

American Indian Student Aid Information

Non-Federal Types of Financial Aid:

American Indian Tuition Waiver – This waiver is designated to tuition only for students who meet all the qualifications specified on application and listed below. It does not, however, waive any other charges such as mandatory fees, class fees, etc. Copies of the American Indian Tuition Waiver are available at the Financial Aid Office, Griz Central, 2nd floor OR on the [Financial Aid Office website](http://www.umt.edu/finaid) (www.umt.edu/finaid), under Forms. Complete the application only if you meet the following qualifications:

- You are a resident of the State of Montana when you enroll in one of the two or four year college of the Montana University System, and
- You are at least one-quarter (¼) degree of Indian blood; or are an enrolled of a state or federally recognized Indian tribe which is located within the boundaries of the State of Montana. Accepted documentation as follows: CIB (Certificate of Indian Blood) letter or card; Tribal Enrollment Card; Form letter(s) documenting descendency (birth certificate) that equal ¼ or more; and document of parent (grandparent) enrollment and/or degree of blood, and
- You have demonstrated financial need as defined by Board of Regents Policy 940.13 (F) (4) and verified by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and
- You must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), see “Important Additional Information” section.

Tuition Waiver renewal – current students who have consecutive enrollment, have received tuition waiver and have approved proof of Indian descent *do not* need to re-submit an application and/or documentation. However, they must make sure they have a FAFSA completed for the academic year they are applying for and meet all other qualifications specified above, no later than the 1st day of term in order to be processed in a timely manner.

Summer Tuition Waiver

- For entering new students during summer session, students must submit American Indian Tuition Waiver application and proof of Indian descent as stated plus meet all other qualifications specified above.
- For continuing students, student must complete and submit a Summer Financial Aid Application.

Special Note: Proof of Indian descent/documentation only needs to be submitted once, as long as it has been within five years of last term attendance while receiving the tuition waiver at the University of Montana.

Higher Education/Tribal Funding – funding is administered by each Tribe/Agency based on their criteria and standards. Questions regarding deadlines and eligibility should be directed to the respective Higher Education/Tribal Office. Contact information is available online on [American Indian Student Services website](http://www.umt.edu/aiss) (www.umt.edu/aiss) in the Tribal Higher Ed section or check the designated handbook/guide.

- **Financial Needs Analysis (FNA)** form may need to be completed by UM’s Financial Aid Office; the completed FNA form (student portion) from the higher education office or financial aid office should be submitted to the financial aid at least **two weeks** prior to the deadline. If you wait later than two weeks you may jeopardize your funding.
- In order to have an FNA completed you must complete a FAFSA processed by the school before the deadline and must be meeting/maintaining SAP.
- Student loan eligibility will be determined after any higher education/tribal funding has been reported; at that time a request for loans must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office in writing.

Scholarships:

- Scholarship information can be found on [American Indian Student Services website](http://www.umt.edu/aiss) (www.umt.edu/aiss).
- Individual academic departments may also have scholarships available specifically to American Indian students and should be referred to department offices or websites for more information.
- Additional Scholarship Opportunities:
 - Montana Resident Scholarships for Entering students - undergraduates pursuing their first bachelor’s degree will automatically be considered for a scholarship known as the Montana Academic Achievement (MAA). The application for admission serves as the scholarship application. *Students who are receiving the American Indian tuition waiver are not eligible for the MAA.*
 - Non-Resident Scholarships for Entering students - undergraduates pursuing their first bachelor’s degree are automatically considered for either the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) program or the Leadership, Achievement and Service (LAS) scholarship. The application for admission serves as the scholarship application.

- UM Scholarship Portal – Offers one centralized General Application, regardless of a student’s major or program of study for new and continuing students. Many individual departments, school and colleges use this for scholarship awarding. For more information see [UM’s scholarship website](http://www.umt.edu/scholarships) (www.umt.edu/scholarships).
- Campus-Wide Scholarships Administered by Financial Aid Office – You must complete the General Application through the UM Scholarship Portal by February 15th each year. For more information see [UM’s scholarship website](http://www.umt.edu/scholarships) (www.umt.edu/scholarships).

