



Biigtigong  
Nishnaabeg

Endzhi-gkinoohmaading  
Post-Secondary Support Program

# Post Secondary Student Support Policy

APRIL 2016

GLENDANABIGON

POST-SECONDARY SUPPORT PROGRAM

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## **DISCLAIMER**

The contents of this student support policy are subject to alteration or amendment without prior notice. All changes made to this policy will be effective upon notification to all currently funded post secondary students and all future applicants. All funding decisions are contingent upon availability of funds.

Many circumstances, both within and beyond the control of Biigtigong Nishnaabeg may cause change. These may include but are not limited to:

- Changes to better serve Biigtigong Nishnaabeg
- Changes in financial resources
- Natural catastrophes or disasters
- Changes in staffing
- Changes introduced by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)

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## DEFINITIONS

- a) **“First Nation Member”** means a person whose name has been entered into the Membership Register for Biigtigong Nishinaabeg.
- b) **“Department”** means the Department of Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development.
- c) **“Band”** means a body of Indians:
  - i) Whose use and benefit in common, lands, the legal title to which is vested in Her Majesty, have been set apart before, on or after September 4, 1951,
  - ii) Whose use and benefit in common, moneys are held by Her Majesty, or
  - iii) Declared by the Governor in Council to be a band for the purposes of this Act.
- d) **“Administering Organization”** and **“PRFN”** means the Biigtigong Nishinaabeg, formerly the Ojibways of the Pic River First Nation.
- e) **“Post-Secondary Education”** means a program of studies, offered by a post-secondary institution, for which completion of secondary school studies or its equivalent is a prerequisite.
- f) **“Program of Studies”** includes all post-secondary programs, at least one academic year in duration, leading to a certificate, diploma or degree. Programs e.g. pre-law, less than one academic year which are prerequisites to post-secondary programs of at least one academic year in duration are included.
- g) **“Post-secondary Institutions”** are degree, diploma, and certificate granting institutions which are recognized by a province and include educational institutions affiliated with, or delivering accredited post-secondary programs by arrangement with a post-secondary institution.
- h) **“Canadian Public Institution”** is a post-secondary institution which receives the majority of its funding from federal and provincial governments.
- i) **“Private Post-Secondary Institution”** is a post-secondary institution which receives the majority of its funding from sources other than governments.
- j) **“Full-time Student”** Level I/II: taking at least 15 hours of in class instruction per week for the program registered in. Level III/IV: as defined by the institution.
- k) **“Part-time Student”** is defined by the post-secondary institution.
- l) **“Academic Year”** is as defined by the post-secondary institution, but will not be less than eight months duration.
- m) **“Semester”** refers to a part of the academic year, as defined by the post-secondary institution. Semesters usually cover the periods from September to December, January to April, and May to August.

- n) **"Immediate Family"** means father, mother (or alternatively stepfather, stepmother or foster parent), brother, sister, spouse (including common-law spouse resident with the student), child (including child to the common-law spouse), stepchild or ward of the student, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandfather and grandmother.
- o) **"Contingency Funding"** means financial support provided to students for costs related to emergency situations. Funding for Emergency situations applies as follows:
  - i) for illness or accident, contingency funding applies to dependent family members
  - ii) for bereavement, contingency funding applies to immediate family members.
- p) **"Selection Committee/Review Board"** means a committee set to review and recommend applications for approval.
- q) **"Student Appeals Committee"** means a committee set to hear appeals to ensure fairness and equitable treatment under the policy for First Nation Members.
- r) **"UCEP"** means University and College Entrance Program and refers to all preparation programs (i.e. General Vocational Prep., General Arts and Science, Access Program)
- s) **"CEGEP"** is an abbreviation of College d'enseignement general et professional, CEGEPs operates in Quebec.
- t) **"Continuing Student"** is defined as a student who is continuing from one year of study to the next year of study in one level of studies without a break in their regular program.
- u) **"Just Cause"** for taking leave from Post Secondary studies will be determined by the post secondary administrator and the education director on a case by case basis.
- v) **"Overpayment"** An overpayment is any payment or expenditure for which a student is or was not eligible e.g.
  - i) Tuition and book subsidy given for any sponsored course is an overpayment if the course is not successfully completed. This includes incomplete courses or courses you withdraw from.
  - ii) Education subsidy payments received by a student who has become ineligible.
- w) **"Failure"** is any sponsored course that is not successfully completed.
- x) **"Special Education"** is defined as an educational program with specific objectives and an outline of educational services that meets the needs of exceptional

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students who typically require additional supports in order to meet their learning potential. Special education services are defined as facilities and resources, including support staff and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.

