**LOWER ELWHA KLALLAM TRIBE**
Education Assistance Program
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

# I.  PURPOSE AND SCOPE

It is the policy of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe ("Tribe") to encourage all Tribal Members and first generation descendants to pursue training and education that will enhance their individual goals and the quality of their lives. The Tribe's Education Assistance Program provides financial assistance, support and encouragement to all Lower Elwha Tribal Members who choose to further their education. The purpose of the Education Assistance Program is to enhance career opportunity and employability for Tribal Members and first generation descendants. The Lower Elwha Tribal Business Committee considers education and career advancement a top priority for Tribal Members and first generation descendants and is committed to providing support for education to the fullest extent possible, within the guidelines and budgets established for this Program.

# II.  ELIGIBILITY

The Education Assistance Program is available to all Lower Elwha Klallam Tribal Members, and first generation descendants who are not enrolled in another Tribe, who meet the eligibility criteria for the Programs described in this Policy. No individual may receive Education Assistance Program grants for more than a total of eight (8) years combined across all Education Assistance Programs, not including GED Assistance.

Education Assistance Program grants are not a right. Financial assistance through the Tribe is provided within approved budgets and policy guidelines.  This funding provides assistance for Running Start, GED Testing Fees, and the pursuit of a degree program or vocational training.

# III.  PROGRAMS

## A.  RUNNING START STUDENTS

The Running Start Program enables eligible high school students who seek expanded educational challenges to enroll simultaneously in high school and college classes, or solely in college classes, for the purpose of earning credit to be awarded by both their high school and college.

### 1.  Determination of Grant Award

a.  Running Start grant awards are determined based on expenses for the books or fees for classes.

### 2.  Academic Requirements for Grant Continuation

a.  Submit term grade reports as soon as they are posted.

b. Complete all attempted credits with at least a 2.00 grade point average.

c. Submit new registration or bill for the new quarter/semester.

## B. GED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The General Educational Development (GED) Testing Program is designed for adults 19 years of age or older who have not graduated from high school. Individuals 16 through 18 years of age may also be eligible for this program, but must provide documentation verifying that they are not enrolled in any type of high school program at the time of testing, unless they are in the military, incarcerated in a correctional facility, or enrolled in the Washington Options Program. It is the applicant's responsibility to inform the Education Director of any changes in their educational status.

There are 4 GED tests: Science, Math, Language Arts, and Social Studies. The Tribal Library provides materials and GED study time to help students prepare for the GED. Sample tests are also available to students in the Tribal Library.

1. **Maximum Period of Eligibility**

a. The Education Assistance Program will only pay the testing fees one time, i.e. one time for each of the four tests.

2. **Requirement to Seek Other Resources**

a. GED students must have applied to all other resources to pay their testing fee before applying to the Tribe's GED Assistance Program.

## C. ADULT HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Adults (19 years and older) who did not complete high school may obtain a high school diploma through a community college program.

1. **Maximum Period of Eligibility**

a. Students enrolled in the Adult High School Diploma program are eligible for grant awards for a maximum equivalent of two (2) full time (12 credits or more) academic years (3 quarters or 2 semesters per year) to attain their high school diploma.

2. **Academic Requirements for Grant Continuation**

a. Submit term grade reports as soon as they are posted.

b. Complete all attempted credits with at least a 2.00 grade point average.

c. Submit new registration or bill for the new quarter/semester.

## D. ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Adult Education Program is designed for high school graduates or GED recipients who are pursuing a higher education degree through an accredited college or university.

1. **Maximum Period of Eligibility**

   a. Undergraduate grant recipients are eligible for grant awards for a maximum equivalent of six (6) full time (12 credits or more) academic years (3 quarters or 2 semesters per year) to complete a Bachelor of Arts/Science Degree.

   b. Post Graduate students are eligible for a maximum equivalent of eight (8) years.

2. **Academic Requirements for Grant Continuation**

   a. Submit term grade reports as soon as they are posted.

   b. Complete all attempted credits with at least a 2.00 grade point average.

   c. Submit new registration or bill for the new quarter/semester.

