



Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



ONNSFA Statistical Profile

Calendar Year	2022	2023
No. of Students Requesting Awards: (Students are counted once whether they submit one or more applications during a calendar year.)	11,628	13,404
No. of Students Receiving Awards: (Students are counted once whether they receive one or more awards during the calendar year.)	5,824	6,264
Percentage of Students Funded: (The total number of students awarded from the total number of applicants. Applicants are counted once.)	50%	47%
No. of Students Denied:	5,804	7,140
Denial Ratio of ONNSFA Applicants:	50%	53%
Enrollment Status of Recipients:		
Undergraduate	81%	81%
Graduate	19%	19%
No. of Awards by Funding Source:		
Federal	4,727	4,719
Navajo Nation, Trust, Corporate	3,379	3,853
Total	8,106	8,572
Total Federal Fund Awards to:		
Need-Based Students	\$5,588,290	\$6,235,018
Chief Manuelito Scholars	7,845,102	6,848,695
Grand Total	\$13,433,392	\$13,083,713
Chief Manuelito Awards:		
Total No. of Student Awards	1,652	1,457
Total Expended From All Sources	\$8,550,937	\$7,932,228
Percentage From All Sources	37%	33%
Total Funding to:		
Undergraduate Students	16,984,093	17,454,685
Graduate Students	5,880,706	6,375,032
Grand Total	\$22,864,799	\$23,829,717
Average Award to:		
Undergraduate Students	\$2,597	\$2,516
Graduate Students	\$3,758	\$3,899
No. of Students Awarded:		
Undergraduate Students	4,724	5,093
Graduate Students	1,100	1,171

Apply online: www.onnsfa.org

DEADLINES TO APPLY:

2024-2025 Academic Year - **June 25, 2024**

2025 Spring/Winter Term - **November 25, 2024**

Financial Need-Based Awards

(\$1,000 to \$2,500 per semester)

Need-based funding is provided to students who demonstrate financial need according to the Financial Need Analysis (FNA) form submitted on their behalf by the school of attendance. Students in this category are deemed not to have sufficient personal or family resources to meet a college's or university's cost of attendance (e.g. tuition, books and housing). Awards of up to \$2,500 per semester or \$5,000 per academic year are provided to students based upon their individual need assessment. Primary funding sources of need-based awards are PL 93-638 funds and Navajo Nation Funds.

No-Need-Based Awards

(\$1,000 per semester)

No-need-based funding is provided to students, who are deemed to have enough resources to meet the cost of attendance (e.g. tuition, books and housing) at a college or university of their choice.

Chief Manuelito Scholarships

(\$3,500 per semester)

Merit-based scholarships are provided students, who achieve a high grade point average and a commensurate ACT or SAT college test score. Students are required to complete courses in Navajo Language (1 unit) and Navajo Government (½ unit) prior to the application deadline to be considered for this scholarship. Full-time undergraduate students may also qualify for the Chief Manuelito scholarship under the 24/3 rule by completing 24 credit hours of college-level courses with a 3.0 GPA. The Chief Manuelito Scholarship is based upon the GPA of college-level courses. Students seeking an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) or Certificate are ineligible. The scholarship is not automatically renewed and students must re-apply each year for continued consideration.

Graduate Student Awards

(\$2,500 to \$5,000 per semester for 9-12 credit hours)

Grant awards are provided to full-time graduate students.

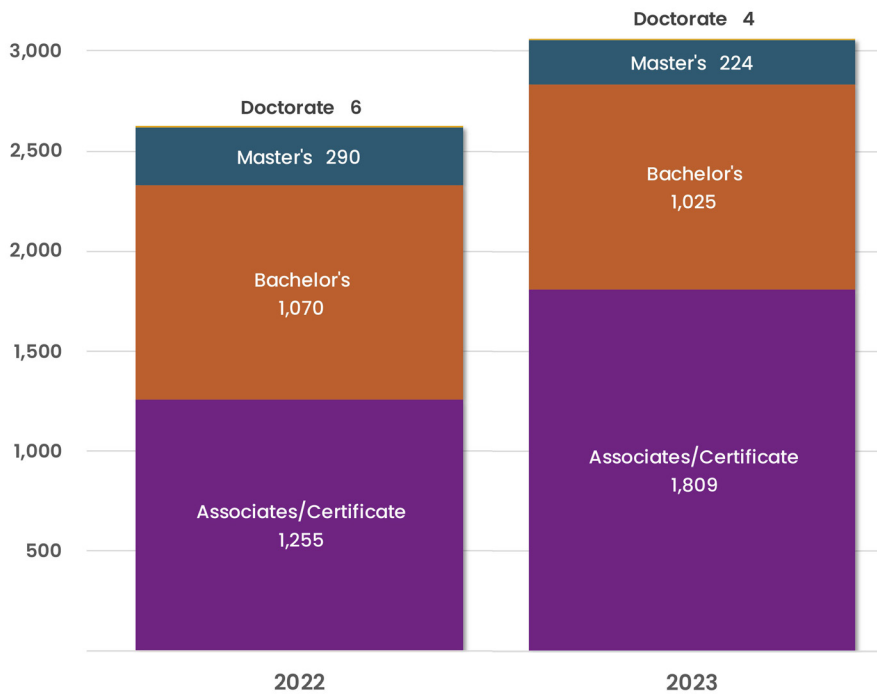
Part-Time Undergraduate and Graduate Awards

(\$250 to \$750 per semester depending on course level)

Funding is available for eligible part-time undergraduate and graduate students. Part-time application requirements and award amounts vary.

Degrees Attained/Pursued by ONNSFA Recipients

3,062 ONNSFA Award Recipients Attain College Degrees or Certificates



The number of degrees earned by ONNSFA award recipients in the Calendar Year 2023 increased by 441 from those earned in 2022. A total of 3,062 students served by the ONNSFA attained degrees at various levels in 2023 compared to the 2,621 degrees achieved in 2022.

Data collected from 196 schools, primarily in the Four-Corners area, showed that 3,062 award recipients attained a college degree or certificate in 2023.

Approximately 1,809 recipients, or 59 percent, earned an Associate degree or certificate. Another 33 percent, 1,025 recipients, earned a Bachelor's degree, 7 percent, or 224 recipients, earned a Master's degree, and less than 1 percent, or four recipients, earned a Doctoral or professional degree.

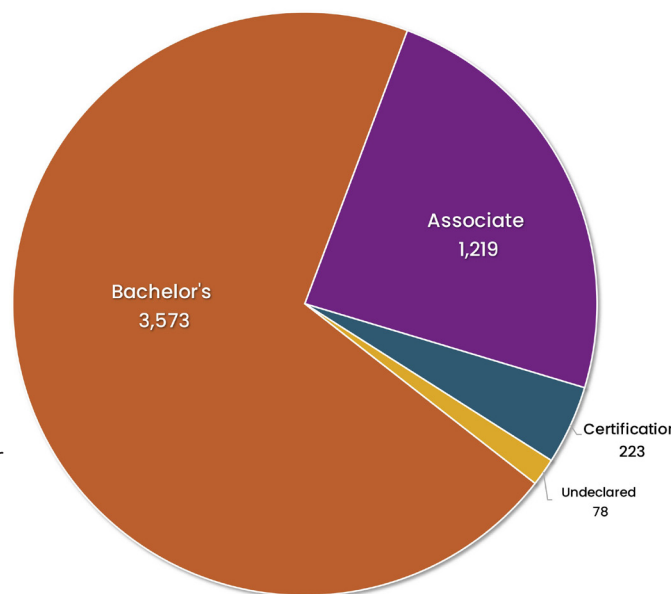
The number of degrees attained is based on graduation data within the ONNSFA's Empower database. The institutions where award recipients earned a college degree or certificate are among the top 20 schools attended by all students awarded. Data was extracted from graduation programs obtained by ONNSFA staff. The ONNSFA continually seeks graduation data.

Levels of Degrees Sought by Undergraduate and Graduate Students in 2023

In Calendar Year 2023, 6,264 students received awards from the ONNSFA. Eighty-one percent were undergraduates, and 19 percent were graduate students.

Undergraduates

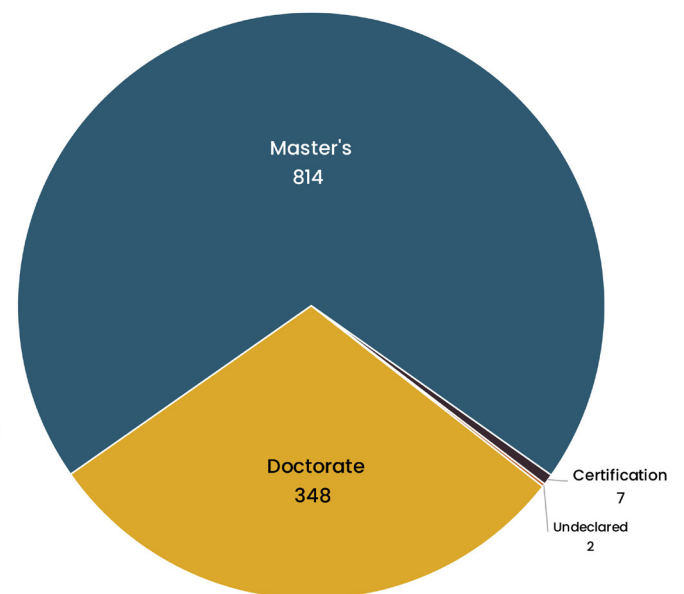
Approximately 70 percent of undergraduates, or 3,573 students receiving awards, were seeking a Bachelor's degree. Another 24 percent, or 1,219 students, pursued an Associate degree, and 4 percent, or 223, sought a Certificate. Two percent, or 78 undergraduates, were undeclared.



Graduates

Approximately 69 percent, or 814 graduate students, sought a Master's degree. Another 30 percent, or 348 students, pursued a doctoral or professional degree.

Less than 1 or 7 students percent sought a Certificate. Two graduate students were undeclared.