## **I. Introduction**

BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG is a sovereign Anishinaabek Nation and possesses an inherent right to self-determination. BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG has never surrendered or extinguished their aboriginal rights or title to their traditional territory. We will determine our own destiny in accordance with our Anishinaabek customs

As a self-determining Nation, we have the responsibility to address the historical and current attempts to extinguish our language, ceremonies, culture, values and beliefs. PRFN will protect and ensure the continuation of Anishinabemowin.

BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG asserts that Post-Secondary education is a fiduciary responsibility of the Government of Canada. BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG'S acceptance of the administrative responsibility for the program does not abrogate this responsibility and any other Aboriginal and Treaty rights.

BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG acknowledges the importance of having healthy self-reliant members who are able to make meaningful contributions in the efforts to re-build our Nation by working together towards our collective vision.

## **II. Program Description**

The post secondary student support program is intended to assist members of Biigtigong Nishnaabeg in pursuing post secondary studies in recognized and authorized post secondary institutions, based on eligibility and the availability of funds.

The Government of Canada through INAC allocates funds for the post-secondary student support program. BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG does not have any control over the level of funds provided by INAC. BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG acknowledges that these resources are insufficient to meet the needs of the membership and commit to the continued advocacy for additional financial resources.

This policy is developed to ensure fair, equitable and consistent standards and practices in the delivery of the post-secondary student support program. This policy will also support the collective vision, goals and objectives of the PRFN and our efforts to re-build and sustain our Nation and community.

## **III. Objectives**

The post secondary student support program aims to meet the following objectives:

To assist in the collective development and growth of the BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG First Nation.

To assist eligible students to successfully acquire post-secondary education and be successful in the pursuit of their life goals.

To build the capacity of our youth to run the affairs of the community.

#### **IV. Eligibility**

To be eligible to apply for support under the Post-Secondary Student Support Program an applicant must meet the following criteria:

1. Must be a member of Biigtigong Nishinaabeg and possess a secondary school diploma. Students who have transferred to the PRFN from another First Nation must wait for a period of two years from the date of transfer before being eligible for PSSSP funding.
2. Must be of Anishinaabe Ancestry.
3. Must have met the Post-Secondary Institution's program requirements and have been enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a post-secondary institution for a program of studies.
4. Must have a repayment plan approved by the First Nation for all monies owing to the First Nation as a result of overpayments
5. Must have successfully completed sponsored courses and programs and provide proof of completion. Students who fail to complete their courses or program – without just cause- will not be eligible to apply for funding for one (1) full academic year and in addition to an overpayment assigned to their file, the following actions will be taken:

LEVEL I AND II (college/university):

**2 course failures** (not to exceed the equivalent of one full year course) – sponsorship will be revoked and applicant will be assigned a priority 7 (previously unsuccessful student);

**1 course failure** not to exceed one half year course (0.5 credit) – student will be placed on academic contract and a mandatory counseling interview will be scheduled with the student support worker or the academic advisor at his/her post secondary institution.

6. Must fully complete the Post-Secondary Student Support Program Application in accordance to the Post Secondary Student Support Policy.

#### **V. Priorities**

If support for the number of eligible applicants exceeds the budget, a priority list will be developed to assist in the approval of applications for support. The list, in general, will be based on the following categories:

1. Continuing students approved from the previous year with good academic standing.

2. New High School graduates who reside in the exclusive or shared territory of the PRFN. (Refer to Map 1) High School Graduates shall be considered new graduates for a maximum of two years after graduation.
3. High School Graduates who reside in the historical traditional territory of the Anishinaabek Nations. (Refer to Map 2)
4. High School Graduates who reside in the territory now referred to as Canada.
5. Post-graduate students.
6. Mature students who have completed high school, who are at least 21 years of age, and who wish to return to full-time studies and have not received previous support from the First Nation.
7. All other students including previously unsuccessful students. Previously unsuccessful students will move up on the priority list once all previously funded courses/program requirements are successfully completed and verified by the institution.

