



News Release

For Immediate Release: February 20, 2020

Contact: Carolyn Calvin
(928) 871-7705

Navajo Nation Advances Funds to ONNSFA for Spring 2020 Awards

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance (ONNSFA) today announced that awarding of scholarships and financial assistance for Spring 2020 resumed today with \$2 million advanced from Navajo Nation funds.

Awards for Spring 2020 were on hold due to a delay in distribution of federal funds to tribes as the Dept. of Interior reorganizes the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). The BIE is assuming direct responsibility of Indian Education Programs, which includes the Higher Education Scholarship program.

President Jonathan Nez authorized the advance of \$2 million as the Navajo Nation awaits the remainder of FY 2020 appropriations from the Dept. of Interior. The ONNSFA currently receives federal funding for scholarships and financial assistance through a P.L. 93-638 contract with the BIA.

The \$2 million advance will allow the ONNSFA to finish awards for the Spring/Winter term. A total of 9,402 applications were submitted for the 2020 Spring/Winter term and 4,095 students have received awards to date.

“We understand students’ concerns about the delay in the awarding process,” said Rose Graham, ONNSFA director. “However, our office cannot make any commitments until funding is in place.”

“Students are already several weeks into the Spring semester. We had been in touch with BIA officials asking that the release of federal funds be expedited as thousands of students are in danger of being dropped from classes for non-payment of tuition and fees,” Ms. Graham said. “It’s unfortunate so many students experience hardship when federal funding is held up at the national level.”

The ONNSFA is working on securing support for Congressional legislation to authorize forward funding of the Bureau of Indian Education Higher Education Grant Program to prevent funding delays. Forward funding of the grant would make funds available on July 1st of each year. The ONNSFA would then be able to provide awards to students before their school year begins.