## E. ADULT VOCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Adult Vocational Assistance Program is designed for adults 18 years and older who are pursuing vocational training, certificate, or degree through an accredited training institution. The Adult Vocational Assistance Program may also agree to fund attendance at an unaccredited training institution if no similar accredited institution exists within a 50-mile radius of the applicant's home and the Education Program believes that the unaccredited institution provides adequate and appropriate training for the applicant's desired career field.

1. **Maximum Period of Eligibility**

   a. Vocational Training recipients are eligible for grant awards for a maximum of four (4) years.

2. **Exceptions to the General Application Timeline**

   a. When the Tribe or another employer in the greater Port Angeles area has a training need arise, the Program may waive application due date timelines for a student to get the required vocational training.

3. **Academic Requirements for Grant Continuation**

   a. Submit grade reports as soon as they are posted.

   b. Complete all attempted course/certifications with passing grade per the training intuition's criteria.

   c. Submit new registration or bill for the new term.

## F. APPLICATION PROCESS

Tribal Education grants are awarded, when funding is available, to students who maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 each quarter at an accredited higher education institution.  The

amount provided by the Tribe's Education Assistance Program is then determined by the Education Program's budget for that year.

Funding for the next term will not be released until grades are submitted to the Education Director in a format easily transmitted electronically or in person. Grades are due as soon as they are posted.

1. **Application Process for First-Time Applicants**

   Applicants are required to submit the following information to the Tribe's Education Director prior to being considered for financial assistance through the Tribe's Education Assistance Program:

   a. Tribal Education Assistance Application from the Education Assistance Program. This Application must include a Personal Statement describing the student's goals, a completed Family Education Right and Privacy Act (FERPA) form, and a signed Agreement. By completing the Application, the student gives permission for Tribal staff to obtain information about the student's enrollment, financial aid, class schedule, and grades directly from the institution they are attending.

   b. Certification of Enrollment in the Tribe (CDIB).

   c. Copy of Birth Certificate.

   d. Complete High School Transcript or Diploma or proof of GED, if applicable.

   e. Copy of admissions letter, registration form, or statement of account/billing from an accredited college, university, or vocational training institution, or completed GED testing application.

   f. If the applicant previously attended college, the applicant must submit previous college transcripts.

   g. Copy of Registration for Selective Service (males over the age of 18 only).

   h. Web submission confirmation for FAFSA or student aid report (SAR), or, for GED students, proof of application for all other available forms of testing fee assistance.

   i. The Tribe's Accounting Department requires all students to have a W-9 on file from their school. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure this is done annually.

   Submit applications to:      Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe
   Education Assistance Program
   2851-A Lower Elwha Road
   Port Angeles, WA 98363

2. **Application Process for Returning Students**

Applicants and prior grantees who are continuing in their higher education or vocational program are required to submit the following information to the Tribe's Education Director *every year* for continued consideration for financial assistance through the Tribe's Education Assistance Program:

    a. Tribal Education Assistance Application. This Application must include a Personal Statement describing the student's goals, a completed FAFSA form, and a signed Agreement. By completing the Application, the student gives permission for Tribal staff to obtain information about the student's enrollment, financial aid, class schedule, and grades directly from the college. **This must be done every year for which funding is sought.**

    b. Complete college transcript showing credits earned and completed each semester or quarter and a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.00.

    c. Copy of admissions letter, registration form, or statement of account/billing from an accredited college, university, or vocational training institution.

    d. Web submission confirmation for FAFSA or SAR.

    e. Degree Evaluation:

        i. List of courses and credits completed that apply towards graduation and a degree;

        ii. Courses and credits that still need to be taken to complete a major, minor, and degree evaluations; and

        iii. Signature of institution official completing the degree evaluation and date evaluation completed.

Submit applications to:    Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe
Education Assistance Program
2851-A Lower Elwha Road
Port Angeles, WA 98363

## G. APPLICATION DEADLINE

Applications for Education Assistance Grants are due January 31st for the spring term and June 30th for the fall term. The Program pays for summer term only if it is a requirement of the program the student attends or the student will earn the final credits for their degree during the summer term. All application requirements must be complete four weeks prior to the beginning of the quarter or semester the student intends to attend.

