
Gina M. Bennett Memorial Scholarship

The Gina M. Bennett Memorial Scholarship is awarded to four (4) Osage student per year with additional applications considered if funding permits. Students must be enrolled full-time in an accredited public or private **non-profit** college or university in the United States.

Eligibility

All enrolled members of the Osage Nation, including their legally adopted children (whether Osage or non-Osage), who are pursuing a post-secondary education full-time at an accredited public or private **non-profit** college or university in the United States are eligible to apply for the Gina M. Bennett Memorial Scholarship within applicable guidelines for funding.

The Gina M. Bennett Memorial Scholarship is specifically intended to benefit students who have experienced hardship that has negatively affected their living and/or financial situations. Applicants who have experienced one or more of the following instances of hardship will be considered a priority within the context of this scholarship. They will therefore receive the first and strongest consideration.

Priority applicants are defined as:

- Students who have suffered the loss of one or both of their biological parents before the student has reached the age of 18 *and/or*
- Students who have been living in foster care *and/or*
- Students whose biological parent or parents are, or have been, incarcerated for a sentence of one or more years before the student reached the age of 18 *and/or*
- Students who have been homeless or unhoused for a period of 3 months or longer *or*
- Adult learners (students defined as those over the age of 25) who are returning to school after an extended absence due to life circumstances such as illness or pregnancy

If in the academic year no students who meet the above-stated eligibility criteria apply and/or funding permits, exceptions may be made for students who fall outside the stated eligibility. Exceptions will be granted in the following order once priority applications (if any) have been reviewed:

- Students who have suffered the loss of one or both parents or whose parent or parents have been incarcerated for a sentence of one or more years during the time that the student is enrolled in their university studies
- Students who are enrolled part-time and do not meet the full-time student status requirement but are otherwise eligible to receive the award based on hardship
- Students who do not meet the above-stated hardship requirements but meet all stated academic requirements

Academic Requirements

The ONED requires students receiving the Gina M. Bennett Scholarship to have at least a 2.0 GPA for the scholarship award. A student's GPA will be calculated on a 4.0 scale when alternate grading scales are used. For example, a school using a 100-point grading scale would have scores converted to a 4.0 scale as shown below:

X = Average of all scores reported

$$(X / 100) * 4 = \text{GPA}$$

For example:

$$90\% + 80\% + 75\% + 90\% + 80\%$$

$$415 / 5 = 83$$

$$(83 / 100) * 4 = 3.32 \text{ GPA}$$

Withdrawal and Failed Classes

The Bennett Scholarship is not renewed each term. Applicants must apply each academic term as if it was his/her first time. If a student fails or withdraws from class(es) but maintains at least a 2.0 GPA and full-time status, that student is still eligible to apply for the scholarship the following term. If a student fails or withdraws from class(es) and drops below the full-time status, that student will not be eligible to apply for the scholarship the following term.

Hardship Waiver

A hardship is defined as an event that prevents a student from completing the hours in the term for which he/she has been awarded scholarship funding. Examples of hardships may include but are not limited to an unexpected surgery, complications associated with pregnancy or an accident with a major injury. In order to remain eligible for the Bennett Scholarship, students must request a Hardship Waiver and submit documentation in a timely manner verifying hardship circumstances. The ONED shall, within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of receipt of the Hardship Form, report the findings and final decision to the complainant in writing.

The student must provide the following information to be awarded a Hardship Waiver:

- A form asking for hardship consideration and explaining circumstances in detail from the student, and
- A physician's statement verifying a medical condition which prevents the student from completing courses; or
- A written report from an unrelated, licensed counselor verifying an event or condition which prevents the student from completing courses

Funding Levels

The Gina M. Bennett Memorial Scholarship is awarded in the amount of \$2,500 each for the fall and spring academic terms. Students enrolled in summer or winter sessions must apply during the preceding term.

Funding Limitations

The Osage Nation will award two (2) Gina M. Bennett Memorial Scholarships each term. In order to qualify, students must be full-time, have experienced one or more of the specific instances of hardship, and have a minimum 2.0 GPA to receive scholarship funding unless they qualify as an exception at the discretion of the ONED scholarship program coordinator.

High school students, concurrently enrolled, are not eligible for the award.

The Gina M. Bennett Scholarship amount may change from one academic year to the next due to budget limitations.

Allowable Expenses

Funding from the Gina M. Bennett Scholarship may only be used for costs directly related to attending courses including but not limited to tuition, fees, books, transportation, and room and board.

