Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance

2024 ANNUAL REPORT





Diné Government History, Language Projects Launched

BY ROSE GRAHAM DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR

The past year reminded the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship and Financial Assistance that Navajo students know that higher education is a powerful force for change.

There is a lot a student must overcome to even step into a college classroom. We were immensely proud to find that 7,216 students who were ONNSFA award recipients at one time or another earned a college degree or certification in 2024.

Of those, 42%, or 3,039 students, earned an Associate degree. Another 35%, or 2,499, gained a Bachelor's and 23% or 1,632 received certification. Forty-one recipients earned a Master's, and five earned a Doctorate.

In 2024, the ONNSFA was able to fund about 45 percent of the 6,426 applications submitted. We realize that the cost of higher education is a challenge for Navajo students, and they look to ONNSFA for financial support to help them meet their educational goals. We continually seek support from Navajo Nation leadership to provide additional funds to help more stu-

Work on a Navajo Nation government textbook written by Diné scholars for Diné students began on Jan. 10, 2024, with an initial meeting of Navajo scholars and an editorial team in Albuquerque, NM. TOP ROW L-R - June-el Piper, Dr. Lloyd Lee, Dr. Wendy Greyeyes, Byron Tsabetsaye, Dr. Melanie Yazzie, Dr. Andrew Curley, Dr. Miranda Haskie, Daryl Begay, Kara Roanhorse, Dr. Farina King, Reada Jones-Claw, Evelyn Bahe FRONT L-R - Dr. Jennifer Denetdale, Rose Graham, Rex Lee Jim. See page 17.

dents. We are thankful that the Navajo Nation Council appropriated an additional \$2 million for scholarships in the FY 2025 budget cycle.

We are equally grateful for the extra support of the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs Navajo Regional Office, in providing supplementary support to the Higher Education Grant program. The additional \$2.4 million allocated to the ONNSFA will support more students and upgrade the student information system and website.

Navajo Government Textbook

In addition, thanks to Navajo Nation Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez, there was an appropriation of \$172,500 to create a Navajo Nation government textbook. Noted Navajo See PROGRESS REPORT, Page 14

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- 17 Doctoral Degrees
 Nine Earn EdD Degrees From
 Fielding Graduate University

Apply online at: https://onnsfa.org

Chinle Agency Office (800) 919-9269

Crownpoint Agency Office (866) 254-9913

Ft. Defiance Agency Office (800) 243-2956

Shiprock Agency Office (866) 223-6457

Tuba City Agency Office (866) 839-8151

Central Office (928) 871-7444



ONNSFA Statistical Profile

C - I		V	- 2024
Cal	lend	iar yea	ar 2024

No. of Students Requesting Awards: (Students are counted once whether they submit one or more applications during a calendar year.)	14,281	Total Funding to: Undergraduate Students Graduate Students Grand Total	18,554,106 6,957,309 \$25,511,415
No. of Students Receiving Awards: (Students are counted once whether they receive one or more awards during the calendar year.)	6,426	Total Federal Fund Awards to: Need-Based Students Chief Manuelito Scholars Grand Total	\$6,625,993 7,036,504 \$13,662,497
Percentage of Students Funded: (The total number of students awarded from the total number of applicants. Applicants are counted once.)	45%	No. of Awards by Funding Source: Federal Navajo Nation, Trust, Corporate Total	4,907 4,083 8,990
Enrollment Status of Recipients: Undergraduate Graduate	81% 19%	Average Award to: Undergraduate Students Graduate Students	\$2,562 \$3,980
No. of Students Awarded: Undergraduate Students Graduate Students	5,212 1,214	Chief Manuelito Awards: Total No. of Student Awards Total Expended From All Sources Percentage From All Sources	2,351 \$8,149,427 32%
No. of Students Denied:	7,853	Denial Ratio of ONNSFA Applicants:	55%



Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance

Central Administration 1-928-871-7444

Rose Graham, Department Manager II Shirlene Shondee-Roan, Senior Office Specialist Keeyonnie Zah, Administrative Assistant Sheila Tsosie, Senior Accountant Carolyn Calvin, Senior Public Information Officer Fernando Sarracino, Application Systems Programmer Michael Tsosie, Jr., Associate Statistical Research Analyst Daryl Begay, Policy Analyst

Chinle Agency 1-800-919-9269

Eltavisa Begay, Senior Financial Aid Counselor Joann Nez, Financial Aid Counselor Laverne Teller, Office Specialist Rosechelle Willie, Office Specialist

Crownpoint Agency 1-866-254-9913

Bertha Davis, Senior Financial Aid Counselor Nancy Eriacho, Office Specialist Collene Sanchez, Office Specialist

Fort Defiance Agency 1-800-243-2956

Maxine Damon, Senior Financial Aid Counselor Orlinda Brown, Financial Aid Counselor Michael Mann, Financial Aid Counselor Lesley Gravatt, Office Specialist Desdine Roberts, Office Specialist Altencia Thompson, Office Specialist Jeremy Todachine, Office Specialist

Shiprock Agency 1-866-223-6457

Dommenque Yazzie, Senior Financial Aid Counselor Alicia Becenti, Financial Aid Counselor Jefferline Francisco, Office Specialist Laticia Joe, Office Specialist

Tuba City Agency 1-866-839-8151

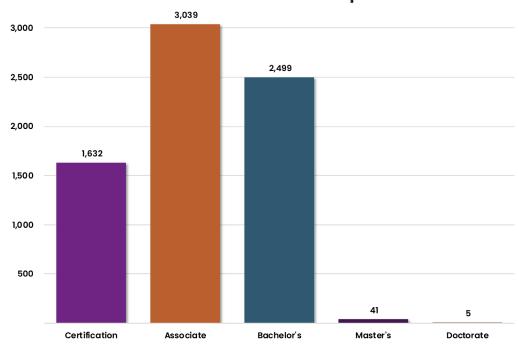
Shirley Tunney, Senior Financial Aid Counselor Melissa Blackhair, Financial Aid Counselor Denise Becenti, Office Specialist Stephanie Nez, Office Specialist

The ONNSFA's 2024 Annual Report was written, edited and designed by Carolyn Calvin, Senior Public Information Officer. Michael Tsosie, Jr., Associate Statistical Research Analyst, compiled the data and statistics included in this report.

https://onnsfa.org • facebook.com/onnsfa

Degrees Attained/Pursued by ONNSFA Recipients

7,216 ONNSFA Award Recipients Attain College Degrees, Certification



A total of 7,216 students served by the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance (ONNSFA) attained degrees or certification in 2024.

According to data collected from the ONNSFA's EMPOWER database and graduation programs obtained by ONNSFA staff, award recipients attended one of 196 schools, primarily in the Four-Corners area.