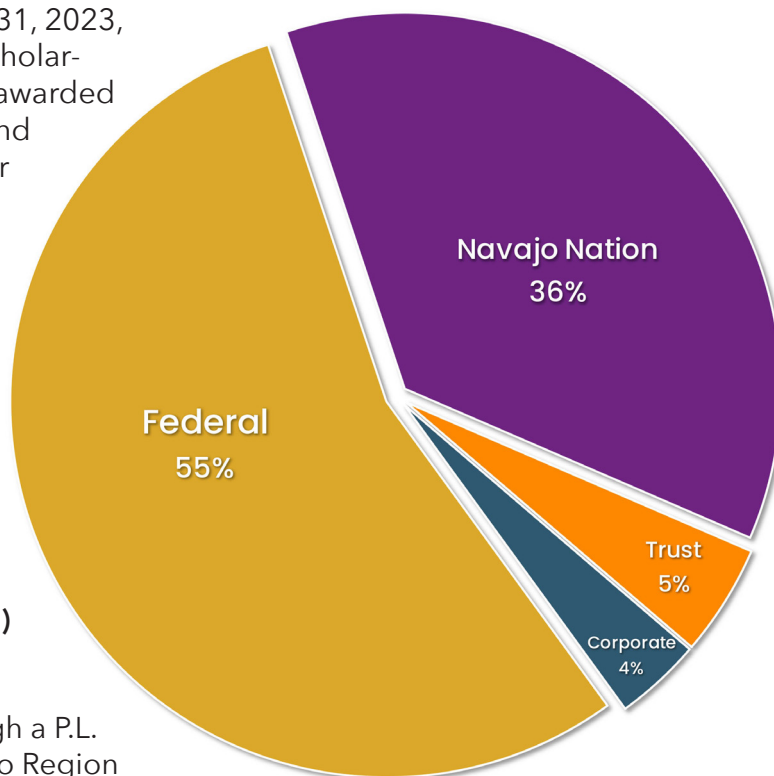
	# of Students	%
Associate	1,219	24%
Bachelor's	3,573	70%
Certificate	223	4%
Undeclared	78	2%
Total	5,093	100%

	# of Students	%
Master's	814	69%
Doctorate	348	30%
Certificate	7	< 1%
Undeclared	2	< 1%
Total	1,171	100%

2023 Calendar Year Funding Sources

ONNSFA Financial Aid, Scholarship Awards Totaled \$23.8 Million in 2023

From January 1 to December 31, 2023, the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship and Financial Assistance awarded \$23,829,717 in scholarships and financial aid. The total number of students receiving awards from the four funding sources equated to 6,264. The total number of awards made from all funding sources amounted to 8,572. The chart to the right illustrates the proportion of each funding source to the total amount administered by the ONNSFA.



Federal Funds (BIA P.L. 93-638)

Total: \$13,083,713

No. of Awards: 4,719

Federal funds, provided through a P.L. 93-638 contract with the Navajo Region Bureau of Indian Affairs, comprised about 55 percent of the funds awarded by the Navajo Scholarship Office. Federal funds are used to award undergraduate students with financial need as determined by the student's Financial Need Analysis and for merit-based awards to Chief Manuelito Scholars.

Navajo Nation General Funds

Total: \$8,716,997

No. of Awards: 3,037

Navajo Nation General Funds comprised about 36 percent of scholarship funds. Annual appropriations of \$3.5 million as mandated by the Diné Higher Education Grant Fund and proceeds from a portion of Navajo Nation Sales Taxes are included in this category. These funds are used to provide awards to graduate students, undergraduates, and students enrolled in the Navajo Teacher Education program.

Trust Funds

Total: \$1,141,935

No. of Awards: 338

Interest revenue from trust funds comprised about 5 percent of funds awarded by ONNSFA in 2023.

Policies for trust funds, including the Graduate Trust Fund, the Navajo Engineering & Construction Authority Trust Fund, the Vocational Education Trust Fund, and Tucson Electric Fund, stipulate that "10 percent of the fund [market value] shall be used as scholarship and financial assistance." Interest revenue from these sources fluctuates from year to year based on market value.

Corporate Funds

Total: \$887,071

No. of Awards: 478

Contributions from corporations comprised about 4 percent of the total funds awarded in 2023. Leases with companies including Chevron Mining, Inc. and Peabody Energy include a provision that companies contribute to the scholarship fund. Contributions from private individuals to the Diné Scholarship Annual Fund are also included in this category.

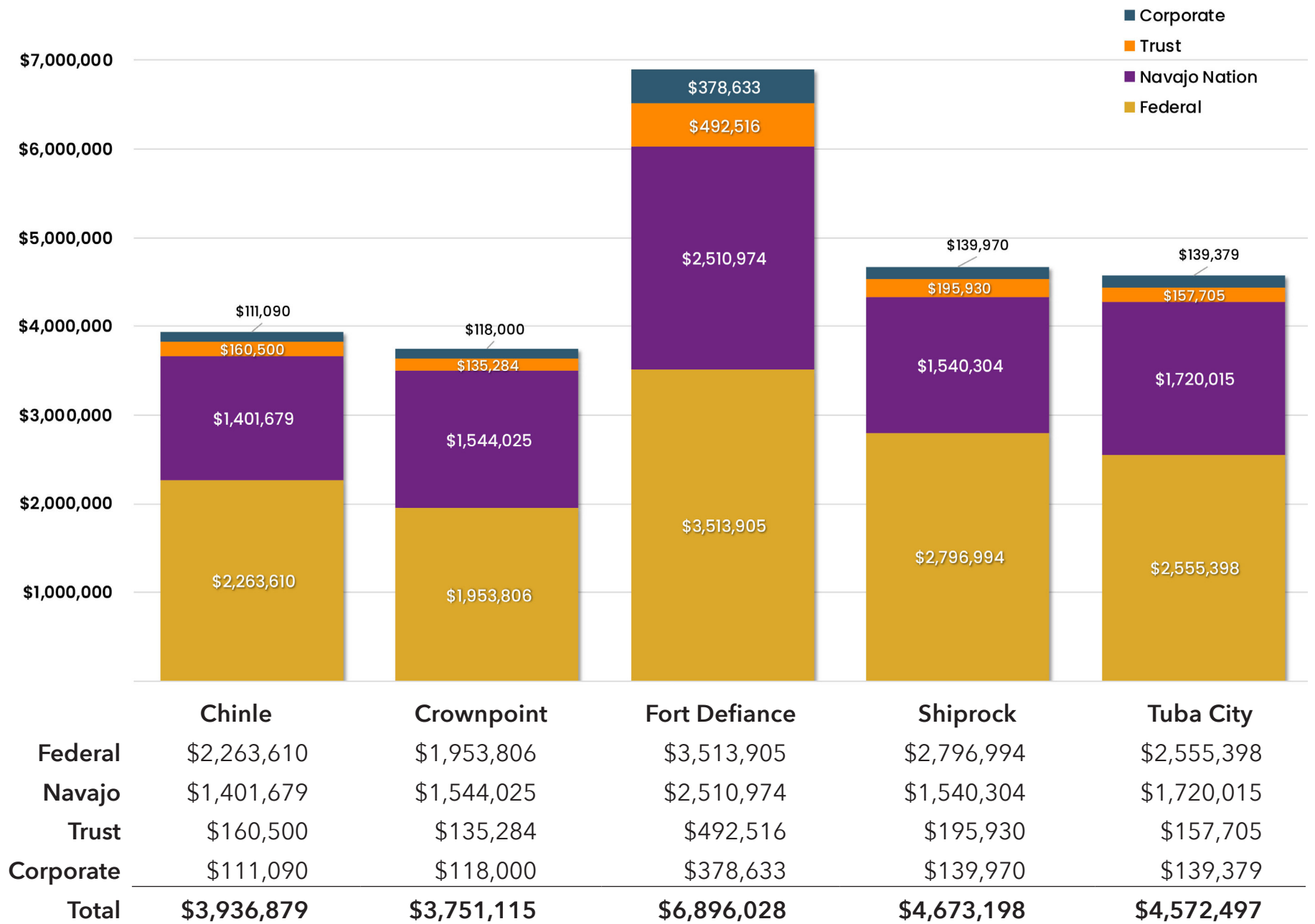
2023 Awards Breakdown

2023 Awards Breakdown	
Navajo Nation Funds	\$ 8,716,997
Navajo Nation Grant	2,882,325
Sales Tax Revenue	1,902,279
UA College of Law	
Navajo Technical University	
Chief Manuelito Scholarships	
Need-Based	
Part-Time Summer	
Vocational	1,604,518
Teacher Education	381,911
Chief Manuelito Scholarships	808,167
Need-Based	949,203
Part-Time	
Graduate	
No-Need (Sales Tax)	49,002
Fielding University	20,000
UA College of Medicine	53,556
UA College of Veterinary Medicine	66,036
Federal Funds	\$13,083,713
Chief Manuelito Scholarships	6,848,695
Need-Based	5,903,097
Part-Time	196,500
Vocational	135,421
Trust Funds	\$ 1,141,935
Navajo Nation Graduate Trust	538,717
Vocational Trust Fund	179,519
Arizona State University Law	172,843
NECA Trust	104,648
University of New Mexico Law	90,428
Tucson Electric	55,780
Corporate Funds	\$ 887,071
Chevron P&M (No-Need)	331,862
Diné Scholarship Annual Fund	62,309
Peabody Energy	420,906
Sussman	57,879
Navajo Nation Oil & Gas, Co.	10,000
Dominion Energy/Four Corners	750
El Paso Natural Gas	3,366
Total All Sources:	\$23,829,717

Note: The total number of students awarded from all funding sources (6,264) differs from the total number of awards (8,572) as students may have received awards from a combination of funding sources.

