

Frequently Asked Questions

ELIGIBILITY for a Cobell Scholarship Opportunity

Q: What is the Cobell Scholarship and who is eligible to apply?

A: The Cobell Scholarship was established as the result of the Cobell v. Salazar settlement. It is competitive, awarded on merit first then disbursed based on unmet need, non-renewable, and available to any post-secondary (after high school) individual who is; an enrolled member of a US Federally Recognized Tribe, enrolled in full-time study and is degree seeking. Applicants must plan to attend or be attending any nationally, regionally and industry accredited non-profit, public or private institution. Applicants must be pursuing a vocational certificate or diploma, associate's, bachelors, masters, doctoral or professional degree, or certificate. The most updated information is always available on the Cobell Scholar homepage and Online Application Student Information System (OASIS), or by contacting IEI.

These are the basic qualifying criterion. IEI staff or affiliates will not tell any potential applicant they are not eligible to receive a Cobell Scholarship without an applicant having a fully completed application on file. Because all information in the first round of the process is self-reported, no documents are required to apply. Therefore, a decision without proper documentation cannot be made. All individuals who meet the above minimum requirements should apply and allow the process to complete to get an official determination of eligibility.

Q: Is there a GPA requirement for a Cobell Scholarship?

A: While there is no minimum GPA requirement, IEI considers the following to be general guidelines to be considered "competitive" for funding purposes.

- Graduate and Professional - - 3.5 or higher, either from undergraduate or previous coursework
- Undergraduate and post-baccalaureate - - 3.25 or higher, either from high school or previous coursework
- Vocational – 2.0 or higher, either from high school or previous coursework.

Applicants with lower GPA's than those listed should still consider applying but should be prepared to provide any explanations and show strengths in other areas. All completed applications are individually reviewed and scored by external professional educators who look beyond the GPA in a holistic review process. Applicants with less competitive GPAs should be able to demonstrate overall success, achievement and a plan for academic improvement or may rank low when reviewed by the selection committee. Vocational applicants are individually reviewed and selected by internal staff on a rolling basis.

Q: Do I need to be a Cobell Settlement Class Member to receive a scholarship?

- A:** No. Neither Cobell Settlement Class membership nor descendancy is required, nor does either guarantee Finalist selection. However, this information is collected for research purposes and may be used as a Finalist selection tiebreaker if needed.
- Q:** **What are the funding amounts; and, who determines the eligibility and amounts for the awards?**
- A:** The Cobell Board of Trustees established and governs the eligibility requirements, oversees the invested funds, and advises the scholarship program administrators regarding eligibility and available scholarship amounts. Each year, the trustees work with the CEO for Indigenous Education, Inc. to evaluate outcomes of prior years to determine eligibility and where to adjust, or make changes, if necessary. This includes measuring the impact of the scholarship award on an applicant's financial aid package. Award amounts are conveyed to the selected Finalists in an email offer letter.
- Q:** **How do I know if my tribe is federally recognized in the United States?**
- A:** All eligible tribes are listed in a drop-down menu in the Applicant Profile in OASIS. If a tribe is not listed, contact IEI. *This list is compiled from the US Congressional Record and verified each year.*
- Q:** **Do you fund descendants of tribal members?**
- A:** IEI does not make offers to descendants or members of US Federally recognized tribes at this time; however, selected Finalists proving $\frac{1}{4}$ or more descent from multiple tribes will be considered after submitting the appropriate documentation(s).
- Q:** **How do I know if I am attending an eligible institution?**
- A:** Without exception, Indigenous Education, Inc.'s scholarship opportunities are only available to individuals attending public or private non-profit institutions. Eligible institutions are listed on the application where applicants select from a drop-down menu in OASIS. If an institution is not listed, please contact IEI to determine if the school should be added to the list or IEI will inform the applicant if the institution is not eligible to receive Cobell Scholarship funds. In addition, institutions must be industry and nationally/regionally accredited.
- Q:** **Does IEI fund individuals who are attending school part-time?**
- A:** It depends. Most applicants must intend to enroll full-time (as determined by the institution), must be degree-seeking, and making progress toward graduation. Selected Finalists will be requested to submit a course registration to verify full-time enrollment when completing the Post-Acceptance process. In some instances, applicants can be considered to enroll part-time, depending on the situation. There is

a section in OASIS for applicants to provide Additional Comments for an explanation and clarification of attendance other than full-time. These circumstances are reviewed separately, and determinations are made on an individual basis. Determinations are not made via phone call or email; they are made only from completed and submitted applications.

Q: If I apply and meet all eligibility criteria, will I be guaranteed a scholarship?

A: Due to a high number of qualified applicants and defined limits on scholarship funds available, there is no guarantee that all applicants who demonstrate full eligibility with a completed scholarship application will be offered or awarded a scholarship. All completed, fully qualified submitted applications are reviewed, scored, and ranked for final determination. Applicants who are selected as Finalists will be awarded only after successfully completing the post-Acceptance and verification process. IEI intends to spend all available scholarship funds each year. If an applicant is not offered a scholarship in the first round, a select group of applicants are placed on a waiting list to make additional offers as funds become available. The applicant can view the Waitlist status (and other statuses) indicated on the application.

Q: By what other means might an applicant be deemed ineligible?

A: There have been several means by which an applicant has been deemed ineligible. Some of the most common include:

- Applicants whose email addresses are invalid may be deemed ineligible until a corrected email address is received.
- Applicants whose email address is not that of the individual applying will be deemed ineligible until a corrected email address is received. Parents of applicants should not be completing the application for their child/ren.
- Applicants attending for-profit institutions will be deemed ineligible.
- Applicants whose tribal enrollment office returns a negative status will be deemed ineligible until additional information is submitted and reviewed.
- Applicants whose name does not match that of submitted documents or the name listed at the institution of choice may be deemed ineligible. It is not possible to match the thousands of received documents with a file under a different name. And tribes and schools cannot match files with our requests if the names don't match. This includes married or maiden names.
- Applicants who attend a different institution than the one listed on the Applicant Profile may be deemed ineligible until current information is submitted and reviewed.
- Applicants applying for an opportunity that is not a match to their degree level will be deemed ineligible for that opportunity and if time allows, will be directed to the correct opportunity.
- Applicants who do not respond to emails or complete "next steps" or other forms of communications from IEI within the clearly stated deadlines, or timely manner may be deemed ineligible until consistent communication is established. Keep in mind that scholarship funds may

be reallocated resulting in the applicant being placed on the waiting list until additional funds become available.

Q: How do I determine if I am eligible for the Cobell Scholarship Vocational Opportunity?

A: The Cobell Scholarship Vocational Opportunity is for any individual who has not yet earned a college degree and is enrolled or will be enrolling in a vocational credential, vocational certificate or occupational license program (not including professional level or post-baccalaureate certifications). Vocational degrees typically are one year or less in duration, certify competency in a specific trade, or provide a license to perform certain occupations. If an applicant is uncertain about this degree level they should check with the institution or review the "What is a Career and Technical Education" Fact Sheet at www.acteonline.org. Vocational programs will be verified prior to making final awards.

NOTES:

Applicants should read all instructions in OASIS when applying. Direct communications with IEI via scholarships@cobellscholar.org are the best way to determine if an applicant may be eligible for a specific opportunity. In most cases, IEI will not inform an applicant that they are not eligible or qualified for any opportunity without a fully complete application on file.

IEI staff cannot be responsible for undelivered email communications and if an applicant has not communicated any changes made prior to any deadline date.