Adult Vocational Training Program Handbook

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska's (STA)'s Adult Vocational Training (AVT) program is to provide financial assistance for eligible unemployed/underemployed applicants to attend a vocational program or to enter into an apprenticeship or on-the-job training program in order to acquire the job skills necessary for full-time satisfactory employment.

Completed Applications Are Due 30 Days Prior to Start of Training. Late Applications will not be considered for funding by the STA Education Committee.

SCOPE

A. Applicants must apply for financial assistance from other sources for which they qualify. The Sitka Tribe of Alaska's (STA) Adult Vocational Training (AVT) program is strictly supplemental.

B. Only those applicants who illustrate & document that they are willing to accept employment as soon as possible after completion of training shall be selected for funding.

C. Maximum funding for training courses within the AVT program shall not exceed twenty-four (24) months in length or in a lifetime. The only exception is for that of registered nurse training. Successful applicants for a nursing program may receive funding through the AVT program for periods not to exceed thirty-six (36) consecutive months for registered nurse training.

D. Repeat training services will be on a lower priority than the initial service and will be determined on an individual basis, considering need, ability, prior performance and present motivation of the applicant.

E. STA Tribal citizens who are not living in Sitka will need to apply to the servicing office nearest to his/her residence at the time of application.

ELIGIBILITY - TRIBAL PREFERENCE

An enrolled Sitka Tribal citizen who has been accepted into an accredited vocational/training program or internship program will be given preference. All other eligible applicants will be considered if funding is available.

To be eligible for STA's AVT Program applicants must:

A. Demonstrate that they have been a resident of Sitka for at least six (6) consecutive months at the time the application is submitted.

B. Provide documentation of tribal status: enrollment with the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, documentation of enrollment with another Federally Recognized Tribe or a copy of their Certificate of Indian Blood (CIB) are necessary.

C. Successful applicants must have earned their high school diploma or their General Educational Development/"General Equivalency Diploma" (GED).

D. To be considered for funding, applicants must be at least eighteen (18) years of age; high school graduates shall be eligible at the age of seventeen (17) years.

E. Applicants must demonstrate a need for training in order to obtain reasonable and satisfactory employment or illustrate current underemployment and a demonstrated need for AVT training assistance to qualify for better employment.

F. Applicants must complete and provide the materials necessary for review of an application for funding at least thirty (30) days prior to the start date of the desired training. Applicants may request and receive assistance from the Workforce Development Department to complete the application, however, submission of an incomplete application by the deadline posted will not be eligible for review. It is up to the applicant to work with tribal staff to ensure that their application and all associated materials are fully complete thirty days prior to the start date of the desired training.

G. In order to be considered for funding, an applicant must have completed and/or submitted the following materials to the STA Workforce Development Department:

1. The Sitka Tribe of Alaska's Adult Vocational Training Program Application;

2. Copies of recent high school or college transcripts (transcripts do not need to be official copies);

3. Information from the desired training institute or program;

4. The information at a minimum shall provide the following details - (a) length of the course/program and (b) training expenses;

5. Complete a Student Aid Report (SAR) generated by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) (if applicable). FAFSA waivers can only be granted by the STA Education Committee. A FAFSA waiver can be considered on a case-by-case basis if the applicant provides a letter from the training facility, program or employer stating that they do not handle or utilize federal funding; or,

6. Household income verification, including but not limited to, monthly paystubs, the previous year's tax return, Temporary Assistance for Native Families (TANF) payment documentation, Unemployment payment documentation and, General Assistance payment documentation.

7. Participants who are in default of any Federal or State loans (i.e. Perkins, Stafford etc.) are NOT ELIGIBLE for Sitka Tribe of Alaska's Adult Vocational Training AVT funds until the loan(s) have been satisfied.

AVT APPLICATION REVIEW

A. Only completed applications and files are presented to Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA) Education Committee for review. The Education Committee's responsibilities are to:

1. Select eligible applicants who have met the minimum requirements of the AVT program;

2. Approve/deny applications;

3. Review and determine funding awards;

4. Review academic progress, probation and suspension; and,

5. Grant FAFSA waivers. Note, to qualify for a FAFSA waiver, the applicant must provide documentation from the training facility, program or employer stating that they do not handle or utilize federal funding.

COURSE APPROVAL

The Sitka Tribe of Alaska's Education Committee will review the applicant's documentation regarding future employment based on the requested training assistance to make a determination regarding funding

The Education Committee retains the right to deny funding based on such factors as recently funding another applicant in the same field if a subsequent applicant cannot clearly show that STA's scholarship will lead to employment.

NOTIFICATION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Participants will be notified in writing regarding their financial assistance.

A. The written award notice will state:
   1. The total amount of the award;
   2. The length of the financial assistance;
   3. Any other specific information to be determined by STA's Education Committee; and,
   4. A copy the policies and procedures for STA's AVT program will be provided.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Education Committee can award financial assistance, depending on the availability of funds and an applicant's eligibility for assistance, in the following areas.

A. Transportation and food in route to training;

B. Tuition and related training costs;

C. Room & Board while in training;

D. Emergency assistance is allowed where verified emergencies justify such assistance and must have prior approval;

E. Supportive services while in training, which include:
   1. tools for employment,
   2. initial union dues,
   3. transportation of household effects,

4. security and safety deposits,

5. personal appearance and house wares,

6. child care, and,

7. cost of vocational training counselors engaged in providing services to trainees.

PAYMENT OF FINANCAL ASSISTANCE

If the Education Committee determines that an applicant shall receive funding STA will make funding awards available using the following process:

A. Stipends payable to the student to assist with living expenses will be made at the beginning of each month and will be sent to the institution's financial aid office, if the individual is participating in training outside of Sitka.

B. Payments for tuition shall be sent to the financial aid office at the institution where the participant is attending training.

C. In the event that the participant fails or drops out of his/her program it is the participant's responsibility to inform STA. The training facility will be instructed to return any remaining STA financial assistance.

SATISFACTORY PROGRESS DURING TRAINING

Participants who enter in to training with assistance from STA's AVT Program are required to make satisfactory progress. Failure to meet these requirements due to reasons within the participant's control may result in probation, suspension or termination of training assistance. The requirements are to:

A. Provide evidence of progress grade and/or reports to the AVT coordinator from the training facility, and,

B. Maintain a reasonable standard of conduct.

In addition to STA's standards, for a student to receive continuous, uninterrupted funding through STA the student must maintain the minimum academic standards (attendance and GPA) set by the training institute. Students who do not meet the minimum academic or attendance standards

set by the school or training program will be placed on academic probation and will be notified in writing of this action.

Students will have one term, as set by the school or training-program, to meet the minimum standards. Failure to meet minimum academic or attendance standards after the probationary period will result in academic suspension.

TRANSFER

A student may transfer to any accredited school or training program of their choice providing that the student notifies the STA Workforce Development Department prior to any transfer of schools.

A. The student must notify the Workforce Development Department prior to transfer of school or training program.

B. A student must submit a new budget forecast to STA's Workforce Development Department which forecasts the expenses associated with attending the new school or training program.

C. The transfer request and budget forecast will be taken to the Education Committee for review and approval.

D. If transfer is approved by the Education Committee, the student is responsible for transferring their financial aid to their new school.

COMPLETION OF PROGRAM/TRAINING

Once a participant has successfully completed their program/training, they are required to submit a final grade progress report and a certificate or proof of completion to STA's AVT program coordinator.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Participants who do not meet the minimum academic or attendance standards set by the school or training program will be placed on academic probation; will be notified in writing of academic probation. Participants will have 1 term set by the school or training program, to meet the minimum standards. Failure to meet the minimum standards by the end of the probationary term will result in academic suspension.

ACADEMIC SUSPENSION

If a participant has not met the academic standards by the end of the probationary period, they will be placed on academic suspension and will be notified by certified mail.

A. All funding through STA will be suspended until the student has met the minimum standards set by the school or training program they are attending.

B. Students may be eligible for reinstatement of funding once they have met the minimum standards set by the school or training program.

C. Official grades or progress reports from the school or training program will be required to determine eligibility.

APPEALS

Participants wishing to appeal a denial of funding must:

A. Submit a letter stating the reason(s) for the appeal to the STA's Workforce Development Department;

B. The Education Committee will meet within 72 hours after receipt of the appeal; and,

C. The Education Committee's decision will be final.

Participants will be notified by certified mail as to the outcome of the decision.

INCOME GUIDELINES FOR UNDEREMPLOYMENT

The Term underemployment is explained in 25CFR27.5§c, as "underemployed, without additional training would result in extreme hardship for the applicant"

In accordance to US Code title 25, chapter 43, sec. 4103, "(13) Low-income family The term " low-income family" means a family whose income does not exceed 80 percent of the median income for the area...."

"(14) Median income - The term " median income" means, with respect to an area that is an Indian area, the greater of (A) the median income for the Indian area, which the Secretary shall determine; or (B) the median income for the United States."

The Median income will be determined annually form the From the Federal Register Online via GPO Access [wais.access.gpo.gov].