A total of 1,632 recipients, or 23%, attained certification. Another 42%, 3,039 recipients, earned an Associate degree. A total of 2,499 students, 35%, received a Bachelor's degree. Less than 1% or 41 recipients earned a Master's degree, and five earned a Doctorate-level degree.

The institutions where award recipients earned a college degree or certificate are among the top 20 schools attended by all students served by the ONNSFA.

Levels of Degrees Sought by Undergraduate and Graduate Students in 2024

In Calendar Year 2024, 6,426 students received awards from the ONNSFA. Eighty-one percent were undergraduates, and 19% were graduate students.

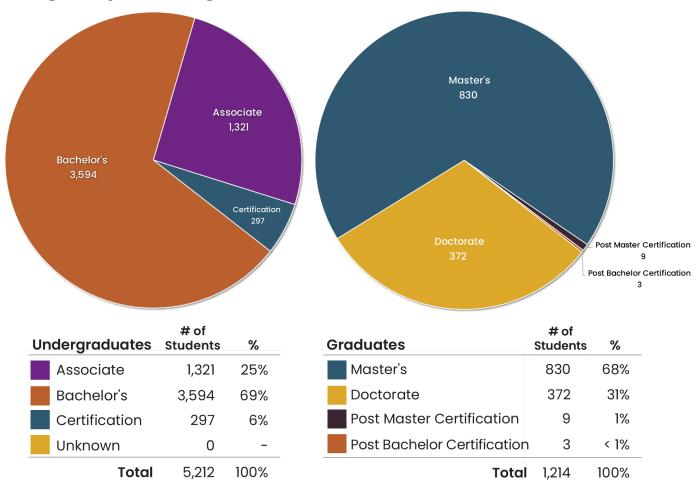
Undergraduates

Approximately 69% of undergraduates, or 3,594 students receiving awards, were seeking a Bachelor's degree. Another 25%, or 1,321 students, pursued an Associate degree, and 6%, or 297, sought a Certificate.

Graduates

Approximately 68%, or 830 graduate students, sought a Master's degree. Another 31%, or 372 students, pursued a doctoral or professional degree.

About 1%, 9, sought Post Master Certification, and another three students sought Post Bachelor Certification.



2024 Calendar Year Funding Sources

ONNSFA Financial Aid, Scholarship Awards Totaled \$25.5 Million in 2024

From January 1 to December 31, 2024, the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship and Financial Assistance awarded \$25,511,415 in scholarships and financial aid. A total of 6,426 students received awards from the four funding sources. The total number of awards made from all funding sources amounted to 8,990. 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: \$13,662,497 No. of Awards: 4,907

Federal funds, provided through a P.L. 93-638 contract with the Navajo Region Bureau of Indian Affairs, comprised about 54% 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

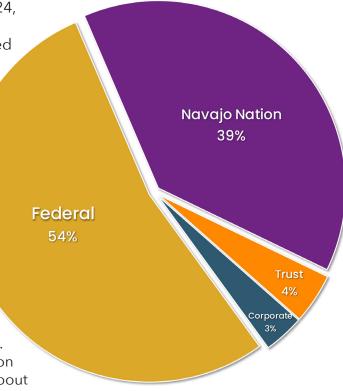
Total: \$9,850,974 No. of Awards: 3,363

Navajo Nation General Funds comprised about 39% 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: \$1,106,397 No. of Awards: 288

Interest revenue from trust funds comprised about 4% of 2024 awards..



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% 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: \$891,547 No. of Awards: 432

Contributions from corporations comprised about 3% of the total funds awarded in 2024. 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.

Note: The total number of students awarded from all funding sources (6,426) differs from the total number of awards (8,990) as students may have received awards from a combination of funding sources.

2024 Awards Breakdown							
Navajo Nation Funds	\$ 9,850,974						
Navajo Nation Grant	3,888,960						
Sales Tax Revenue UA College of Law Navajo Technical University Chief Manuelito Scholarships Need-Based Part-Time Summer	2,948,955						
Vocational	1,319,209						
Teacher Education	498,357						
Chief Manuelito Scholarships	981,056						
No-Need (Sales Tax)	19,000						
Summer Sessions I & II	36,000						
UA College of Medicine	29,843						
UA College of Veterinary Medicine	129.593						

Federal Funds	\$13,662,497
Chief Manuelito Scholarships	7,036,504
Need-Based	5,883,106
Part-Time	202,500
Vocational	540,387

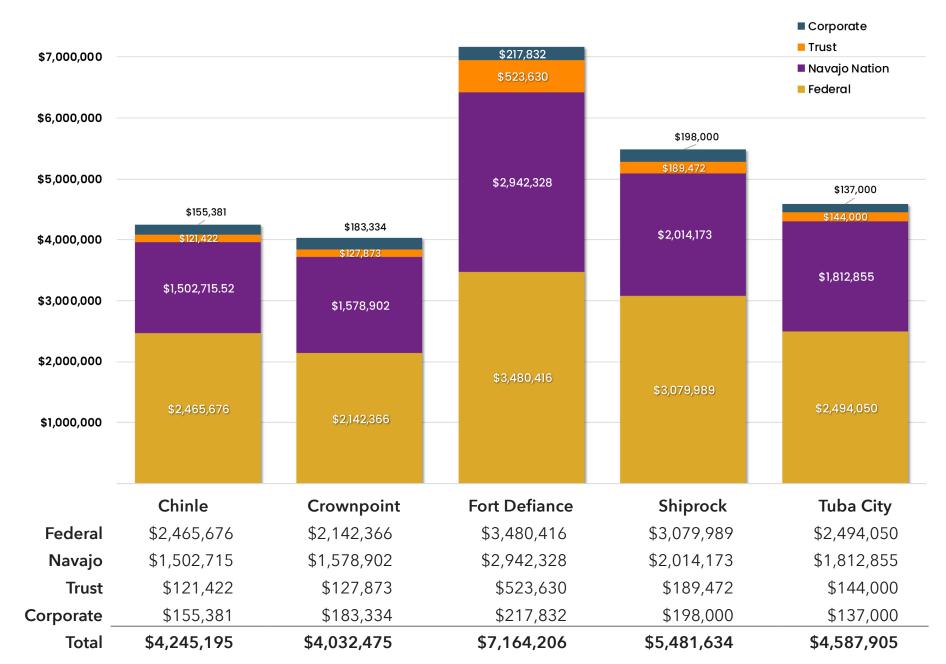
Trust Funds	\$ 1,106,397
Navajo Nation Graduate Trust	554,760
Vocational Trust Fund	181,456
Arizona State University Law	191,048
NECA Trust	5,524
University of New Mexico Law	105,664
Tucson Electric	67,945

