provide:
 - i. List of tools
 - ii. Vendor used to purchase tools, if available
4. **Required expenses:** \$2,000.00 maximum per semester fall/spring, summer semester will be awarded based on the availability of funds.
 - Funds will be disbursed directly to the school/college/university or reimbursed with an itemized receipt showing participant paid for the expense.
 - Fees
 - Supplies
 - i. Basic school supplies (\$25.00 per semester in the form of a **Walmart** gift card.)
 - Computer/Printer: **One-time only** assistance of \$500.00 in the form of a (**Walmart** or **Best Buy**) gift card to be used for any one of the following items. After completed purchase, an itemized receipt must be submitted to the Education department. If you need to retain a copy for your records, please request two receipts.
*May take up to 10 business days to process gift cards through our Procurement Department.
 - i. Desktop computer
 - ii. Laptop computer
 - iii. Printer
 - GED Test Voucher(s): voucher will be purchased online and code given to participant or the testing center will be paid directly.
 - i. 4 Tests
 - ii. 1Test
 - GED Prep (options available depending on applicant's needs)
 - Utility – For internet usage during enrollment in the approved semester, program, or course. Example: Spring semester = 5 months of internet service.
 - i. Participant must provide an itemized internet billing statement.
 - ii. Internet billing statement must be in Participant's name to be eligible for assistance.

Educational Incentives

1. Fuel/Gas:

- a. Incentive will be issued in the form of a check in four week intervals and sent to the address listed on participant's W-9 form.
- b. Participant must be enrolled in a college, university, vocational institution, or an adult high school completion program.
- c. Participant must submit a completed IRS W-9 Form (Oct. 2018).
- d. Participant must be attending courses in-person weekly, verification required.
- e. Eligible participants will receive \$50.00 a week for fuel/gas expenses.
- f. Receipts will need to be provided with one week of end date on award letter to receive continued funding.
- g. **If receipts are not received within three (3) weeks of end date on award letter, participant forfeits any eligible fuel assistance for the remainder of the semester. We need to process fuel incentives in a timely manner while the participant is actively taking courses.**

2. Academic Success (Grades):

- a. Incentive will be issued in the form of a gift card.
- b. Participant must be enrolled in a college, university, vocational institution, or an adult high school completion program.
- c. Participant must submit report card or transcript to receive incentive.
 - i. EIAP or Graduate Scholarship participants are required to submit an official transcript after each semester. We will use the official transcript to meet the above requirement.
 - ii. Vocational students and adult students obtaining a high school diploma can submit a report card.
- d. Incentives are twice a year, **fall and spring only**.
- e. Application deadlines: through September 1, 2024.
 - i. **January 1st – April 1st** (for previous Fall semester)
 - ii. **June 1st – September 1st** (for previous Spring semester)
- f. Incentive levels: for full-time, Vocational/College students
 - 4.0 semester GPA+ - \$125 gift card
 - 3.5 semester GPA+ - \$100 gift card
 - 3.0 semester GPA+ - \$75 gift card
 - 2.5 semester GPA+ - \$50 gift card

Incentive levels: for part-time, Vocational/College students

- 4.0 semester GPA+ - \$100 gift card
- 3.5 semester GPA+ - \$75 gift card
- 3.0 semester GPA+ - \$50 gift card
- 2.5 semester GPA+ - \$25 gift card

Incentive levels: for short-term, Vocational students per course

- A average + - \$50 gift card
- B average + - \$40 gift card
- C average + - \$25 gift card

- g. Gift cards:
- i. Participant can pick up or be mailed the gift card.
 - ii. Participant can choose a different retail gift card each semester.
 - iii. Participant will choose one of the following retail gift cards which will be disbursed in the amount according to levels listed above.
 1. Walmart
 2. Best Buy
 3. Amazon

ASSISTANCE RESTRICTION

Funds will be available for spring and fall terms. Summer assistance will be based on the availability of funds and limited to half of the amounts for fall/spring.

No ARPA EISP funds will be used to pay for defaulted student loans.

No ARPA EISP funds will be distributed in cash.

No ARPA EISP funds will be used to purchase firearms.

Applicants cannot be awarded more than the amount listed according to their enrolled program for tuition assistance without prior approval.

CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must meet the following requirements for continuing eligibility:

1. Participants will be required to submit an official transcript at the end of each semester ARPA EISP tuition assistance is awarded.
2. Subsequent awards are based upon satisfactory performance AND completion of courses/programs as determined by the institution's academic requirements.
3. Continued assistance is subject to availability of funds.
4. Failure to provide documentation needed for verification shall result in suspension from ARPA EISP assistance. Suspension will eliminate the eligibility of the participant until they regain satisfactory performance as determined by the institution. Subsequent application(s) for ARPA EISP assistance will be evaluated at the discretion of the Director of Education.
5. Any funds disbursed to or on behalf of the applicant after withdrawal from classes must be returned to the Education Department.
6. Participants who fail to withdraw officially and/or otherwise drop out of training WITHOUT notifying the Education Department WILL NOT be considered for services of any kind offered through the ARPA EISP.

TRIBAL SERVICE

To facilitate the Absentee Shawnee Tribal Government managed by Absentee Shawnee Tribal members, recipients are encouraged to seek employment with the tribe to benefit their tribe.

PRIVACY

No specific information regarding any participant will be given to anyone without the written consent of the participant in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts.