

ᑭᑎ ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑎ PROGRAM
(Tsi WaZhuPi Program)
(Active persons in the home)

Approved
S. Bedna¹

Policy

The ᑭᑎ ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑎ Program is funded by the Department of Human and Health Services within the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG). The program operates on a fiscal year basis (October through September). The program serves low-income Native American families that reside within the Osage Reservation boundaries (Osage County).

This program provides financial assistance on behalf of eligible youth and is designed to unify and strengthen Native American families. It is intended to enhance activity, sports participation, art initiatives, after-school activities, and promote nutrition. Other assistance includes school supplies, clothes, and lunches, for eligible youth attending a public school, Osage Nation WELA's, or DaPoSka AnKoDoPi School.

Youth participants in the family unit must be enrolled in public, Osage Nation WELA's, or DaPoSka AnKoDoPi School, Pre-K thru the 12th grade and a member of a federally recognized tribe.

Eligibility Requirements

Requirements to be considered eligible for the ᑭᑎ ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑎ Program include:

- Reside within the boundaries of the Osage Reservation (Osage County)
- Youth participants in the family unit must be an Osage Nation member or belong to a federally recognized tribe
- The family unit's monthly net income cannot exceed 125% of the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) Federal Poverty Guideline. The current Federal Poverty Guidelines are published in the Federal Register each year and a copy is available, upon request, from the office.

Application Process

All interested families must complete and submit an application to the Osage Financial Assistance Department and include the following documentation:

Effective 10/01/2022

- Complete and submit the program application (*Appendix A*).
- Osage Nation Membership Card for Osage preference, or a non-Osage tribal membership card
- Photo identification for each parent or legal guardian in the family unit
- Social Security card for each person in the family unit
- Proof of residency (current utility bill in applicant's name or certification of address form)
- Income verification for the past 30 from application date for each parent or legal guardian
- Invoice from youth organization
- Verification of school enrollment (if applying for clothing or supplies)

Application Procedure

Applicants must submit a complete application to the Osage Nation Financial Assistance Department. Applications may be submitted electronically with digital signatures or completed over the phone with office personnel. This allowance is to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to protect the health of constituents. Applications are not considered complete until all required requested documents are submitted and date stamped into receipt.

- Complete applications will be processed within ten (10) business days from the application completion date.
- Each applicant will be sent an approval or denial letter via US mail or electronic mail (email) within (10) business days after eligibility has been determined.
- Applicants will have (10) business days from the date of the denial letter to appeal the determination.

Preference & Priority

In the situation where the need for financial assistance exceeds the available funding, the *ᏌᏊ ᏚᏐᏈᏃᏍᏔᏅ* Program will apply Osage and Veteran preference. A copy of the Preference policy is found within the Human Resources Policy and Procedure.

Income Eligibility

Income verification for the past 30 days is required from the parent(s) or legal guardian in the family unit. Upon approval of the application, the family unit is eligible for assistance for 3 months. Eligibility shall be re-determined with a new application. The following sources of income shall be used to determine the current net income and project an annual income:

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- Wages (net income)
- Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits; excluding Medicare deductions
- Supplemental Security Income Benefits (SSI)
- Retirement/pension benefits
- Self-employment Income
- Unemployment
- Rental Income
- Alimony
- Child Support

Income Calculation

Enrolled members of the Osage Nation will receive a standard deduction of \$350 per enrolled member in the family unit. The following example is an income calculation, at 125% of Federal Poverty Income Limits (*Appendix B*):

Example for a family unit of five (5) enrolled members of the Osage Nation

Osages Net Income \$3,200 per month (ineligible)

Deduction \$1,750

Adjusted Net Income \$1,450 (eligible)

Allowable Expenses & Activities

Expenses associated with sports, art initiatives, and after-school programs may include but are not limited to: fees, equipment, uniforms, supplies, materials, and other related expenses. A list of required items may be requested by the program from the organization providing the activity.

Expenses associated with school supplies, lunch programs, school field trips, lunches and other school-sponsored activities requiring students to provide their own lunches are allowable. School clothing is allowable for students enrolled in public, Osage Nation WELA's, or DaPoSka AnKoDoPi School at one half of the maximum benefit.

Allowable activities include but are not limited to the following list:

Brownies	Girl Scouts	Cub Scouts
Boy Scouts	Gymnastics	Tumbling
Martial Arts	Boxing	Ballet
School Supplies	School Clothing	Dance Classes
Cheerleading	Softball	Baseball
Soccer	Football	Camps
Golf	Swimming	4-H
Workshop	After-School Programs	Other – with Director Approval

Amount of Assistance

The following scale sets the maximum amount of assistance that is available for an eligible family:

1-2 Youth= \$400 per fiscal year

3-4 Youth= \$600 per fiscal year

5 or more Youth= \$800 per fiscal year

Assistance Procedure

The program shall adhere to the Osage Nation Accounting best practices for the processing and delivery of monetary assistance. Within ten (10) business days from the eligibility determination and notification to the applicant the following process shall be used to deliver services:

- Notify the organization, individual, or vendor of the amount of assistance, either verbally or via email.
- Process a purchase requisition or payable to the Accounting Dept. A form W9 may be requested from the vendor providing a good or service to the eligible family.
 - Checks are mailed directly to the organization, individual, or vendor from the accounting department.

Appeal Process

If the applicant is determined ineligible for assistance:

- A letter shall be mailed or emailed to the applicant. The letter will state the reason for denial and include an appeal form
- If the applicant appeals the determination, in written form, within 10 business days of the letter to the Financial Assistance office; the appeal will be forwarded to the Secretary or his / her designee for review.

- The Secretary or his/her designee will hear the applicant, review the appeal and make a determination of eligibility, then respond in written or electronic communication to the applicant.

Confidential Records and Reporting

Applicants are informed, at the time of application, of their Rights and Responsibilities. All program staff shall adhere to signed confidentiality agreements. The Osage Nation Financial Assistance Department will maintain spreadsheets to track applications, eligible family units, allowable activities, and amount of assistance. Constituent files shall be stored in locked cabinets in the Financial Assistance file room and will adhere to the Archives Department records and retention schedules.

Definitions

Family Unit – means individual or group of individuals living together as one economic unit and related by blood, marriage, or a legal capacity.

Fiscal Year – the accounting period for the government which begins on October 1st and ends on September 30th.

Vendor – an organization or individual that is providing a good or service