Corporate Funds	\$ 891,547
Chevron P&M (No-Need)	296,702
Diné Scholarship Annual Fund	23,839
Peabody Energy	185,834
Sussman	299,667
Navajo Nation Oil & Gas, Co.	10,000
El Paso Natural Gas	75,505

Total All Sources: \$25,511,415

Funding Activity by Agency in 2024

Award Totals by Agency



Number of Awards by Agency

	Chinle	Crownpoint	Fort Defiance	Shiprock	Tuba City
Corporate	73	84	98	108	69
Federal	886	820	1,229	1,095	877
Navajo	541	574	899	754	595
Trust	51	42	92	56	47
Total	1,551	1,520	2,318	2,013	1,588

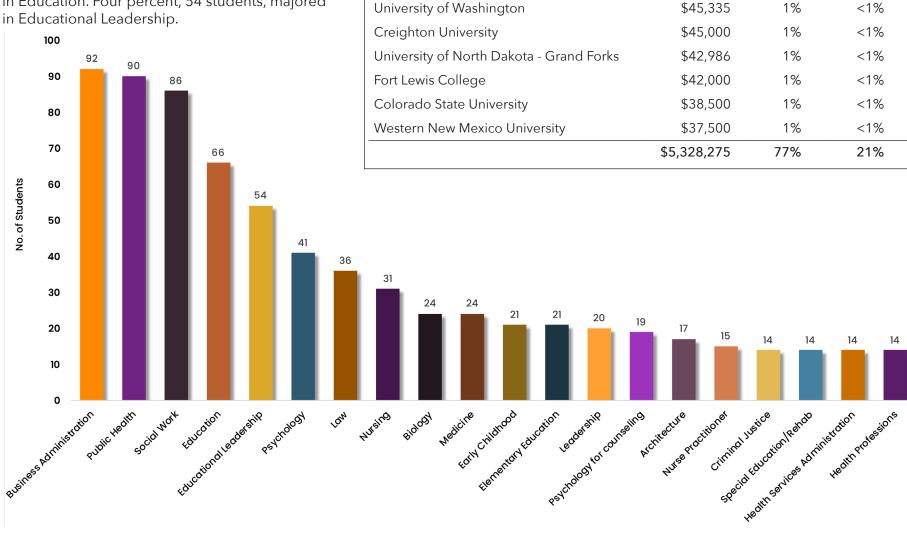
Top Graduate Majors & Institutions

\$6.9 Million Awarded to 1,214 Graduate Students

In 2024, the ONNSFA awarded \$6,957,309 to 1,214 graduate students attending 203 institutions, accounting for 21% of total ONNSFA funding. Students attending the top 20 schools received 77% of all graduate funding at \$5,328,275. Grand Canyon University received the largest amount, with \$945,931 or 14% of graduate funding. Students at Arizona State University received \$917,135, or 13% of graduate funding.

Graduate Majors

Fifty-nine percent of all graduate students declared majors in one of 20 disciplines. Eight percent, 92 students, majored in Business Administration. Another 7%, 90 students, majored in Public Health. Eighty-six students, 7%, sought Social Work degrees. Five percent, 66 students, majored in Education. Four percent, 54 students, majored in Educational Leadership.



Institution

Grand Canyon University

Arizona State University

Northern Arizona University

New Mexico State University

Fielding Graduate University

Navajo Technical University

University of California - Berkeley

University of Arizona - College of Medicine

University of Oklahoma

New Mexico Highlands University

University of New Mexico

University of Arizona

University of Phoenix

University of Utah

Total Awards to

Graduates

\$945,931

\$917,135

\$819,551

\$722,000

\$598,660

\$303,750

\$163,834

\$145,250

\$131,000

\$84,000

\$77,500

\$60,000

\$55,343

\$53,000

% of Grad

Funding

14%

13%

12%

10%

9%

4%

2%

2%

2%

1%

1%

1%

1%

1%

% of Total

Funding

4%

4%

3%

3%

2%

1%

1%

1%

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Top Undergraduate Majors & Institutions

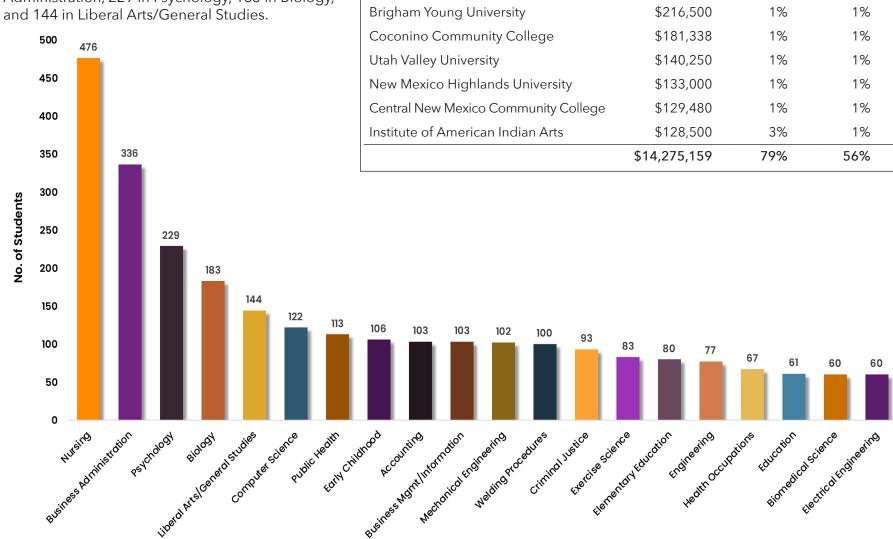
\$18.5 Million Awarded to 5,212 Undergraduates

In 2024, the ONNSFA awarded \$18,554,106 to 5,212 undergraduates attending 446 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 \$2,128,555, or 11% of undergraduate funding and 8% of all ONNSFA funding. Those attending Arizona State University received \$1,593,418, 9% of undergraduate funding. A total of \$1,538,488 was awarded to students at the University of New Mexico.