**The additional factors identified below will be considered in the establishment of the priority list in cases where applicants are closely rated and demand exceeds the budget:**

Students who demonstrate personal contributions to the Nation building efforts of Biigtigong Nishnaabeg will be granted a higher position on the priority list than other students in the same category.

Students who can demonstrate how their education paths will positively impact the Nation building efforts of BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG will be granted a higher position on the priority list than other students in the same category.

Students with high scholastic standing will be granted a higher position on the priority list than other students in the same category

### **Nation Re-building Initiatives**

The Chief & Council of the BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG First Nation reserve the right to establish special initiatives that directly support the collective goals of the Biigtigong Nishnaabeg. These initiatives will be deemed critical to the survival and development of the governance, administrative and cultural needs of the community and Nation. PRFN Chief & Council can allocate a portion of the post-secondary budget to these specific initiatives.

### **Waiting List**

The PRFN will establish a waiting list for applicants who have been denied funding due to budget constraints. Applicants on this list may be offered funding should financial resources become available. The waiting list will be generated using the PSSSP eligibility guidelines and priority list. This list will be valid only for the current fiscal year.

## **Student Interviews**

As part of the application process all PSSSP applicants will be required to undergo a personal interview via telephone, skype, video conference, or in person. Basic knowledge of BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG and its collective goals will be a part of the interview. A committee appointed by Council shall conduct the interviews.

## **Mandatory Orientation Session:**

Successful first time post secondary support applicants will be required to attend a mandatory orientation session. All costs associated with this orientation will be the sole responsibility of the applicant. Failure to personally attend the orientation will automatically deem the approved application void and all funding will be revoked. Dates for the orientation sessions will be made available within the first week of June in order to allow successful applicants time to make the necessary arrangements to attend.

## **CONTINUING STUDENTS**

All currently funded students will be considered "continuing students" for the current academic level they are being sponsored for providing they are successful in their program each year. Students must submit an official transcript to the student support co-coordinator immediately upon availability at the end of each academic year. All continuing students must complete and submit the continuing student application by May 20 of each year. Failure to do so may result in funding being redirected.

Upon successful completion of current program interested students must reapply for funding as a new student. If funding is approved at the next level of education that student will be considered a continuing student at that level providing they are successful in their program each year. This will ensure fairness to all applicants as well as ensure that all requirements are being met by the student.

Funding is approved on a year by year basis. BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG will follow the priority list as closely as possible for each level of funding per student providing they are in good academic standing.

## **"GIVE BACK CLAUSE"**

All fully sponsored students will be required to "give back" to the community of Biigtigong Nishnaabeg in the form of work hours at the equivalent of 20 hours per one full time year of funding. These work hours can be in the form of volunteer work, a project/paper that will benefit Biigtigong Nishnaabeg, a funding proposal that could potentially benefit Biigtigong Nishnaabeg, or any other project/work approved by the student support coordinator and/or Education Director. These

hours must be completed by the student's last year of funding for their current program.

### **PERSONAL OR MEDICAL LEAVE**

Students who have had their post-secondary studies interrupted for personal or medical reasons must immediately contact the Student Support Coordinator and provide the required documentation in order to remain in good standing with the post secondary support program. Approval will be given on a case by case basis.

### **TYPES OF SUPPORT – FULL-TIME STUDENTS**

#### **Tuition Support**

Includes student fees for registration, tuition, tutorials, initial professional certification and examination fees, as well as the cost of books and supplies up to \$800.00, which are listed as required by the post secondary institution.

- i) Students attending Canadian public institutions at the normal rate charged by the institution for a Canadian student.
- ii) Students attending private or foreign post-secondary institutions at the same rate charged by the Canadian institution nearest to the student's place of residence at the time of application which offers a comparable program.
- iii) Students enrolled in a foreign institution where no comparable program is available at an institution in Canada.
- iv) Book and supply subsidy will be provided to supplement the cost of all required text, special equipment, clothing and workshops as requested by student and verified by program coordinator (Subsidy for 'work placement' clothing will be given only once per program if required and budget allows). Receipts will be required.

#### **Travel Support:**

Students who are required to live away from their permanent place of residence may qualify for a travel grant, once every semester. Travel support will not exceed \$600 per year for eligible applicants and will be determined using the most updated INAC guidelines.