Types of Federal Financial Aid:

Federal and State Grants - Students will be offered the maximum grant aid possible, based on their Expected Family Contribution (EFC) as determined by the FAFSA application. Some funds are limited, so applying early (before November 15th) is vital for receiving the largest possible award.

Loans - The types of loans available to you will depend on many variables. For more information about the individual types of loans available, visit the [Financial Aid Office’s Loans page](http://www.umt.edu/finaid/types-of-aid/loans) (www.umt.edu/finaid/types-of-aid/loans).

Work-Study – Students who are awarded work-study will only receive the funding if they secure a work-study position. For those who do, payment comes in the form of a paycheck after work is performed. Students can apply for jobs by inquiring in individual departments or by using [UM’s electronic job board](http://www.umt.edu/career/StudentEmployment) (www.umt.edu/career/StudentEmployment).

Special Note: Jay Treaty – American Indian Students are not subject to the requirement to be US citizens and are eligible to fill out the FAFSA to receive federal aid due to the protection of the Jay Treaty.

Important Additional Information:

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) - Students receiving federal financial aid are required to make timely and satisfactory progress towards the completion of their degree/certificate. This policy, known as Satisfactory Academic Progress, looks at a student’s grade point average (GPA), and the percentage of credits they have successfully completed, known as pace or completion rate. Student’s that fail to make SAP may be placed on warning or financial aid suspension. Students must maintain a 2.0 GPA (undergraduates) and successfully complete at least 70% of the credits they attempt. If students withdraw, fail or get incomplete grades in a course it will decrease the percentage of completed credits and may affect a student’s eligibility to receive financial aid. If placed on financial aid suspension students must file a SAP Appeal form. Further information can be found on the [Financial Aid Office website](http://www.umt.edu/finaid) (www.umt.edu/finaid) under Maintaining Eligibility.

Verification – Approximately 30% of all students that submit a FAFSA are selected for a process known as verification. Selection is made by the US Department of Education (ED) and can occur in multiple years if an applicant meets ED’s criteria. If selected, a student will need to provide more documentation to the financial aid office before their application can go through the final review process or aid can be disbursed. The financial aid office is required to ask for additional documentation if, when reviewing a student’s application, there appears to be discrepant information. More information is available on the [Financial Aid Office website](http://www.umt.edu/finaid) (www.umt.edu/finaid) on the Applying for/Receiving Aid then Additional Requirements→Verification.

- If selected for verification login to CyberBear and go to Tab “Accept Award Offer” to see what needs to be provided. Links to the required forms or instructions will be attached to each specific requirement.
- Please be aware that completing verification is a manual process that can be time consuming and we ask that students be patient and allow time for the financial aid office to determine their award eligibility.
- To ensure that aid will be available prior to the start of each semester all documentation must be complete and received June 15th.

Financial Aid Important Dates:

- **December 1st** – UM FAFSA priority filing date. To file visit the [Federal Student Aid FAFSA homepage](http://fafsa.ed.gov) (fafsa.ed.gov).
- **May 1st** – National College Decision Day, for high school seniors to pick their college.
- **June 15th** – All requested documentation should be submitted to avoid delays in the disbursement of your autumn semester aid.
- **July 1st** – All student files must go through a process known as ‘Final Review’, the awards reflected on the initial estimated offer are pending until final review is complete. Once complete you will receive an email.
- **August 24th** – Aid begins to be disbursed for those students whose: files have been reviewed and have confirmed payment on their autumn semester bill.

Who to contact for help - If you have questions or would like more information, please visit us in the Emma B. Lommasson building, 2nd floor – room 218. For specific Higher Education/Tribal funding, tuition waiver or scholarship questions, please contact Sarah Wade at sarah.wade@umontana.edu.