Undergraduate Majors

Fifty-two percent, or 2,698, of all undergraduate students declared majors in one of 20 disciplines. A total of 476 majored in Nursing, 336 in Business Administration, 229 in Psychology, 183 in Biology, and 144 in Liberal Arts/General Studies



Institution

Northern Arizona University

Arizona State University

Fort Lewis College

University of Arizona

San Juan College

Navajo Technical University

Grand Canyon University

University of Phoenix

University of Utah

New Mexico State University

University of New Mexico - Gallup

Utah State University - Blanding

Diné College

University of New Mexico

% of Total

Funding

8%

6%

6%

5%

5%

4%

4%

4%

2%

2%

2%

1%

1%

1%

% of Under-

grad Funding

11%

9%

8%

7%

7%

6%

6%

5%

3%

3%

2%

2%

2%

1%

Total Awards to

Undergraduates

\$2,128,555

\$1,593,418

\$1,538,488

\$1,373,700

\$1,279,286

\$1,107,890

\$1,061,049

\$952,445

\$470,728

\$467,392

\$453,467

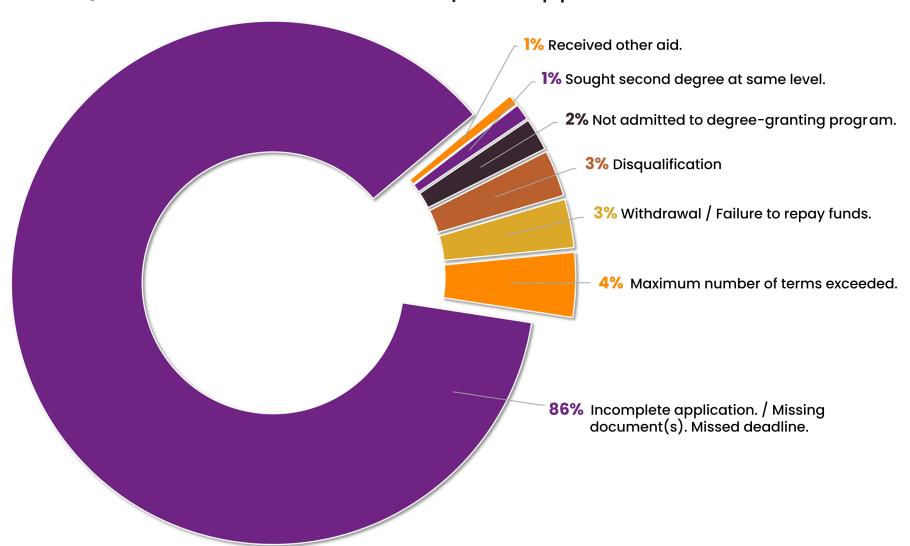
\$380,183

\$299,990

\$239,500

2024 ONNSFA Denials

Primary Reasons for Denials: Incomplete Applications, Missed Deadlines



7,853 Applications Denied

In Calendar Year 2024, 14,281 applications were submitted to the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance (ONNSFA). Approximately 45 percent, 6,426 applicants, received awards. The remaining 7,853 applications were denied for varied reasons, including:

Incomplete Application/Missed Deadlines

Eighty-six percent (6,791 students) submitted incomplete applications or failed to provide all required documents by established deadlines.

Seeking a Second Degree at Same Level

One percent, or 79 applicants, were denied as they requested additional funds toward a second degree at the same level.

Maximum Number of Terms Exceeded

Four percent, or 314 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 equivalent number of quarter or trimester credit hours.

Withdrawal/Failure to Repay Funds

Three percent or 236 applicants were denied due to outstanding debts to the ONNSFA arising from withdrawing from school without justification. Applicants with outstanding debts are disqualified.

Disqualification

Three percent, or 225 applicants, were denied due to violation of the ONNSFA's policies, including not maintaining the required grade point average, repeating courses, or falsifying information.

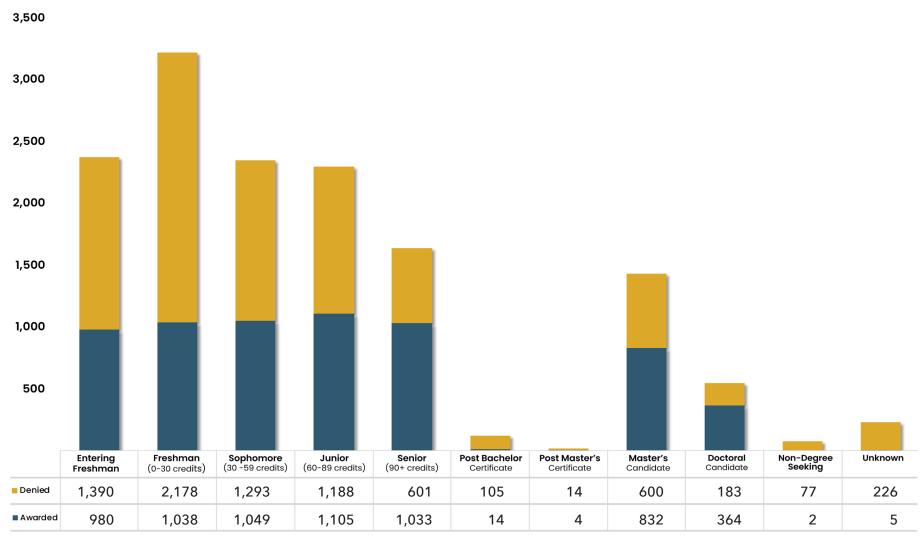
Not Admitted Into a Degree Program

A total of 158, or two 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.

Received Other Aid

One percent, or 52 applicants, were denied due to receiving aid from other sources that met or exceeded their financial need.

Awarded/Denied Students by Class Levels

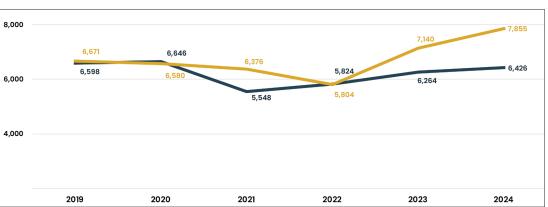


Application Submission Rate Rises by 6.5%; Approximately 55% of Applications Denied

The Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance received 6.5% more applications (14,281) in 2024 than the previous year (13,404). The denial rate increased to 55% from 53% in 2023.

Freshman applicants (0-30 credits) submitted the highest number of applications with 3,216 (23%). Approximately 68% (2,178) were denied, and 32% (1,038) received awards. Entering Freshman applicants submitted 17% (2,370) of applications. Of those, 1,390 applications were denied (59%).

Sophomore (31-59 credits) and Junior status students (60-89 credits) each submitted 16% of all applications. Fifty-five percent of 2,342 Sophomore applications were denied (1,293). Fifty-two percent of 2,293 Junior applications were denied (1,188).