Funding Activity by Agency in 2023

Award Totals by Agency



Number of Awards by Agency

	Chinle	Crownpoint	Fort Defiance	Shiprock	Tuba City
Federal	827	735	1,239	1,016	902
Navajo	515	565	793	567	597
Trust	58	47	104	74	55
Corporate	67	72	169	90	80
Total	1,467	1,419	2,305	1,747	1,634

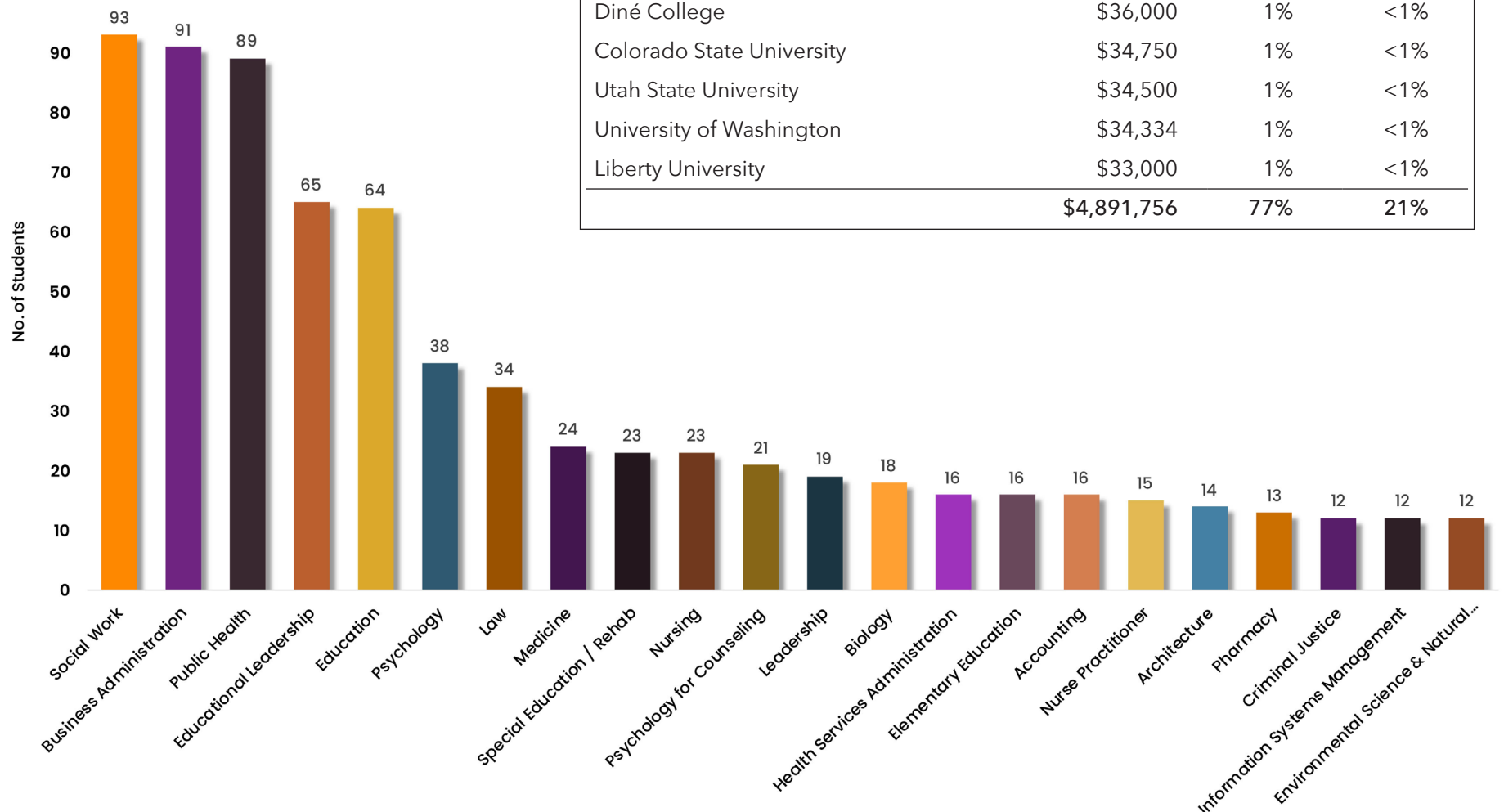
Top Graduate Majors & Institutions

\$5.8 Million Awarded to 1,100 Graduate Students

In 2023, the ONNSFA awarded \$6,375,032 to 1,171 graduate students attending 200 institutions. Students attending the top 20 schools received 77 percent, \$4,891,756, of all graduate funding. Grand Canyon University received the largest amount with \$905,089 or 14 percent of graduate funding. Students at the University of Arizona received \$740,076 or 12 percent of graduate funding.

Graduate Majors

Sixty-two percent of all graduate students declared majors in one of 22 disciplines. Eight percent, 93 students, majored in Social Work. Another 8 percent, 91 students, majored in Business Administration. Eighty-nine students, sought Public Health degrees. Six percent, 65 students, majored in Educational Leadership. Another five percent, 64 graduate students, majored in Education.



Institution	Total Awards to Graduates	% of Grad Funding	% of Total Funding
Grand Canyon University	\$905,089	14%	4%
University of Arizona	\$740,076	12%	3%
Arizona State University	\$720,343	11%	3%
University of New Mexico	\$632,409	10%	3%
Northern Arizona University	\$544,105	9%	2%
NM Highlands University	\$377,750	6%	2%
Fielding Graduate University	\$139,000	2%	1%
University of Phoenix	\$130,000	2%	1%
New Mexico State University	\$103,094	2%	<1%
Western New Mexico University	\$85,000	1%	<1%
Navajo Technical University	\$84,250	1%	<1%
University of Arizona - College of Medicine	\$73,556	1%	<1%
University of Utah	\$72,750	1%	<1%
University of Oklahoma	\$69,750	1%	<1%
University of California - Berkeley	\$42,000	1%	<1%
Diné College	\$36,000	1%	<1%
Colorado State University	\$34,750	1%	<1%
Utah State University	\$34,500	1%	<1%
University of Washington	\$34,334	1%	<1%
Liberty University	\$33,000	1%	<1%
	\$4,891,756	77%	21%

Top Undergraduate Majors & Institutions

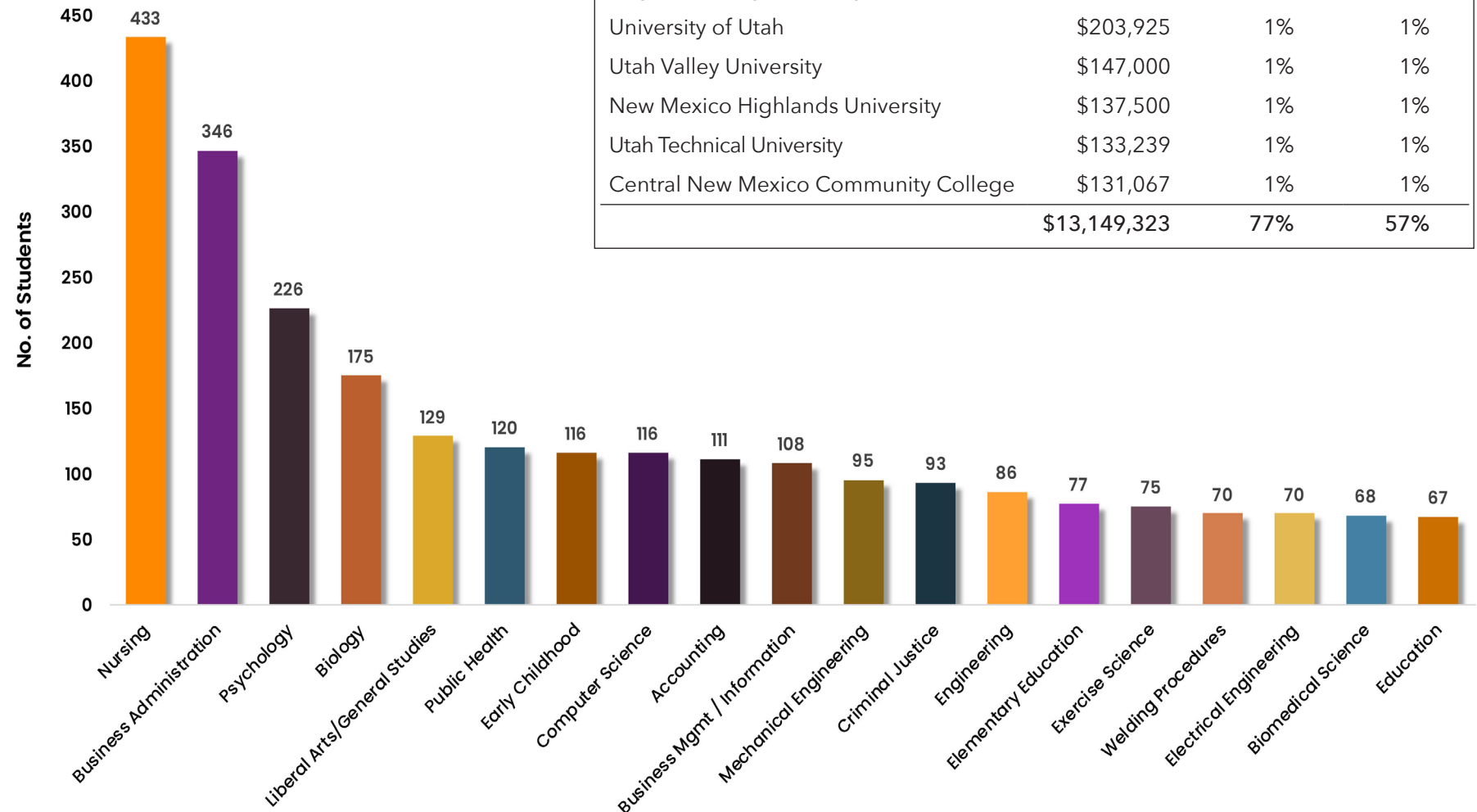
\$17.4 Million Awarded to 5,093 Undergraduates

In 2023, the ONNSFA awarded \$17.4 million to 5,093 undergraduates attending 447 colleges and universities throughout the United States. A majority of students chose to attend schools in the Four-Corners area.