## H.  LATE OR INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS

Incomplete applications are not considered for funding.

If an application is not completed by the deadline for a particular quarter, the applicant will need to apply for the next funding cycle.

## I.  GRANT AWARD DETERMINATION

When all requirements are met, the Education Assistance Program will review the Application and determine what assistance to offer based on documentation and available funding. The Education Assistance Program will notify each applicant of their eligibility in an award letter.

## J.  DIBURSEMENT OF GRANT FUNDS
Grant funds are generally disbursed directly to the academic intuition.

In rare instances, the Education Director may disburse funds directly to the student. A student who wishes to receive a direct disbursement of funds should contact the Education Director to discuss their specific situation and provide any necessary documentation.

## K.  DISAPPROVAL OF APPLICATION

When the Education Assistance Program does not to approve an Application, the Education Director will notify the applicant of the decision in writing. This notification will explain the reason(s) for the decision. It will also describe the appeals process. An Application may be disapproved for any of the following reasons:

      a.  The applicant is not an enrolled member of Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe.

      b.  The applicant fails to complete the required number of credits per term.

      c.  The applicant fails to maintain the required grade point average.

      d.  The applicant withdraws without proper notification.

      e.  The Program does not have sufficient grant funds to make the requested award.

      f.  The applicant submits an incomplete Application.

      g.  The applicant fails to apply for institutional financial aid.

      h.  The applicant fails to meet applicable deadlines.

      i.  The applicant is not accepted for admission by institution.

      j.  The applicant is suspended by the institution, FAFSA, and/or the Education Assistance Program.

k. The applicant has exceeded the maximum grant award for the Education Assistance Program grant they are applying for.

l. The applicant is taking courses that are non-degree courses.

## L. REFUND OF GRANT AWARD

When the recipient of a Tribal grant award does not enroll, withdraws, or drops from an institution, the balance of the unused grant award must be returned to the Tribe. If the funds are not returned to the Tribe, the student will be placed on suspension from future grant awards until they funds are returned. Methods to return funds may include community service with the Tribe.

## M. FINANCIAL PROBATION

A grant recipient who does not meet the minimum academic requirements will be placed on financial probation for the next term. A "Notice of Probation of LEKT Education Assistance Grant" will be sent to the institution. To be removed from probation; a grant recipient must meet at least the minimum academic requirements for the term in which a written warning was given. The repetition of courses for which financial aid has previously been awarded will not be funded.

## N. GRANT SUSPENSION

A grant recipient on financial probation who fails to meet the minimum academic requirements or withdraws without notification will be suspended from the Education Assistance Program.

A grant recipient who is suspended from Tribal funding will not be considered for future funding until the recipient completes a term of at least six (6) credits on using other resources and meets minimum academic requirements.

A student who is suspended from the Tribal Education Assistance Program will be notified in writing. This notification will give the reasons for the decision and explain the appeal process.

## O. HARDSHIP OR MEDICAL WITHDRAWALS

When a student is granted a medical or hardship withdrawal approved by their learning institution, the Education Assistance Program will honor the institution's decision and excuse the approved withdrawal. The Tribe may also elect not to suspend a student from the Program after a withdrawal if the Program independently determines that a hardship or medical withdrawal was warranted.

## II. APPEALS

An applicant who has completed an Application for Education Assistance and is denied funding may appeal to the Education Director. The appeal must be in writing, and must set forth the reason the applicant believes the decision should be changed.

Within ten (10) working days of receipt of appeal, the Education Director, along with their supervisor, will review the information, make a decision, and notify the appellant.

The appellant can appeal this second decision to Tribal Business Committee within ten (10) working days by submitting in writing the original application, the response from the Education Director, and a letter stating the reasons why they believe the decision should be changed. The Education Director will notify the appellant, in writing, of the decision by the Tribal Business Committee. The decision of the Committee is final.