Year	Total No. Applicants	Awarded Students	Denied Students	% Awarded	% Denied	% Change (No. of Applicants)
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%
2024	14,281	6,426	7,855	45%	55%	6.5%

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 2024, the ONNSFA provided awards to a total of 6,426 students. The chapters the students are affiliated with are:

Ft. Defiance Agency 1,627 Students

Cornfields - 40 Coyote Canyon - 57

Crystal - 52 Dilkon - 59

Ft. Defiance - 363

Ganado - 79

Greasewood Springs - 34

Houck - 41

Indian Wells - 35

Jeddito - 39

Kinlichee - 57

Klagetoh - 40

Low Mountain - 27 Lupton - 15

Mexican Springs - 43

Nahata Dziil - 26

Naschitti - 64

Oak-Pine Springs - 41

Red Lake - 39

Sawmill - 64

St. Michaels - 137

Steamboat - 40

Teestoh - 57

Tohatchi - 50

(Ft. Defiance Agency)

Twin Lakes - 63 White Cone - 40 Wide Ruins - 25

Crownpoint Agency 1,206 Students

Alamo - 16 Baca/Haystack - 27 Baahaali-32

Becenti - 37

Casamero Lake - 21 Chichiltah - 43

Church Rock - 104

Counselor - 18

Crownpoint - 200

Huerfano - 71

Iyanbito - 30

Lake Valley - 18

Littlewater - 17

Manuelito - 35

Mariano Lake - 23

Nageezi - 34

Nahodishqish - 27 Ojo Encino - 22

Pinedale - 37

Pueblo Pintado - 19 Ramah - 40

Red Rock - 52

Rock Springs - 51

Smith Lake - 13 Standing Rock - 30

Thoreau - 57

Tohajiilee - 33

Torreon/Star Lake - 36

Tsayatoh - 29

White Rock - 17

Whitehorse Lake - 17

Shiprock Agency 1,374 Students

Aneth - 108

Beclabito - 26

Cove - 18

Gad íí'ahí - 15

Mexican Water - 30

Nenahnezad - 77 Newcomb - 19

Red Mesa - 71 Red Valley - 31

Rock Point - 86

(Crownpoint Agency) (Shiprock Agency)

San Juan - 36

Sanostee - 46

Sheepsprings - 42

Shiprock - 507

Sweetwater - 43

Teec Nos Pos - 47

T'iis Tsoh Sikaad - 23

Tsé Daa K'aan - 32

Toadlena/

Two Grey Hills - 24

Upper Fruitland - 93

Tuba City Agency 1,123 Students

Birdsprings - 33

Bodaway/Gap - 50 Cameron - 40

Chilchinbeto - 40

Coalmine Canyon - 37

Coppermine - 23

Dennehotso - 34

Inscription House - 29

Kaibeto - 41

Kayenta -148

Lechee - 76

(Tuba City Agency)

Leupp - 56

Navajo Mountain - 36

Oljato - 85

Shonto - 60

Tolani Lake - 34

Tonalea - 64

Tó naneesdizí-237

Chinle Agency 1,089 Students

Black Mesa - 26

Chinle - 417

Forest Lake - 37

Hard Rock - 23

Lukachukai - 67

Many Farms - 77

Nazlini - 35

Piñon - 98

Rough Rock - 57

Round Rock - 51

Tachee/Blue Gap - 38

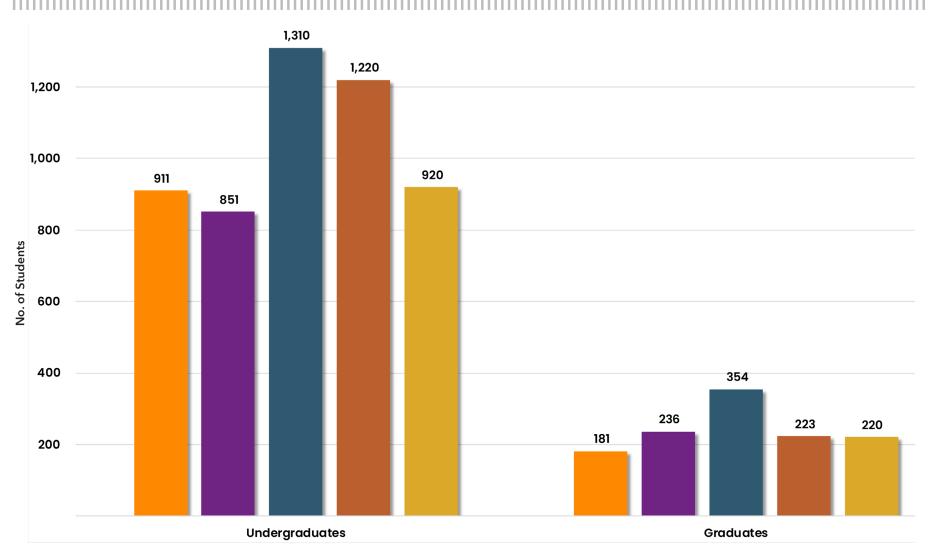
Tsaile/Wheatfields - 80

Tselani/Cottonwood - 52

Whippoorwill Springs - 31

Unknown - 7

Students Awarded by Agency/Class Level



6,426 Applicants Receive Awards; Fort Defiance Agency Funds 26%; Shiprock Agency Funds 22%

In 2024, 14,281 undergraduate and graduate students submitted applications for financial aid to the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance. Of those, 6,426 students received a total of 8,990 awards.

As illustrated in the graph above, the Fort Defiance Agency office awarded 1,664 applicants, or 26% of all students receiving awards, with the most at the undergraduate (1,310) and graduate (354) levels. Two agency offices - Shiprock and Tuba City - issued awards to approximately 22 and 18% of the total number of students awarded.

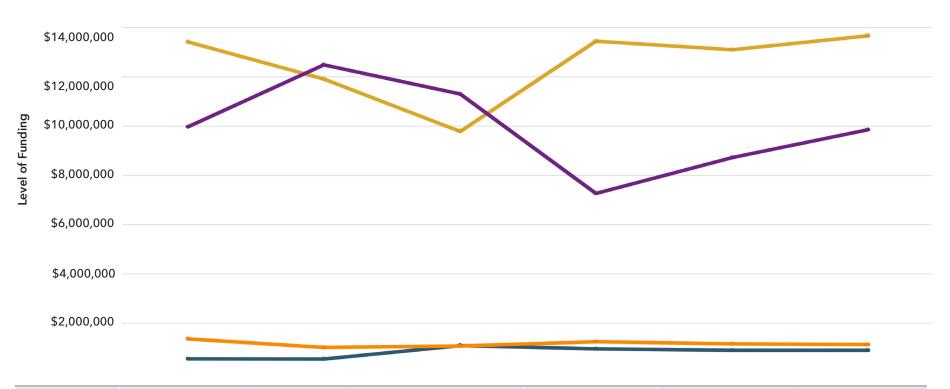
The Shiprock Agency office issued 1,220 undergraduate and 223 graduate awards, totaling 1,443. The Tuba City Agency office provided 1,140 awards, 958 for undergraduates and 225 for graduates. The Crownpoint and Chinle Agency offices each issued awards to 17% of 2024 applicants. The Crownpoint office awarded

Agency Office	No. of Undergraduates Awarded	No. of Graduates Awarded	Total
Chinle	911	181	1,092
Crownpoint	851	236	1,087
Fort Defiance	1,310	354	1,664
Shiprock	1,220	223	1,443
Tuba City	920	220	1,140
	5,212	1,214	6,426

851 undergraduates and 236 graduates, totaling 1,087. The Chinle Agency awarded 1,092 students, including 911 undergraduates and 181 graduates.