Students at Northern Arizona University received \$1,745,550, or 10 percent of undergraduate funding and 7 percent of all ONNSFA funding. Those attending Arizona State University received \$1,711,585, 11 percent of undergraduate funding and 7 percent of all funding.

Undergraduate Majors

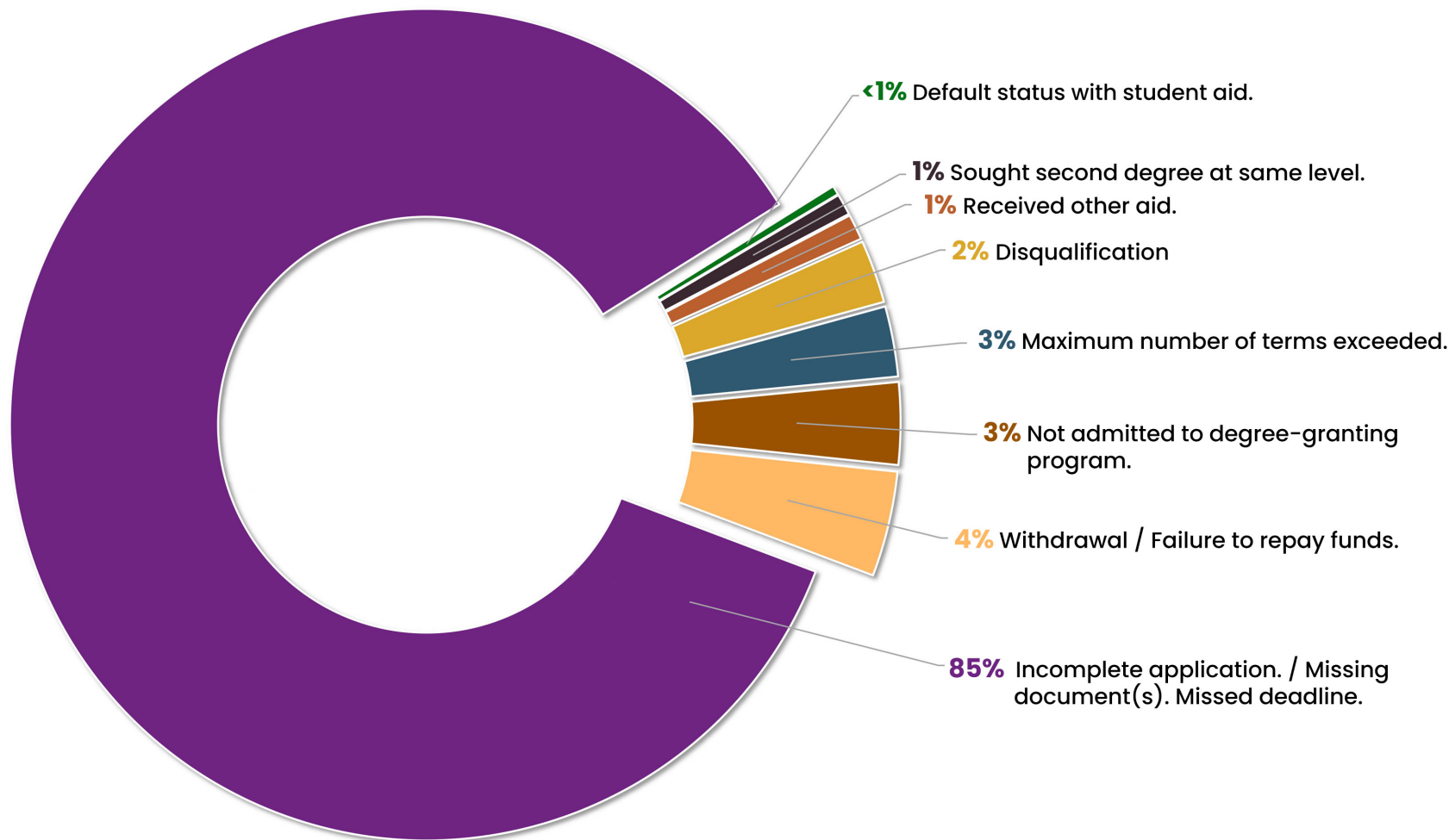
Fifty-one percent, or 2,581, of all undergraduate students, declared majors in one of 20 disciplines. A total of 433 undergraduates chose to major in Nursing, 346 in Business Administration, 226 in Psychology, 175 in Biology, and 129 in Liberal Arts/General Studies.



Institution	Total Awards to Undergraduates	% of Undergrad Funding	% of Total Funding
Northern Arizona University	\$1,745,550	10%	7%
Arizona State University	\$1,728,696	10%	7%
University of New Mexico	\$1,482,972	8%	6%
Fort Lewis College	\$1,477,876	8%	6%
Diné College	\$1,136,463	7%	5%
University of Arizona	\$949,070	5%	4%
Navajo Technical University	\$923,056	5%	4%
San Juan College	\$746,633	4%	3%
Grand Canyon University	\$551,842	3%	2%
University of New Mexico - Gallup	\$443,770	3%	2%
New Mexico State University	\$441,674	3%	2%
Utah State University - Blanding	\$374,875	2%	2%
University of Phoenix	\$271,652	2%	1%
Coconino Community College	\$255,080	1%	1%
Brigham Young University	\$230,204	1%	1%
University of Utah	\$203,925	1%	1%
Utah Valley University	\$147,000	1%	1%
New Mexico Highlands University	\$137,500	1%	1%
Utah Technical University	\$133,239	1%	1%
Central New Mexico Community College	\$131,067	1%	1%
	\$13,149,323	77%	57%

2023 ONNSFA Denials

Primary Reasons for Denials: Incomplete Applications, Missed Deadlines



7,140 Applications Denied

In Calendar Year 2023, 13,404 applications were submitted to the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance (ONNSFA). Approximately 47 percent, 6,264 applicants, received awards. The remaining 7,140 applications were denied for varied reasons, including::

Incomplete Application/Missed Deadlines

Eighty-five percent (6,095 students) submitted incomplete applications or failed to provide all required documents by established deadlines.

Withdrawal/Failure to Repay Funds

Four percent or 292 applicants were denied due to outstanding debts to the ONNSFA arising from withdrawing from school without justification. Applicants with outstanding debts are disqualified.

Not Admitted Into a Degree Program

A total of 228, or three percent, were denied due to not gaining admission to a degree program. Graduate applicants must submit a regular Letter of Acceptance to the graduate program of study and a regular Letter of Admission from the graduate university.

Maximum Number of Terms Exceeded

Three percent, or 195 applicants, were denied due to exceeding the maximum number of terms, which generally are:

- **Undergraduates:** Ten semesters or fifteen quarters;
- **Graduates:** Five semesters or seven quarters;
- **Two-Year Institutions:** Five academic terms, sixty-four semester credit hours, or an equivalent number of quarter or trimester credit hours.

Disqualification

Three percent, or 175 applicants, were denied due to violation of the ONNSFA's policies, including not maintaining the required grade point average, repeating courses, or falsifying information.

Received Other Aid

One percent, or 71 applicants, were denied due to receiving aid from other sources that met or exceeded their financial need.

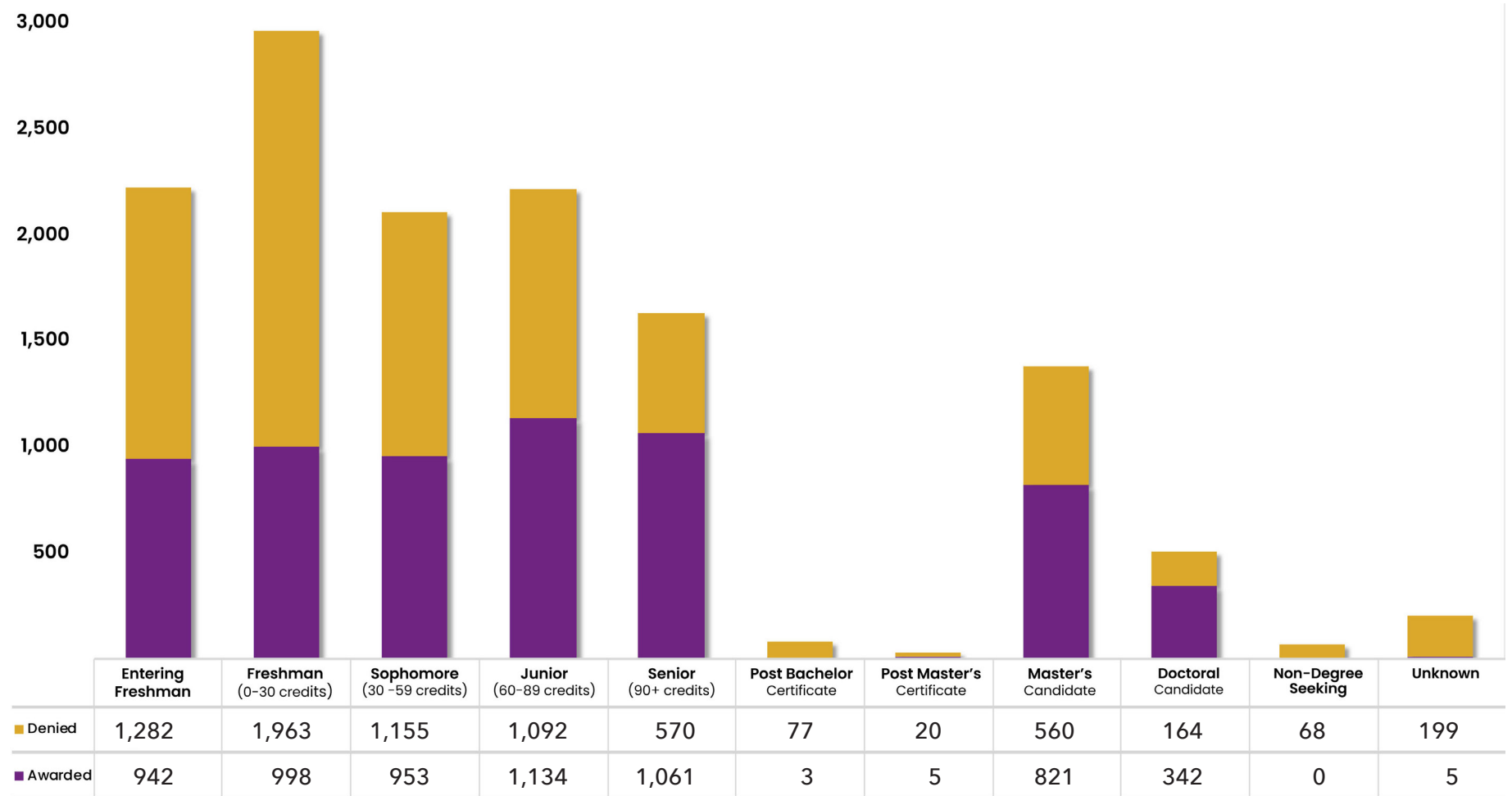
Seeking a Second Degree at Same Level

One percent, or 59 applicants, were denied as they requested additional funds toward a second degree at the same level.

