

Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries, Scholarships, and Awards

Program Policy

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1.0 Introduction

Indspire has disbursed millions of dollars of financial support to thousands of Indigenous students through the *Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries, Scholarships, and Awards* program since 1985.

Research shows that a significant gap in graduation rates exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people¹. Also, Indigenous people are underrepresented in all areas of education and face numerous barriers, the largest one being financial.²

Contrary to popular myth, Indigenous students do not receive automatic full funding for education. Indspire's *Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries, Scholarships, and Awards* program strives to lessen the financial barriers that First Nation, Inuit, and Métis students experience in accessing and completing education programs.

2.0 Definitions

Applicant: a person who applies for financial support through the *Building Brighter Futures* program.

Alumni: past recipients of financial support from Indspire.

Arts Training: studies in fine arts and performance arts, including visual, performing, media, graphic, and literary arts

Award Record: a document used to establish criteria for each financial award.

Continuing Education: a program of study for adult learners beyond traditional post-secondary education.

Financial Aid: Indspire's financial aid program includes four components:

- **Scholarships** – based on academic merit;
- **Bursaries** – based on financial need;
- **Awards** – based on both academic merit and financial need; **and**
- **Incentives** – to encourage students to stay in school or to reward successful completion of each period of a program or final completion of a program.

Full-time and Part-time Studies: full-time and part-time studies are defined by the educational institution the applicant is attending.

Indigenous: means a person who is recognized as “one of the aboriginal peoples of Canada” within the meaning of section 35 the Constitution Act, 1982, which further states that for the purposes of the Constitution, the “aboriginal peoples of Canada includes the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada”. This policy (consistent with general Canadian practices) understands the term “Indians” in the Constitution to now be replaced by the term “First Nations”.

Status: means a person who is registered as an Indian on the Registrar of the Federal Government's Indian Register.

¹ National Household Survey 2013, Statistics Canada

² Survey of Education Choices Made by Indigenous Students 2013, Indspire

Non-Status: means a person who identifies as an Indian or First Nations and is not registered on the Government of Canada’s Indian-Register but who:

- 1) is a direct descendant of a parent or grandparent who is/was a Registered Indian on the Government of Canada’s Indian Register and holds/held a valid Status Card;
- 2) is on a Band membership list where the Band has control of its membership list; or
- 3) is on the enrolment, citizenship, registry or membership list of an Indigenous group under a modern land claims agreement.

First Nations: means a person who self-identifies as an Indian or as First Nations, whether Status or Non-Status. Applicants are required to provide proof of First Nation identity by providing a valid Certificate of Indian Status (a “Status Card”) or a citizenship, membership, registration or enrolment card issued by:

- 1) the Registrar of the Federal Government’s Indian Register;
- 2) a Band within the meaning of the Indian Act that has control of its membership list; or
- 3) by an Indigenous group under a modern land claims agreement.

Inuit: means a person who self-identifies as Inuit. Applicants are required to provide proof of Inuit identity by providing a valid Inuit identity card issued by:

- 1) an Inuit organization that is recognized by the Government of Canada,
- 2) an Inuit organization that is recognized by the Government of Nunavut; or
- 3) an Indigenous group under a modern land claims agreement.

Métis: means a person who self-identifies as Métis. Applicants are required to provide proof of Métis identity by providing a valid Métis citizenship, membership, registration or enrolment card issued by:

- 1) one of the Métis Settlements in Alberta,
- 2) a provincial organization that is a member of the Métis National Council, which includes the Métis Nation British Columbia, the Métis Nation of Alberta, the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, the Manitoba Métis Federation and the Métis Nation of Ontario;
- 3) an Indigenous group under a modern land claims agreement; or
- 4) a Métis organization that is recognized by the Government of Canada,

Professional Development: the advancement of skills or expertise to succeed in a particular profession, especially through continued education (normally programs are short, workshops of a couple of days, week long, less than a month) and taken while on the job.

Traditional Knowledge: a term used to represent the broad spectrum of Indigenous knowledge, primarily as it is linked to well-established cultural practices.

3.0 Program Objectives

The objectives of the *Building Brighter Futures* program are to:

- support as many Indigenous students as possible;
- meet each student’s financial need;
- increase the number of Canadian Indigenous graduates;
- increase the number of Indigenous people participating in the economy and workforce through education;
- transform lives within Indigenous communities through education; **and**
- collect and present data about Indigenous education to support good public policy.

4.0 Guiding Principles

Building Brighter Futures is a student-focused program that is designed to provide financial support to Indigenous people to complete their education.

Indspire strives for fairness, accountability, and transparency in the administration of this program.

Indspire is distinctive in its approach, as an Indigenous-led organization; as such, the program strives to encourage:

- fairness and equity (in the disbursement of financial support);
- reciprocity (rooted in Indigenous values); **and**
- diversity (Indigenous identity, geography, academic/professional discipline).

5.0 Purpose and Scope of the Policy

The purpose of the *Building Brighter Futures* policy is to:

- guide the administration of the program by Indspire; **and**
- inform external stakeholders, including students, funders, the education sector, Indigenous leaders, and parents, about the program.

This policy governs the equitable assessment and fair and wide disbursement of funding through financial awards.

6.0 Program Guidelines

6.1 ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for *Building Brighter Futures* financial awards, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- be an Indigenous person;
- be enrolled in:
 - an accredited education program;
 - a professional development program;
 - a continuing education program;
 - a traditional knowledge program; or
 - arts training; **and**
- not be a member of the staff, board, or jury at the time of applying for funding support .

6.2 APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants to the *Building Brighter Futures* program must provide proof of eligibility (see section 6.1) and a completed application form by the deadline(s).

6.3 APPLICATION ASSESSMENT

Application assessment is based on criteria established by Indspire and/or its funders.

6.4 FINANCIAL AWARDS CRITERIA

Disbursement criteria for financial awards are negotiated with funders for significant donations (i.e. gift amounts of \$5,000 per year or more), recognizing that Indspire's goal is to make funding accessible to as many eligible applicants as possible.

The disbursement of financial awards is tied to funding agreement criteria, where it can be either:

- a fixed amount, the total amount of which will be disbursed to a successful applicant(s);
or
- based on (1) an assessment of the application, and (2) monies available to be disbursed.

If Indspire deems the criteria specified in a funding agreement to be too restrictive, Indspire will renegotiate the criteria with the funder in order to increase the accessibility of the funds by successful applicants.

Any type of financial award may be considered, including renewable ones.

Indspire levies a fee to cover the cost of administering and promoting the program.

Criteria for financial awards are detailed in award records.

6.5 FINANCIAL AWARDS DISBURSEMENT

Applicants may receive more than one financial award per year, based on funds available for disbursement.

Indspire strives to disburse all funds available for financial awards in a timely fashion.

Indspire has an appeal process available for applicants.

6.6 REPORTING

Indspire gathers information about applicants to monitor and evaluate program success, build statistical metrics, promote the program, and report to its funders.

With the expressed consent of successful applicants or Indspire alumni, their names and contact information may be provided to funders for employment consideration or for the purpose of encouraging the funders to continue to support the program.

With the expressed consent of successful applicants or Indspire alumni, their names and stories may be used for promotional purposes by Indspire.

7.0 JURISDICTION

The President and CEO of Indspire has jurisdiction over the implementation of this policy.