A total of 8,990 awards were made from Navajo Nation funds, federal funds, corporate funds, and trust funds. Fifty-five percent of awards (4,907) were sourced from federal funds. Navajo Nation funds provided 37% (3,363) of all awards. Corporate funds funded 5% (432) of all awards, and Trust Funds funded 3% of awards (288).

ONNSFA Funding From 2019-2024



	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
Federal	\$13,414,550	53%	\$11,917,270	46%	\$9,774,534	42%	\$13,433,392	59%	\$13,083,713	55%	\$13,662,497	54%
Navajo Nation	\$9,964,989	39%	\$12,480,928	48%	\$11,293,430	48%	\$7,257,149	32%	\$8,716,997	36%	\$9,850,974	39%
Corporate	\$542,606	2%	\$531,392	2%	\$1,076,076	5%	\$939,905	4%	\$887,071	4%	\$891,547	3%
Trust	\$1,350,787	5%	\$1,002,686	4%	\$1,056,558	5%	\$1,234,353	5%	\$1,141,935	5%	\$1,106,397	4%
Total	\$25,274,952		\$25,932,276		\$23,200,598		\$22,864,799		\$23,829,717		\$25,511,415	

Federal Funds Are Primary Source of Funding for ONNSFA Recipients in 2024

In 2024, the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance awarded about \$25.5 million to 6,426 students.

Federal funds, provided through a P.L. 93-638 contract with the Navajo Region Bureau of Indian Affairs, comprised about 54% of the funds awarded in 2024.

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 2024, Navajo Nation funding increased to about \$9.85 million from \$8.75 million in 2023.

Navajo Nation funding includes annual appropriations 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 \$1.106 million from \$1.41 million in 2023. Policies for trust funds, including the Graduate Trust Fund, the Navajo Engineering & Construction Authority Trust Fund, the Vocational Education Trust Fund, and the Tucson Electric Fund, stipulate that "10% of the fund [market value] shall be used as scholarship and

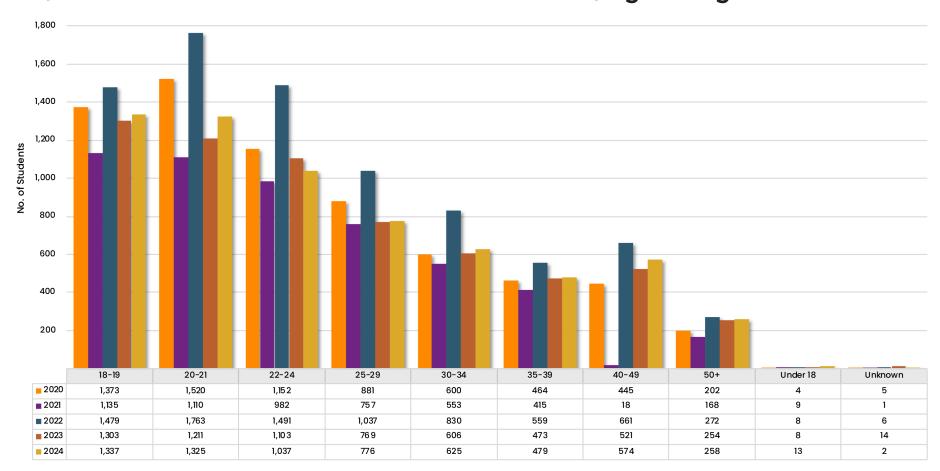
financial assistance." Interest revenue from these sources fluctuates from year to year based on market value.

Corporate funding, which comprised about 3% of the total funds awarded in 2024, increased slightly from 2023 levels at \$887,071 to \$891,547. 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.

Age Groups of ONNSFA Award Recipients

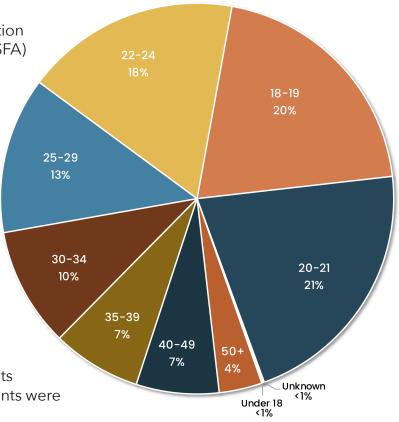
32,588 Students Receive Awards From 2020-2024; Ages Range From 18 to 50+



From 2020-2024, the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance (ONNSFA) awarded an average of 6,518 students each calendar year. The average amount awarded each year during the same period was \$24,267,761.

Award recipients from 2020-2024 ranged from 18 and under to 50-plus years old. Approximately 21 percent, 6,929, fell into the 20-21 age range. Another twenty percent, 6,627, are in the 18-19 age range. Eighteen percent, 5,765, ranged in age from 22-24. Thirteen percent, 4,220, were aged 25-29.

The remaining 8,977 recipients ranged in age from 30 to 50 plus. Forty-two recipients were under 18, and the ages of 28 recipients were unknown.



2020-2024 Award Recipients

Age Range	No. of Students	%
10.10	4 4 2 7	20%
18-19	6,627	20 /0
20-21	6,929	21%
22-24	5,765	18%
25-29	4,220	13%
30-34	3,214	10%
35-39	2,390	7%
40-49	2,219	7%
50+	1,154	4%
Under 18	42	0%
Unknown	28	0%
	32,588	100%

Dr. Charles "Monty" Roessel: A Tireless Advocate of Higher Education

The Navajo Nation lost another champion of education. Dr. Charles M. "Monty" Roessel, 63, Navajo, leader, educator, journalist, and photographer, died on Jan. 6, 2025.

He was the 18th president of the Dine' College - a school founded by community members, including his parents, Dr. Robert A. Roessel Jr. and Ruth Roessel, in 1968. His father served as the college's first president.

Dr. Roessel had a clear vision for the Navajo Nation's institution of higher learning. As the president of Diné College, he passionately believed that to "meet the future" and the aspirations of the Navajo people, "we need to think boldly about what is out there, what is possible, and what we can do now."