For resourcing purposes, travel support will be determined on an individual basis and as the post secondary budget allows. Travel support is normally restricted to the cost to the Canadian post-secondary institution, which offers the selected program of studies, nearest the student's home.

Where travel by standard bus transportation exceeds 10 hours alternative means of transportation will be considered.

**Living Subsidy:**

The monthly payment to assist with living expenses shall be deposited in student accounts on the fourth Friday every month. The support for living expenses is expected to assist with the cost of food, shelter, daily transportation, daycare, rental costs and contingency funding. Living support is set at \$1 100 per month for eligible student. Students are expected to seek other sources of funding if required.

i) Students who work full-time and attend school part time will not be eligible for the living subsidy.

ii) Where a student is taking a full time distance education program with **mandatory** campus sessions, such as labs and clinical, additional living support may be issued pro-rated for the time they are on campus. Students must submit official post secondary institute documentation verifying the on campus training.

**TYPES OF SUPPORT**

**PART-TIME STUDENTS**

Part-time students may receive support for tuition and the cost of books and supplies as required by the post-secondary institution.

Students who attend school part time are not eligible for the living subsidy or travel subsidy.

**LIMITS OF SUPPORT**

Assistance can be provided at four levels of post-secondary education:

**Level 1:**

Community college and CEGEP diploma or certificate programs;

**Level 2:**

Undergraduate university programs (certificate, diploma, degree);

**Level 3:**

Advanced or professional degree programs, or masters programs; and

**Level 4:**

Doctoral programs.

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1. Financial assistance for tuition, compulsory student fees and required books and supplies may be provided to students enrolled in all four levels.
2. Assistance may be provided to students to complete only one program at each level.
3. Exceptionally, Level 2 may include assistance for an additional degree at the bachelor level which has as a prerequisite an undergraduate degree or undergraduate courses.
4. The duration of assistance will accord with the official length of the program as defined by the post-secondary institution in which the student is enrolled, as long as the student is in satisfactory academic standing at the institution as per the institution's definition of satisfactory "academic standing".
5. Students enrolled in Levels 1 and 2 may be assisted for up to one additional academic year per level if such an extension is approved in writing by the post-secondary institution's dean or the department head. Students enrolled in Level 3 or 4 may be assisted for up to one additional academic year for medical or personal reasons.
6. Students may be assisted in Level 1 studies after dropping out of Level 2 studies if not previously funded for Level 1.
7. Students who have completed a Level 2, 3 or 4 program, **with or without assistance from the PSSSP**, are ineligible for program assistance for lower levels.
8. Student support will not exceed the limits set out in the paragraphs above. **Where students change programs within one of the levels or temporarily pause their studies, the academic years or semesters used for each program within each level will be counted for assistance purposes.** Students who become eligible for assistance and who have previously completed a portion of post-secondary studies without assistance from this program may receive assistance for the balance of their program of studies but will not be reimbursed for previous expenses.

The BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG post secondary program will not reimburse students for studies previously taken. i.e. OSAP, own source funding, etc.

At the end of each semester, students must present or mail their transcripts to the student support coordinator. Students, who do not present their transcripts, will not be funded for the following semester. Furthermore, the transcripts must reflect the required degree of success to continue on in the program of studies while keeping to the specific time frame for completion of program.

If the demand from eligible students exceeds the funding available, priority selection criteria will apply.

Students receiving funding from the PSSSP or UCEPP must declare support received from this program as a source of income.

### **COMPUTER PURCHASE PLAN**

Sponsored full time students in good standing with the Program may request to enter a Computer Purchase Plan for the purpose of purchasing a computer. Each request will be assessed individually and approval of each plan is at the discretion of the program. To qualify, each student must meet the following conditions:

- a) That the request for entering into a Computer Purchase Plan must be filled and completed prior to September 25<sup>th</sup> of the start of the Fall semester;
- b) That a 50% down payment be made by the student on the total cost of the computer;
- c) That the student agrees to full repayment, through monthly deductions to the student's living subsidy;
- d) That all monies advanced by the Plan must be recovered by the end of the Winter semester.

### **CONTINGENCY FUNDING**

#### **Biigtigong Nishnaabeg may provide financial support to students for costs related to emergency situations:**

Contingency Funding for Emergency situation applies as follows:

- i) for illness or accident, contingency funding applies to dependent family members;
- ii) for bereavement, contingency funding applies to immediate family members.