Default Status With Student Aid

Less than 1 percent of applicants (25) were denied due to default status. Students who default on a federal student loan are ineligible for additional federal student aid.

Awarded/Denied Students by Class Levels



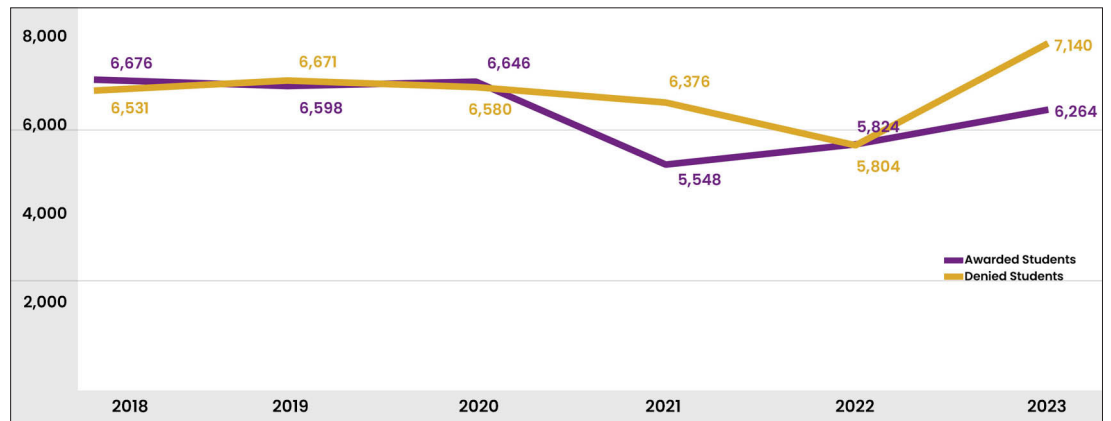
Application Submission Rate Rises by 15%; Approximately 53% of Applications Denied

The Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance received 15.3 percent more applications (13,404) in 2023 than the previous year (11,628). The denial rate increased to 53 percent from 50 percent in 2022.

Freshman applicants (0-30 credits) submitted the highest number of applications with 2,961 (22 percent). Approximately 66 percent (1,963) of those were denied, and 34 percent (998) received awards.

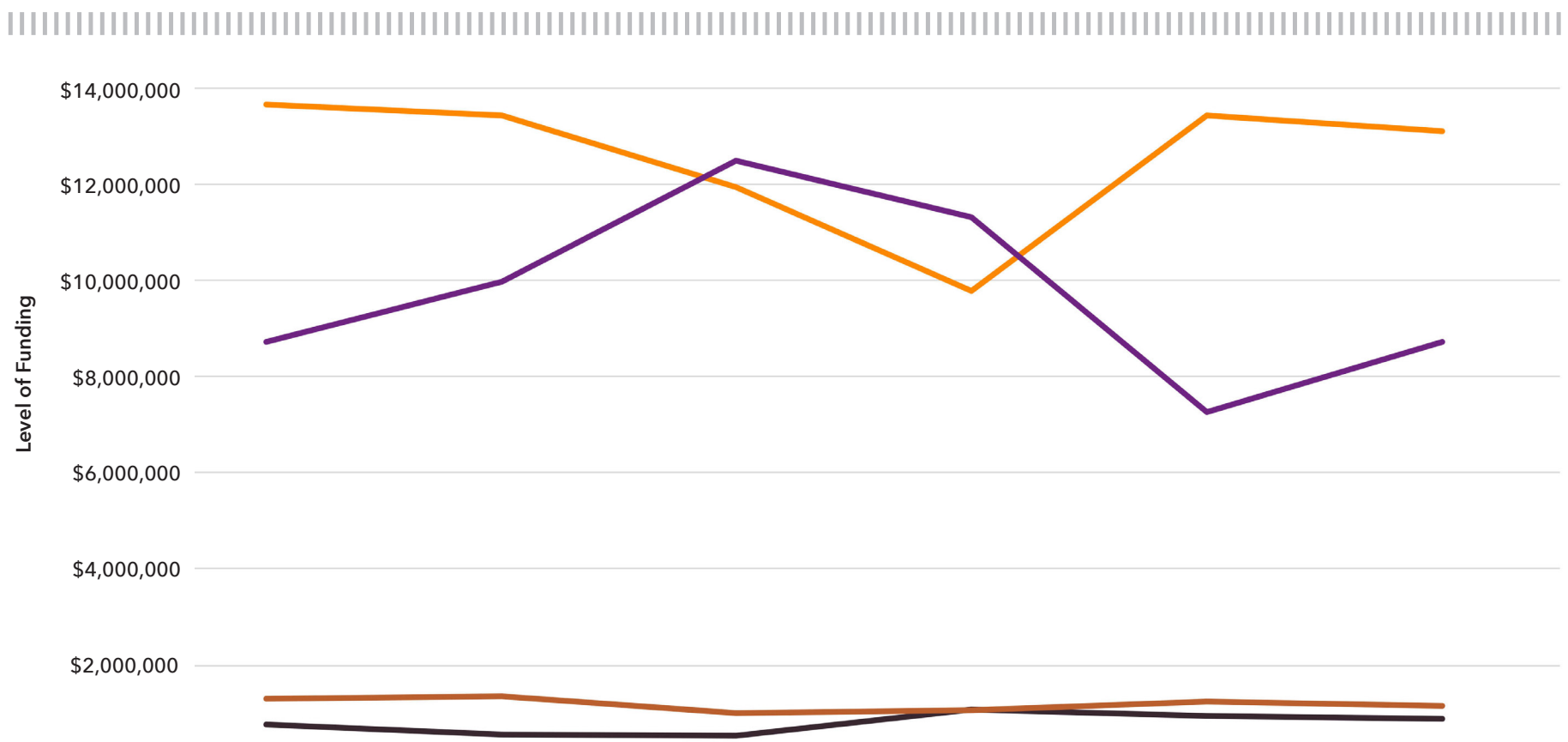
Students with Junior status (60-89 credits) submitted 17 percent (2,216) of applications. A total of 1,082 applications were denied (49 percent), and 1,134 received awards (51 percent).

Senior status students (90+ credits) submitted 12 percent (1,631) of applications. Of those, 1,061 (65 percent) received awards and 570 were denied (35 percent). Doctoral candidates submitted 4 percent (506) of all applications. A total of 68 percent (342) received awards, and 164 were denied.



Year	Total No. Applicants	Awarded Students	Denied Students	% Awarded	% Denied	% Change (No. of Applicants)
2018	13,207	6,676	6,531	51%	49%	
2019	13,269	6,598	6,671	50%	50%	.4%
2020	13,226	6,646	6,580	50%	50%	-.3%
2021	11,924	5,548	6,376	47%	53%	-10%
2022	11,628	5,824	5,804	50%	50%	-2.5%
2023	13,404	6,264	7,140	47%	53%	15.3%

ONNSFA Funding From 2018-2023



	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Federal	\$13,647,552 56%	\$13,414,550 53%	\$11,917,270 46%	\$9,774,534 42%	\$13,433,392 59%	\$13,083,713 55%
Navajo Nation	\$8,710,026 36%	\$9,964,989 39%	\$12,480,928 48%	\$11,293,430 48%	\$7,257,149 32%	\$8,716,997 36%
Corporate	\$751,889 3%	\$542,606 2%	\$531,392 2%	\$1,076,076 5%	\$939,905 4%	\$887,071 4%
Trust	\$1,288,322 5%	\$1,350,787 5%	\$1,002,686 4%	\$1,056,558 5%	\$1,234,353 5%	\$1,141,935 5%
Total	\$24,397,789	\$25,274,952	\$25,932,276	\$23,200,598	\$22,864,799	\$23,829,717

Federal Funds Are Primary Source of Funding for ONNSFA Recipients in 2023

In 2023, the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance awarded about \$23.8 million to 6,264 students.

Federal funds, provided through a P.L. 93-638 contract with the Navajo Region Bureau of Indian Affairs, comprised about 55 percent of the funds awarded in 2023.

Federal funds are primarily used to award undergraduate students with financial need as determined by the student's Financial Need Analysis and for merit-based awards to Chief Manuelito Scholars.

In 2020 and 2021, Navajo Nation funds surpassed federal funding amounts. In 2023, Navajo Nation funding increased to about \$8.7 million from \$7.25 million in 2022.

Navajo Nation funding includes annual ap-

propriations of \$3.5 million as mandated by the Diné Higher Education Grant Fund and proceeds from a portion of Navajo Nation Sales tax revenues earmarked for scholarships.