Rose Graham, ONNSFA director, said Dr. Roessel was a tireless advocate of higher education and provided constant support to the Navajo scholarship program.

"Dr. Roessel introduced much needed initiatives such as increasing opportunities for special education and STEM teachers," she said.

"We could always count on Monty to pitch in whenever needed. He helped our office in so many ways, whether by providing temporary internet access at the Chinle office or supporting the Chief Manuelito Scholarship Awards ceremony. He always put the needs of students first," Ms. Graham said.

In a 2022 interview, Dr. Roessel said there are roughly 29,000 people in the Navajo Nation with some college education. Imagine if even a quarter of them could come back to school and be supported by a community to continue on a learning path. That collective effort is aspirational yet is true to the founding of his college on the principles of Navajo philosophy.

Dr. Roessel was a photographer, an author, and a journalist, all before he became an educator. He earned his bachelor's degree



Dr. Charles "Monty" Roessel

in photography and industrial arts from the University of Northern Colorado in 1984. In 1995, he earned a master's degree in journalism from Prescott College, and in 2007, he was awarded doctorate in Educational Administration and Supervision from Arizona State University.

Dr. Roessel was originally from Round Rock, Arizona, and graduated from Chinle High School.

Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren said Dr. Roessel led the college's "transition from a two-year institution to a four-year college."

"Under his leadership, the college established four new transdisciplinary schools. These include the School of Diné Studies and Education, the School of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, the School of Arts, Humanities, and English, and the School of Business and Social Science," President Nygren said.

"Significantly, Dr. Roessel guided the college to begin the Navajo Sovereignty Institute, the Navajo Cultural Arts Program, and the creation of the Navajo Law Program."

As a journalist, Dr. Roessel was a photojournalist at the Greeley Tribune in Colorado and became the managing editor of the Navajo Times Today from 1985 to 1987. In that role, he created an environment where more Navajos were hired to report about the nation. Before his appointment, most journalists working at the Navajo Times were not Navajo.

He later was vice president, co-owner and editor of *Navajo Nation Today* with former *Navajo Times TODAY* editor and publisher Mark Trahant.

Dr. Roessel contributed to various magazines, including National Geographic and Arizona Highways. His work has appeared in New Mexico Magazine, Newsweek, Time, Sports Illustrated, and Native Peoples.

He published a widely acclaimed children's book, Songs from the Loom: A Navajo Girl Learns to Weave, in 1995.

Starting in December 1997, Roessel worked for the Round Rock Chapter AmeriCorps program, which was followed by several posts, including executive director of the Rough Rock Community School. While at Rough Rock, Dr. Roessel also taught photography and coached baseball.

Then, in 2002, Monty collaborated with Peter Iverson on an important book, *Diné:* A History of the Navajos. In 2007, Roessel published his second children's book, Kinaaldá: A Navajo girl grows up. And, most recently, an academic work, "Self-Determination as a School Improvement Strategy" for the Journal of American Indian Education.

Dr. Roessel served in the Obama administration in 2012 as the director of the Bureau of Indian Education. In that role, he oversaw 66 federally funded schools across the United States.

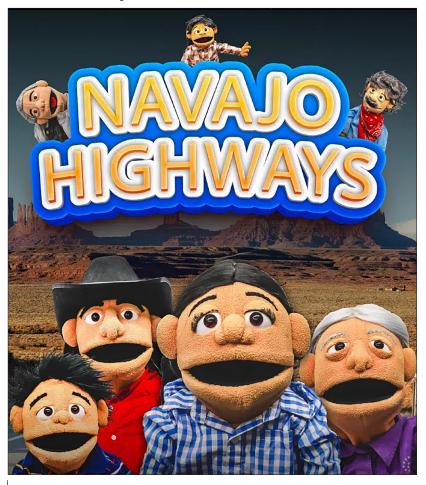
He is survived by his children Jaclyn, Bryan, Bobby, Robyn, and Kimberly and his best friend Karina Roessel, their six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, one daughter-in-law, two sons-in-law, his brothers and sisters Robert, Raymond, Faith, and Mary, and many nieces and nephews.

PROGRESS REPORT, continued from page 14

historian Dr. Jennifer Denetdale and Diné Scholars from various disciplines are working on a text-book that takes the unique governance approach from Navajo creation stories, traditional governance, and sovereignty. We are grateful that Dr. Denetdale and the contributing authors, with expertise in Diné history, governance, and culture, will write chapters for the textbook. Students will have an invaluable source of information regarding their government.

Navajo Language Revitalization Projects

The ONNSFA played a significant role in seeking funds for Navajo language revitalization projects. We secured a \$1.23 million grant from the New Mexico Public Education Department for Navajo cultural and language programming and activities. The grant funds several projects, including a Navajo language app, the Navajo Highways Puppet Show, the Navajo Nation - New Mexico Seal of Bilingual Proficiency Fund, and a Navajo Culture, History, and Government Learning Activities App.



ABOVE, Free screenings of the Navajo Highways television series' debut are taking place throughout the Navajo Nation and surrounding communities. The series follows a young girl during her stay on the Navajo Nation.

receiving awards, were seeking a Bachelor's degree. Another 25%, or 1,321 students, pursued an Associate degree, and 6%, or 297, sought a Certificate. Approximately 68%, or 830 graduate students, sought a Master's degree. Another 31%, or 372 students, pursued a doctoral or professional degree. About 1%, 9, sought Post Master Certification, and another three students sought Post Bachelor Certification.

Majors being sought in 2024

Fifty-two percent, or 2,698, of all undergraduates awarded declared majors in one of 20 disciplines. The top five majors were Nursing, Business Administration, Psychology, Biology, and Liberal Arts/General Studies.

For graduate students, 59% of those awarded declared majors in one of 20 disciplines. Eight percent, 92 students, majored in Business Administration, and 7% or 90 students majored in Public Health; eighty-six students, 7%, sought Social Work degrees. Five percent, 66 students, majored in education.

Navajo Highways Television Series

On April 1, 2024, we were proud to witness the debut of the Navajo Highways children's TV series at a screening held at the Navajo Nation Museum. It was incredible to watch a project that our office sought funding for come to fruition. The Navajo Highways series, which features some realistic puppetry, follows a young girl spending a summer in the Navajo Nation. Students can relate to her as she learns about Navajo culture and language.

No Audit Findings

In August 2024, the KPMG auditor informed the ONNSFA that there were no Higher Education Grant audit findings as part of the FY 2023 Navajo Nation single audit. The ONNSFA makes every effort to ensure that our funding is used appropriately. It is a credit to our staff who work hard to provide services in accordance with our established policies.

