



THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JAN. 30, 2007

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Federal continuing resolution delays Navajo scholarships

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The federal Continuing Budget Resolution, scheduled to last until Feb. 15, has again resulted in disbursements of Navajo Nation Scholarship checks being delayed.

Because the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship and Financial Assistance is funded through a federal Indian Self-Determination Act contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Navajo Nation must wait to receive its scholarship funding.

This is not unusual, said Rose Graham, director of the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship and Financial Assistance.

“Even when there is no continuing resolution, it takes anywhere from two weeks to a month to get BIA monies,” she said.

The Fiscal Year 2007 budget of the Higher Education Grant program is authorized at \$10,712,481. This funds Chief Manuelito Scholarships and need-based financial aid as well as personnel and operation of the five (5) ONNSFA Agency offices and administration, Ms. Graham said.

On or before Feb. 15, the Higher Education Grant Program will either receive another partial allocation or the full 2007 budget.

In anticipation of funding delays, Navajo scholarship office counselors were authorized to make commitments with award letters once funds were depleted to avoid late fees, loss of courses or withdrawals.

“In many cases, we have good rapport with financial aid offices that will post estimated awards on their system, which allows charges to be processed against the estimated funds,” Ms. Graham said.

“However, in most cases, Financial Aid Offices are imposing deadlines on students requiring them to pay their bills on time.”

Because the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship and Financial Assistance is funded through a Indian Self-Determination Act contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, U. S. Department of Interior, the Navajo Nation is waiting to receive its scholarship funding.

Of the FY 2007 budget, \$2,007,907 has been received as a percentage of the full budget authorized by the Continuing Resolution. Another \$2,007,907 will be received shortly.

BIA-funded scholarship money was depleted on Dec. 12, and ONNSFA issued award letters up to \$3.4 million. Some \$1,828,482.03 was covered by the recent drawdown of \$2 million, and \$1,662,986 will be covered by the deficit spending authorization.

Currently, there is \$1,662,986 worth of scholarship payments committed but not yet paid. The Office of the President and Vice President authorized deficit expenditures for scholarship payments in the amount of \$1,662,986.00. The payments are now being processed. Checks should be in the mail no later than Friday, Feb. 2.

Navajo Nation President Shirley recently announced that the scholarship office will soon have the capacity to send scholarship payments electronically to colleges and universities rather than manual checks. This will speed up the process of getting funds to our students.