Legislation passed in recent years increased the number of programs that receive a portion of sales tax revenue and impacted amounts available for scholarships.

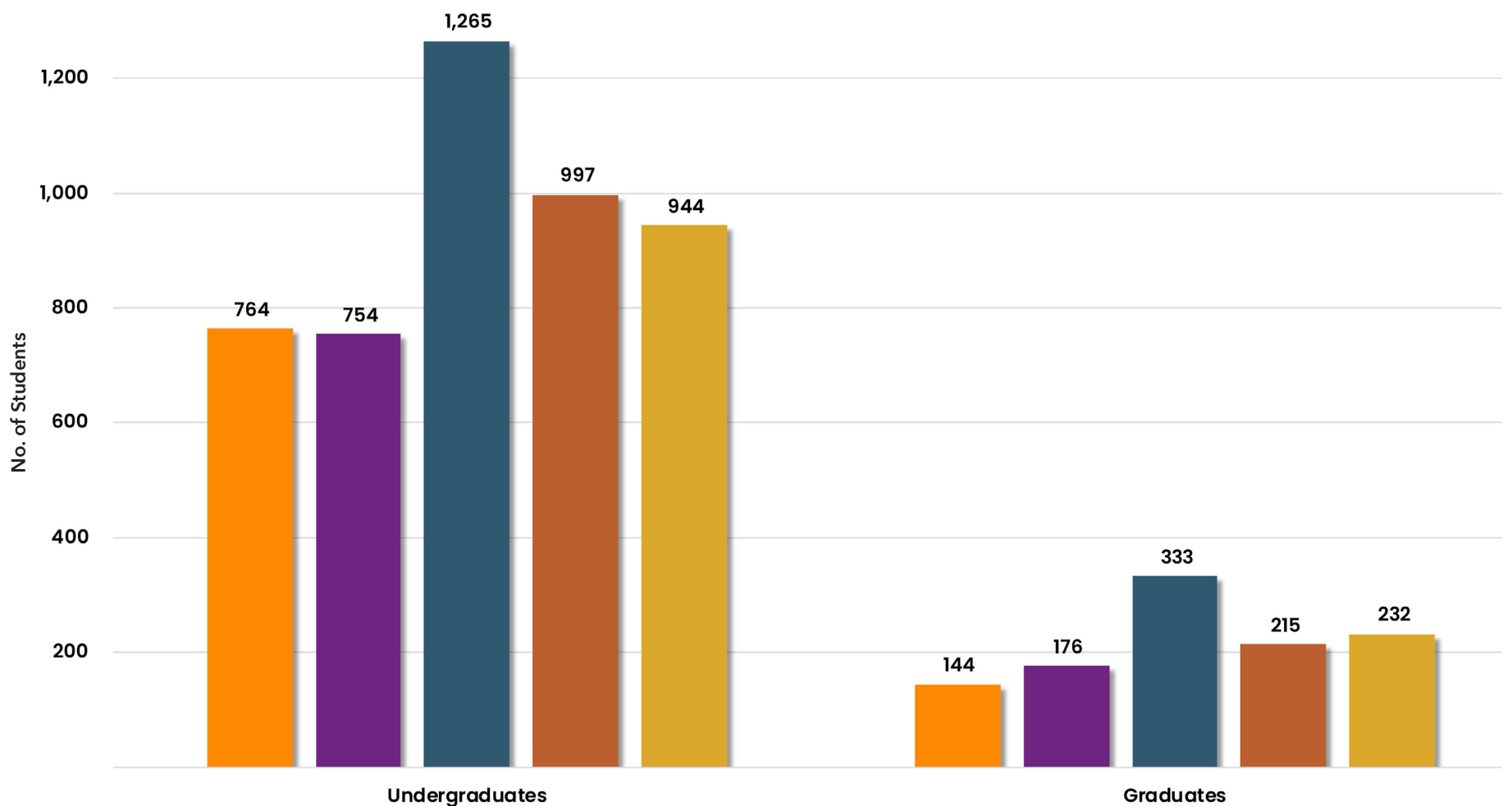
Revenues from the Navajo Nation's trust funds declined slightly to \$1.1 million from \$1.2 million in 2022. Policies for trust funds, including the Graduate Trust Fund, the Navajo Engineering & Construction Authority Trust Fund, the Vocational Education Trust Fund, and Tucson Electric Fund, stipulate that "10 percent of the fund [market value]

shall be used as scholarship and financial assistance." Interest revenue from these sources fluctuates from year to year based on market value.

Corporate funding, which comprised about 4 percent of the total funds awarded in 2023, fell slightly from 2022 levels to \$887,071. Leases with companies including Chevron Mining, Inc. and Peabody Energy include a provision that companies contribute to the scholarship fund.

Contributions from private individuals to the Diné Scholarship Annual Fund are also included in this category. Private individuals continue to make generous contributions for scholarships. In some instances, contributions are made in memory of loved ones with strong ties to the Navajo Nation.

Students Awarded by Agency/Class Level



6,264 Applicants Receive Awards; Ft. Defiance Agency Issued Awards to 27% of All Applicants in 2023

In 2023, 13,404 undergraduate and graduate students submitted applications for financial aid to the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance. Of those, 6,264 students received a total of 8,223 awards.

As illustrated in the graph above, the Fort Defiance Agency office awarded 1,672 applicants, or 27 percent of all students receiving awards, with the most at the undergraduate (1,327) and graduate (345) levels. Two agency offices - Shiprock and Tuba City - issued awards to approximately 21 and 19 percent of the total number of students awarded.

The Shiprock Agency office issued 1,080 undergraduate and 208 graduate awards, totaling 1,288. The Tuba City Agency office provided 1,183 awards to 958 undergraduates and 225 graduates.

The Crownpoint and Chinle Agency offices each issued awards to 17 percent of 2023 applicants. The Crownpoint office awarded

Agency Office	No. of Undergraduates Awarded	No. of Graduates Awarded	Total
Chinle	914	173	1,087
Crownpoint	814	220	1,034
Fort Defiance	1,327	345	1,672
Shiprock	1,080	208	1,288
Tuba City	958	225	1,183
	5,093	1,171	6,264

814 undergraduates and 220 graduates, totaling 1,034. The Chinle Agency awarded 1,087 students, including 914 undergraduates and 173 graduates.

Navajo Nation funds, federal funds, corporate funds, and trust fund interest are used to make awards. Fifty-five percent of awards (4,719) were sourced from federal funds. Navajo Nation funds provided 36 percent (3,037) of all awards. Corporate funds funded 4 percent (478) of all awards, and Trust Fund interest funded 5 percent of all awards (338).

Student Awards (by Chapter)

Chapter Affiliation

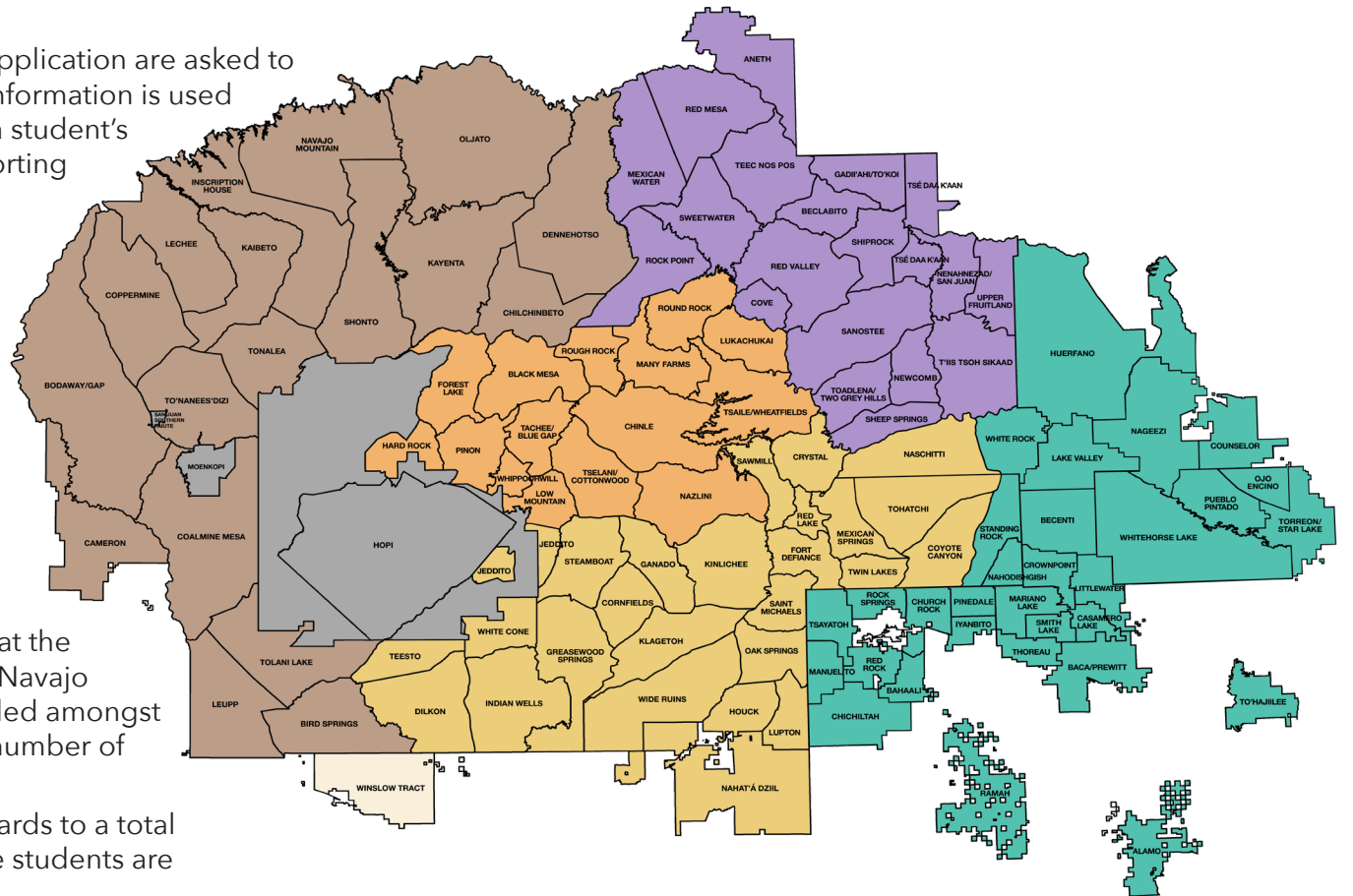
Students submitting an ONNSFA application are asked to state their chapter affiliation. This information is used to determine which agency office a student's file will be assigned to and for reporting purposes.