Tuition is the amount the student must pay per credit or clock hour in order to maintain enrollment; this amount varies depending on the institution.

Fees are the funds charged per student to attend the institution at per credit hour or clock hour rate; these fees may include but are not limited to user fees for libraries and technology, student health fees and building fees; they are included in the tuition bill per student.

Books include any textbook, manual, or required readings compiled by the instructor to successfully complete the course(s).

Transportation includes any fees incurred when traveling to or from enrolled classes.

Room and Board is the expense based on the set amount indicated for room and board set by the institution attended.

Application Requirements

Applications are not considered complete until all required and requested documents have been submitted to ONED:

- A completed application
- Copy of Osage Nation membership card
- Non-Osage applicants legally adopted by a court of competent jurisdiction must provide verification of adoption by an original allottee (adoption decree and birth certificates tracing that adoption back to an original allottee)
- Verification of enrollment signed or stamped by the Registrar's Office
- A copy of the student's course schedule with credit hours and/or program plan with clock hours
- A copy of the student's complete transcript/progress report

Additionally, students who believe that they are eligible for ***priority consideration*** must submit one of the following:

- Documentation verifying one or more of the specific instances of hardship listed in the eligibility requirements which includes but is not limited to death certificates, obituaries, proof of incarceration, proof of foster care placement, etc. **or**
- A written statement explaining which of the specific instances of hardship the student has experienced and how they would benefit from receiving the Gina M. Bennett Memorial Scholarship. Statements of hardship must be written by the student and submitted as a typed document one page in length (and no longer) using the Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri font, and must be signed and dated by the student

The student's transcript must include hours of completion from the last school attended. If applicable, transcripts must show final grades for the last term the student received an Osage scholarship. If the student has not completed any college or career tech hours since high school, he/she must include a copy of his/her final high school transcript or GED test scores.

Application Process

The deadline to apply for the fall and spring terms are **September 15th and February 15th of each academic year**. Scholarship applications are available on the Osage Nation website at: <https://www.osagenation-nsn.gov/what-we-do/education-department/higher-education-scholarship> and must be received by the deadline date.

If a student changes his/her educational plan prior to submitting an application, he/she must contact ONED at scholarship@osagenation-nsn.gov to provide an update.

Applications will be processed according to the following:

- Complete application and supporting documents must be submitted prior to the deadline date
- Applications will be reviewed in the order they are completed
- Completed applications will be processed within twenty (20) business days of the deadline date

Payment

Gina M. Bennett Memorial Scholarships are disbursed in two equal installments in the fall and spring.

A letter and check for each student will be mailed and made payable to the student's school. The letter will include a description of the scholarship, the amount funded, the term for which it is being granted and the allowable expenses for which the scholarship may be used.

After payment has been made to the school the file is closed and no additional documents will be accepted for the current term.

It is the student's responsibility to update his/her address with ONED to receive timely updates on any issues with his/her application or updates on ONED processing.

Gina M. Bennett Memorial Scholarships will only be funded in U.S. dollars.

If a student's funding has not been received by the school, it is the policy of the Osage Nation Accounting Department to allow twenty-one (21) days before a missing check can have a stop payment placed on it before it will be reissued to the school. In the interim, ONED will issue a letter of intent to the school informing the financial aid office that payment is forthcoming.

Data Privacy

The information contained within each scholarship application and any supporting documentation attached is a protected record under the Osage Nation Open Records Act. The Osage Nation will not disclose any record containing protected information without the written consent of the applicant unless the information is being used to perform the duties of an Osage Nation employee. The applicant's information may be released to other Osage Nation Departments/Programs with which the applicant is receiving or requesting services and to the Office of the Osage Nation Attorney General for an investigation to detect or eliminate fraud.

Privacy waiver statements are included in the Patterson Scholarship application. If the waiver is not signed by the student, data will not be discussed with parents/guardians or external scholarship committees.

Appeals Process

If a student believes his/her award has been denied in error, he/she must submit a written appeal within ten (10) business days of notification to the ONED stating the reason for the appeal. Within five (5) business days after receiving an appeal, ONED will submit a report to the Secretary of Education (SE). Within ten (10) business days of this report, the SE shall inform the complainant and the ONED in writing the decision from the Office of the Principal Chief. The decision of the Principal Chief shall be deemed a final decision.

Contact Information

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Phone: 918-287-5300

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