Students eligible for contingency funding should apply by telephone to the Student Support office immediately. The application will be processed as quickly as possible and should it be approved, a cheque can be deposited into the student's bank account.

Approval of contingency funding is at the discretion of the Education Director and is dependent on the availability of funds.

## INCENTIVES

The BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABE may provide the types of incentives listed in this section if the budget permits. The student support coordinator will notify all full time post secondary students currently being funded by the PSSSP if these incentives/scholarships are available by May 15 of each academic year. The deadline for applications will be June 15. Successful applicants will be notified by June 30.

- a) **Incentives for Students Enrolled in Level III Programs:**  
 Students enrolled as full-time students in a Level III degree program may receive an incentive from the administering organization, subject to a maximum of \$1,500. This incentive will only be provided once. Students will be eligible for this incentive upon commencement of the second year of the degree, or upon successful completion of the degree.
- b) **Strategic Studies Scholarships in Level II:** In order to encourage students to engage in studies that directly contribute to achieving self-government and self-reliance, the administering organization may award incentive scholarships.
- i) Students who are currently receiving financial support under the Student Support Program and who are enrolled as full-time students in a program of studies in the areas of commerce, public or business administration, economics, applied and physical science, mathematics and computer science, forestry and engineering are eligible for the Strategic Studies Scholarship.
  - ii) The amount of a scholarship awarded by the administering organization will be up to a maximum of \$1,000 annually.
  - iii) Eligibility for the scholarship will be conditional upon successful completion of one year of the program of study and continuation in it. The scholarship will be awarded annually at the beginning of the second year of the program and the beginning of each year thereafter in accordance with the length of the program as defined in 6(d).
  - iv) The Strategic Studies Scholarship will be available to a maximum of five percent of the Indian/Inuit post-secondary student population. Recipients of the scholarship will be determined by the administering organization. One scholarship will be available where the five percent maximum is less than one student.
- c) **Academic Achievement Scholarship:** In recognition of academic achievement, the administering organization may award scholarships to students in Level I and II who are enrolled as fulltime students and who have achieved a grade point average of B or higher in their program of studies.

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- i) Students currently receiving support under the Student Support Program are eligible for scholarships in recognition of academic achievement.
  - ii) The amount of the scholarship awarded by the administering organization will be up to a maximum of \$1,000 annually.
  - iii) Students may be eligible for the scholarships upon successful completion of each year of their program of studies.
  - iv) The Academic Achievement Scholarship will be available to a maximum of five percent of the PRFN post-secondary student population. One scholarship per level will be available where the five percent maximum is less than one student.
- d) Eligible students may be awarded either one Strategic Studies Scholarship or one Academic Achievement Scholarship in one academic year.
  - e) If the number of eligible applicants exceeds the maximum allowable scholarships, the selection will be made by a group as appointed by Chief and Council.

### APPEAL PROCESS

To ensure fairness and equitable treatment under the policy, the PRFN has in place an appeal process which incorporates the following basic elements:

- a) Formal statement and public distribution of the said policy and procedures.

Ensuring that the student has a right to an established appeal process. This includes the existence of an impartial appeal board.

- b) Ensuring that the student has a right to have support in the form of an advisor or advocate.
- c) Ensuring the First Nation has an adequate level of participation in the appeal process and its structure.
- d) The administering organization will provide costs for board members and the students to attend the appeal hearing.
- e) The establishment of specific time frames for appeals hearing to be set and decisions to be made.

- f) Confirmation that the administering organization will abide by the appeal board's decision.

Students may not appeal to INAC any decisions made by other administering organizations. This includes administrative decisions and appeal rulings. The appeal process for Biigtigong Nishnaabeg is contained in the operating guidelines.

## **11. OPERATING GUIDELINES**

The BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG First Nation has in place operating guidelines for the administration of this program. Copies of this policy and operating guidelines will be made available upon request at the post secondary student support office.

## **12. STUDENT REGISTRY**

**Biigtigong Nishnaabeg is responsible for maintaining a student registry. The Department will identify the information requirements which will include the student's name, the institution attended, the program of study, the support provided, the degree/diploma/certificate obtained any additional which may be required from time to time. This information will be used for statistical purposes only and will remain confidential. The PRFN must report this information annually to the Department.**