Choosing a Chapter

On occasion, students inquire about which of the Navajo Nation's 110 chapters they should state on the application. We encourage students to consider the chapter nearest to their residence or the chapter at which their parents are registered to vote.

Students, who become registered voters on the Navajo Nation, have an opportunity to elect leadership at the chapter and national levels. Many Navajo Nation services and funds are divided amongst the 110 chapters based upon the number of registered voters and population.

In 2023, the ONNSFA provided awards to a total of 6,264 students. The chapters the students are affiliated with are:



Ft. Defiance Agency **1,646 Students**

- Cornfields - 30
- Coyote Canyon - 69
- Crystal - 50
- Dilkon - 64
- Ft. Defiance - 348
- Ganado - 70
- Greasewood Springs - 41
- Houck - 48
- Indian Wells - 34
- Jeddito - 48
- Kinlichee - 55
- Klagetoh - 40
- Low Mountain - 23
- Lupton - 21
- Mexican Springs - 42
- Nahata Dziil - 29
- Naschitti - 70
- Oak-Pine Springs - 39
- Red Lake - 32
- Sawmill - 61
- St. Michaels - 148
- Steamboat - 43
- Teestoh - 57
- Tohatchi - 57

(Ft. Defiance Agency)

- Twin Lakes - 57
- White Cone - 38
- Wide Ruins - 32

Crownpoint Agency **1,127 Students**

- Alamo - 16
- Baca/Haystack - 27
- Baahaali - 38
- Becenti - 36
- Casamero Lake - 17
- Chichiltah - 37
- Church Rock - 97
- Counselor - 16
- Crownpoint - 193
- Huerfano - 49
- Iyanbito - 29
- Lake Valley - 17
- Littlewater - 19
- Manuelito - 34
- Mariano Lake - 21
- Nageezi - 39
- Nahodishgish - 22
- Ojo Encino - 24
- Pinedale - 29

(Crownpoint Agency)

- Pueblo Pintado - 14
- Ramah - 36
- Red Rock - 45
- Rock Springs - 49
- Smith Lake - 16
- Standing Rock - 24
- Thoreau - 55
- Tohajiilee - 28
- Torreon/Star Lake - 42
- Tsayatoh - 37
- White Rock - 13
- Whitehorse Lake - 8

Shiprock Agency **1,252 Students**

- Aneth - 112
- Beclabito - 22
- Cove - 19
- Gad í'ahí - 17
- Mexican Water - 28
- Nenahnezad - 75
- Newcomb - 14
- Red Mesa - 67
- Red Valley - 28
- Rock Point - 84

(Shiprock Agency)

- San Juan - 27
- Sanostee - 41
- Sheepsprings - 33
- Shiprock - 426
- Sweetwater - 34
- Teec Nos Pos - 42
- T'iis Tsoh Sikaad - 29
- Tsé Daa K'aan - 35
- Toadlena/
Two Grey Hills - 23
- Upper Fruitland - 96

Tuba City Agency **1,161 Students**

- Birdsprings - 32
- Bodaway/Gap - 49
- Cameron - 42
- Chilchinbeto - 42
- Coalmine Canyon - 31
- Coppermine - 34
- Dennehotso - 35
- Inscription House - 36
- Kaibeto - 39
- Kayenta - 146
- Lechee - 70

(Tuba City Agency)

- Leupp - 60
- Navajo Mountain - 44
- Oljato - 101
- Shonto - 54
- Tolani Lake - 34
- Tonalea - 64
- Tó naneesdizí - 248

Chinle Agency **1,064 Students**

- Black Mesa - 28
- Chinle - 398
- Forest Lake - 34
- Hard Rock - 20
- Lukachukai - 60
- Many Farms - 72
- Nazlini - 38
- Piñon - 99
- Rough Rock - 51
- Round Rock - 48
- Tachee/Blue Gap - 50
- Tsaile/Wheatfields - 88
- Tselani/Cottonwood - 44
- Whippoorwill Springs - 34
- Unknown - 14

Honoring a True Advocate of Higher Education: Dr. Peterson Zah

The Navajo Nation lost an extraordinary advocate for higher education in 2023 – Dr. Peterson Zah, former President and Chairman of the Navajo Nation.

Dr. Zah spent a lifetime making college possible for thousands of Navajo students. He made significant contributions in many areas, but education was always one of his main priorities. The Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance acknowledges and honors Dr. Zah's work which has influenced thousands of Navajo students to seek higher education.

Humble Beginnings

Dr. Zah was born in 1937 and had a traditional upbringing in Low Mountain, Ariz. From a young age, he recognized the importance of education. When his cousins set off for Tuba City Boarding School, he joined them, only taking the clothes he was wearing. He later attended Phoenix Indian School. Some of his teachers discouraged him from continuing his education, telling him he would never succeed in college.

Earning a College Degree

Despite his instructors' words, Dr. Zah enrolled in Phoenix College and graduated in 1960. He then went on to Arizona State University on a basketball scholarship, earning a degree in education. He met his wife, Rosalind, when both were students at ASU.

Public Service

Upon graduation in 1963, they returned to the Navajo Nation, where he taught carpentry to adults and then became a field coordinator for the VISTA Indian Training Center. He later co-founded and became executive director of DNA-People's Legal Services, a nonprofit legal services program.

In 1982, Dr. Zah was elected Chairman of the Navajo Tribal Council. During his administration, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the authority of the Navajo Nation to impose taxes on companies operating in the Navajo Nation in the case *Kerr-McGee v. Navajo Tribe*, Millions of dollars in tax payments held in escrow were released to the Navajo



Dr. Peterson Zah (December 2, 1937 – March 7, 2023)

Nation. Also, at that time, leases for coal, pipelines, and oil and gas operations were renegotiated to obtain a fair market value for the Navajo people.

Trust Funds for the Navajo People

Under his direction and that of Vice Chairman Edward T. Begay and the Navajo Tribal Council, much of the additional revenue was placed into trust funds created for future generations, including the Permanent Trust Fund and the Vocational Education Fund. To this day, the Permanent Trust Fund has grown to more than \$3 billion, and interest earned from other trust funds is used to provide services, including scholarships, to the Navajo people.

Out-of-State Tuition Waivers

During this time, he also worked closely with colleges and universities to negotiate out-of-state tuition waivers in New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and two schools in Colorado. This enabled Navajo students from all parts of the Navajo Nation to pay in-state tuition lower than out-of-state tuition at colleges and universities in those states.

Raising Funds for Scholarships

After his term as Chairman in 1987, Dr. Zah began fundraising for the Navajo Education and Scholarship Foundation. From 1989-1990, he served as director of Save the Children Federation's western regional office.

First Navajo Nation President
In 1990, Dr. Zah was elected the first president of the Navajo Nation under a new form of government. During his administration, he introduced the Navajo Nation Teacher Education initiative. He sought to recruit and educate 1,000 Navajo teachers so that every Navajo child could learn Navajo values, beliefs, and the contributions of great leaders like Manuelito and Chee Dodge from Navajo teachers at their schools.

Navajo Education Center & the Navajo Nation Museum, Library and Visitor's Center

During his term as Chairman, he raised funds to build the two-story Navajo Education Center, which now houses the Department of Diné Education. As President, Dr. Zah worked closely with his wife Rosalind and noted educator Dr. Robert Roessel to raise funds for the Navajo Nation Museum, Library, and Visitor's Center. Throughout the years, Dr. Zah always acknowledged that his success came from team efforts, including his wife and talented individuals.

Return to Arizona State University

In 1995, Dr. Zah was appointed ASU's Special Advisor to the President on American Indian Initiatives. During his tenure, the university's Native American student population doubled and retention rates increased from 43 to 78 percent, among the highest of any major college or university in the country.

Retirement

Even in his retirement, Dr. Zah continued to promote the value of a college degree at schools and events throughout the Navajo Nation. He is remembered for taking over the PA systems at Enemy Way and Yei Bei Chei gatherings to encourage parents to prepare their children for college.

Continuing His Work

The ONNSFA greatly benefited from Dr. Zah's wisdom and counsel. In turn, we will continue to seek opportunities for college students. *Ahxé'hee' nihi Naat'áanii*

Agreement Provides Full Tuition Scholarships for UA Veterinary Students

BY GEORGE HARDEEN
OPVP PRESS OFFICE

WINDOW ROCK - Navajo veterinary medicine students at the University of Arizona will join those in its medical and law schools to be eligible for a full scholarship beginning in August 2023.

On June 6, 2023, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren signed a memorandum of agreement between the university and Navajo Nation to have seven eligible veterinary students receive a 50/50 scholarship equivalent to paying their entire tuition. The agreement takes effect August 2023.

"It's a monumental day for Navajo," the President said. "Taking care of animals is probably one of the oldest Navajo trades, making sure that we can eat, making sure that we can travel and continue to be able to move forward."

Traveling from Tucson for the signing of the agreement were UA Associate Dean Teresa Graham Brett and Dr. Alberta Arviso, senior engagement officer in the College of Veterinary Medicine.

"Veterinarians have been in our culture for a long, long time," Dr. Arviso said. "We probably didn't acknowledge them until the veterinary programs started."

The UA College of Veterinary Medicine opened in August 2020 during the COVID pandemic, she said. Nonetheless, the first 110 students took courses online and are scheduled to graduate from the three-year program on August 24.

"Dr. Wilson Francisco was the first Navajo veterinarian," she told President Nygren. "After he passed away, we went years without a veterinarian. Then, in 1983, my husband, Dr. Joseph Bahe, became a veterinarian. He got his diploma with his relatives around him."

Dr. Bahe became a Navajo Nation veterinarian in Tuba City.



ABOVE, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren signs an MOA between the University of Arizona and the Navajo Nation to provide 50/50 scholarships to seven Navajo veterinarian students, equivalent to paying their entire tuition. From left, Dr. Alberta Arviso, senior engagement officer in the UA College of Veterinary Medicine, Claudia Edgewater-Russell, then-Interim Navajo Nation Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Buu Nygren, Navajo Nation President; Rose Graham, ONNSFA Department Manager, and UA Associate Dean Teresa Graham Brett.

Dr. Arviso said today the university has 360 students in the veterinary college, with 19 Native American students representing 14 Native nations. Among them are five Navajos. Three of them will graduate in August.

President Nygren said it would be wonderful if the Navajo Nation could hire all three. Currently, the Nation has none, burdening Navajos who need medical care for their livestock and family pets.

With newly-graduated veterinary doctors earning an average of \$100,000 per year, he said he would be extremely pleased if the Nation could afford two veterinarians.

"We need a lot of veterinarians," he said. "The landscape is so vast, and the best way for our people to be entrepreneurs is to have their livestock, to be able to have sheep and cows and horses."

"What if we were able to secure the three who are graduating?" he said. "Give them a two-year residency here on Navajo. They would get a good salary, get to work as a team, and when new ones are coming, they'd get to rotate each other out."

"I want these young veterinarians to be the

trailblazers, the ones who build the standards of veterinary science within the Division of Natural Resources," he said.

Associate Dean Brett said the UA program is structured so students complete a four-year program in only three years.

"Instead of taking summers off, we fill their summers with full semesters," she said. "That's why they're able to start earning a salary earlier."

Dr. Arviso said the college has a "pathway program" for her to visit students in the lower grades to have them begin to think about becoming veterinarians early.

She's visited elementary and middle schools in the Navajo Nation to talk to students and counselors to guide them into the field.

"Most of the students come from homes where there are horses, cattle, and sheep," she said. "It's pretty much their whole life. When I was there, I talked about the beauty of our culture. It's been horses and animals. We have a strong connection to them and the land base on which we live. It's always been who we are as Diné."

According to a 2022 report by Mars Veterinary Health, there will be a shortage of 15,000 veterinarians across the United States by the end of the decade.

Meanwhile, that shortage has already hit the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Nation has veterinarian clinics at Shiprock and Tse Bonito that continually need licensed medical veterinarians but remain unstaffed. Currently, the Nation has only three veterinarians in private practice.

Students interested in veterinary medicine should call the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship and Financial Aid for information about the Navajo Nation Future Veterinarians Scholarship. Eligibility follows the University of Arizona schedule and process.

Six Earn Doctoral Degrees From Fielding Graduate University

Fielding Graduate University's School of Leadership Studies conferred EdD degrees upon six exceptionally accomplished students – Rolanda Billy, Martha S. Guy, Viola J. Hoskie, Michelle Tsosie, Telletha Valenski, and Perry R. James – at a graduation ceremony held at the Navajo Nation Museum and Library in Window Rock, Ariz. on June 10, 2023.

Rose Graham, director of the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance (ONNSFA), thanked Fielding for stepping in to offer a program to help Navajo educators enhance their credentials with an advanced degree without uprooting them from the communities where they are truly needed.

“Doctoral graduates are already applying their research and training to their work to improve the educational system for Navajo students,” Ms. Graham said. “They received their education while continuing to work in their jobs as educators or school administrators. It is another way to grow our own educators.”

Ms. Graham thanked Dr. Barbara Mink, Dean of the School of Leadership Studies for Fielding Graduate University, for bringing the graduation ceremony to the Navajo Nation. “Our doctoral graduates have an opportunity to celebrate their achievements with family and



ABOVE, (L-R) Dr. Jenny Edwards, Doctoral Faculty of the School of Leadership Studies for Fielding Graduate University; Dr. Miranda Jensen Haskie, Fielding Graduate University Adjunct Faculty, with graduates Rolanda Billy, EdD; Telletha Valenski, EdD and, Viola Hoskie, EdD.

friends who otherwise may not have been able to attend the university's ceremony in Santa Barbara, Calif.”

Thus far, nearly 30 Navajo doctoral students have earned degrees in Fielding Graduate University's Educational Leadership and Change doctoral program through an innovative partnership with the Navajo Nation that began almost two decades ago and continues to thrive.

The ONNSFA provides financial assistance to eligible students who want to pursue a doctoral

degree. Students who receive financial awards agree to teach or serve where the needs are the greatest – in a leadership capacity within the Navajo Nation or at schools with a significant number of Navajo students – for at least a year for every year they receive financial aid.

A notable development of the Navajo Nation's and Fielding Graduate University's partnership is the annual Navajo Education Conference. Doctoral students have an opportunity to present their research and hear from noted educational experts. The conference is jointly organized and sponsored by Fielding Graduate University, and the Navajo Nation, Department of Diné Education, the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship and Financial Assistance and the Navajo Nation Teacher Education Consortium.

FGU Doctoral Graduates Reflect Upon Their Educational Journeys; Offer Gratitude For Support

Rolanda Billy, EdD

“My name is Dr. Rolanda Billy (Tsi'naajinii, Nihoobaanii, Dziltl'ahnii, Naasht'ezhi) from Pinedale, New Mexico. I am a mother, wife, daughter, sister, auntie, and grand-



mother. I currently work for Navajo Head Start as the Director of Educational Services.

My passion is working in the field of Early Childhood Education and Navajo language revitalization in the

classrooms. I was able to concentrate on both during my dissertation journey. I am thankful for Fielding Graduate University as they allowed me to continue to explore a research question and accepted my indigenous worldviews as they applied to my work.

See *DOCTORAL GRADS*, next page

DOCTORAL GRADS, *continued*

The support of my family is important and vital to my achievement.

I would not have achieved this without the prayers and encouragement from my White family of Pinedale, my parents, Tom and Lorraine, my husband Jim, children, and siblings. Trish, Rob, and JJ, this is for you. I love you all.

I would like to thank the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance, Ms. Rose Graham, the Director, and the staff. Rose is a champion here on Navajo and is constantly advocating at the Navajo Nation Council, Office of the President, and Vice President with the message of continued funding for up-and-coming scholars.

I would like to acknowledge my committee members. Dr. Jenny Edwards, Chair and my mentor, your message of 'whatever it takes' was instrumental in getting me through this program: committee members Dr. Epstein, Dr. Lopez, Ms. Sloan, and Dr. Atencio. I appreciate your commitment and guidance throughout the process. I grew and learned personally and professionally from each of you.

This would not be possible without the 10 Head Start teachers. Thank you for allowing me to hear and learn about your thoughts and processes.

Also, thank you to Navajo Head Start, the Navajo Nation Board of Education, the Parent Policy Council, and the Navajo Nation IRB (Institutional Review Board) for the approvals of the study.

I encourage the upcoming scholars to continue their education pathways.

As Diné, we have the grit and mindset to pursue our dreams and achieve our goals. Thank you, family and friends, for joining us today.



Viola J. Hoskie, EdD

"Yá'át'ééh, shik'éí dóó shidine'é. My name is Dr. Viola J. Hoskie. Halstooi nishí, Tsi'naajinii bashishchiin, Bit'ahnii dashicheii, Kinyaa'áani dashinalí. Kin Hozhoni déé naashá.

I grew up at the base of a beautiful mountain. I played in the sand of a hidden oasis tucked away in the valley near my grandparent's hogan.

I still remember the smell of the wet dirt after my grandma sprinkled water on the dirt floor. My umbilical cord lies under the sheep corral, forever binding me to my home.

My family never left my development to chance. I grew up herding sheep with my older sister. My aunts and uncles called my

siblings and me shi yazhi. No matter the age, those words always make my heart light and happy.

From my dad, I learned about spirituality. Shima taught me unconditional love and incredible strength. Shi nali asdzáán modeled grace and resilience.

In the early morning, shimasani faced the east, sprinkled corn pollen, and prayed for the present and the future. She's not here anymore, but her prayers have seen me through difficult times and immense challenges.

Shicheii taught me the importance of school. He said I could accomplish anything through hard work and perseverance.

The Diné woman I am today is because of my family's teachings. I honor those teachings by passing them on to my nieces, nephews, and classroom children. These teachings also gave me the endurance to fulfill my childhood dream of earning a doctoral degree.

I am thankful to Fielding Graduate University, the Navajo Nation Scholarship program, my mentors, and the dissertation committee for their amazing support and helpful feedback during my doctoral journey. Ahéhee'! My study allowed me to use the teachings of my grandparents as the basis and inspiration for my research on grit, growth mindset, and self-efficacy."

Talletha Valenski, EdD

"Deepest gratitude to Dr. Barbara Mink, Dean of Fielding Graduate University's School of



Leadership Studies, and Rose Graham, director of the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance, for creating a fantastic opportunity for students across the globe.

Can you imagine what would happen if the inventor of WD-40 quit on his 39th attempt?

I did not get my doctorate on my first attempt, but I got it my second time.

Can you imagine when I asked my dad if I should get my doctorate, and he said, "Don't you want to grow?"

Can you imagine with me in Whitehorse Lake, NM, when I played with a cardboard box and typed on a pen-marked keyboard, pretending to type on a computer?

It was the same instrument that I used to write my dissertation.

What if I didn't complete what I set on my heart?

Can you imagine you would be here celebrating this day with us?..."