Degrees sought in 2024

In 2024, 6,426 students received awards from the ONNSFA. Eightyone percent were undergraduates, and 19% were graduate students. Approximately 69% of undergraduates, or 3,594 students

Upcoming issues

We are aware of the unpredictability regarding federal appropriations in the current administration. In the past Trump administration, attempts were made to eliminate the Higher Education Grant Program, which provides a majority of funds used for scholarships and financial asisstance. Navajo leaders were able to work with our Congressional delegation to ensure funds were restored. The current administration is difficult to read. However, we know the need to prepare for cuts that may be detrimental to our program. We have several options on the drawing board and will need Navajo leadership's support to protect higher education funds for our students.

Conclusion

The ONNSFA is committed to creating more scholarship opportunities for Navajo students. We look forward to improving our student information system, enhancing our website and streamlining the application process. We are also continuing work on revising the ONNSFA's policies and procedures to more accurately reflect the student population we serve and address changes in federal financial aid policies.

Navajo Students Earn Doctor of Veterinarian Medicine Degrees at UA

WINDOW ROCK - Since the signing of the Navajo Nation Future Veterinarians Scholarship memorandum of agreement, five Navajo students at the University of Arizona in their quest for Doctor of Veterinarian Medicine Degrees have benefited.

Through the agreement between the university and the Navajo Nation, seven eligible veterinary students receive a 50/50 scholarship equivalent to paying their entire tuition. The agreement took effect August 2023.

Dr. Alberta Arviso, senior engagement officer in the UA College of Veterinary Medicine, said the state's first and only public veterinary medicine program launched in 2020 during the COVID pandemic.

The program offers an innovative curriculum designed for students to complete their degree in three years.

Most veterinary medicine programs in the United States require students to study and train for at least four years.

The college also uses an active learning approach that focuses on providing students with hands-on experience with live animals as early as possible.

At the time of the MOA signing, Dr. Arviso reported the university had 360 students in the veterinary college, with 19 Native American students representing 14 Native nations. Among them were five Navajo students.

Three Navajo students - Kaitlyn Benally, Grace Davis, and Santana Nez-Coleman - made history at the University of Arizona, graduating with Doctor of Veterinarian Medicine degrees

ABOVE, A faculty member places a doctoral hood over the head of Dr. Santana Nez-Coleman signifying her success in completing the UA Veterinary Medicine program on August 24, 2023.

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



at the College of Veterinary Medicine's inaugural commencement ceremony on August 24, 2023.

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

President Nygren 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."

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. We have a strong connection to them and the land base on which we live. It's always been who we are as Diné," Dr. Arviso said.

As part of UA's inaugural veterinary class, Dr. Santana Nez-Coleman, was grateful for the scholarship. "I was taught at a young age to care for the land and animals around you so that they, in turn, would take care of you," she said. "We have had horses, cattle, sheep, goats, dogs, cats, rabbits, and chickens. The varied interactions with these animals ignited my regard for them. The Navajo culture's basis is to be respectful and unders-

tand the interconnectedness of the animals, environment, and people. All these items are connected to work in a harmonious manner. This way of life has helped to form the foundation of my life's purpose and fueled my lifelong dream of becoming a veterinarian."

The UA College of Veterinary Medicine solely decides admission to the veterinary medicine program. Eligibility follows the UA schedule and process. Students accepted into UA's veterinary medicine program are urged to contact ONNSFA for scholarship information.

Diné Scholars Creating Two-Volume Navajo Government Textbook

A Navajo Nation government textbook for high school students written by Diné scholars is now in the works, thanks to an appropriation of \$172,500 in the Fiscal Year 2024 Navajo Nation general fund budget.

Co-edited by respected historian Dr. Jennifer Denetdale and Daryl Begay, a policy analyst with the Dept. of Diné Education, the two-volume textbook will be written in Navajo and English, with a digital version for online learning.

"We are thankful that the Navajo Nation Council and President Buu Nygren over-

whelmingly supported a long overdue project," said Rose Graham, Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance director. She credits Navajo Nation Council Delegate Andy Nez for championing several Navajo language projects, including the government textbook, and ensuring funds were appropriated for each in the Navajo Nation budget.

Ms. Graham said the project is monumental as it conveys knowledge about Navajo culture, language, and ways of life, and students will learn about the history and development of a sovereign tribal nation with the largest land base.

"The proposed textbook will be written by Navajo scholars and take the unique approach of governance from Navajo creation stories, traditional governance, and sovereignty - informed by Navajo concepts of land, history, and leadership," said Claudia Edgewater-Russell, Dept. of Diné Education Interim Superintendent of Schools. "The general texts that schools and colleges use are outdated and written by non-Navajos."

Dr. Denetdale has published extensively on Diné history. She says that it was her grandson, who was taking a Navajo government class, who inspired her to envision a textbook written by Diné that was accessible to young people and was written by Diné.

"We don't have an all-Diné authored government textbook for high school students," Dr. Denetdale said. "So this is truly historical. The Navajo Nation government textbook fills an urgent need."



From the Oscar Chapman Scrapbook, Harry S. Truman Library & Museum. NAID: 348537910

An informal survey of Diné teachers who attended Northern Arizona University's Institute for Native-serving Educators indicates that such a textbook does not exist.

"The textbooks could be used for high school and college coursework across the disciplines of Diné Studies, Native American Studies, and Political Science," she said.

Contributing authors with expertise in Diné history, governance, and culture will write chapters for the text-book. Authors include former Vice President Rex Lee Jim, Dr. Andrew Curley, Dr. Mirandrew Curley, Dr. Mirandre

da Haskie, Kara Roanhorse, Dr. Melanie K. Yazzie, Dr. Lloyd L. Lee, Byron Tsabetsaye, Dr. Wendy Greyeyes, and Dr. Farina King.

Volume one will focus on the roots of Diné sovereignty and the historical shifts in governance under cycles of colonial intrusions that have shaped the modern Navajo government.

The second volume will explore how American democratic governance principles were used to establish the modern Navajo Nation and the ongoing efforts to return to Diné governance and leadership principles as the foundation of government.

Dr. Denetdale said that the selection of the authors reflects Diné scholarship across generations and expertise in traditional knowledge, history, governance, culture, geography, and education. Professor Joe Kee will join the team once the translation project to the Diné language begins.

"The textbook will provide students a comprehensive view of Diné history and governance," Dr. Denetdale said. "The original Dinétah and Diné Bikéyah as laid out by the Holy People and their teachings left with the Diné will be used as the standard for learning about Diné/Navajo government. Navajo governance is, on the one hand, profoundly shaped and transformed by its relationship to the United States' settler nation, and, on the other hand, it is also remembered by our leaders and people that we have the teachings of our ancestors about what government, leadership, and citizenship looks like."

Fielding Graduate University Hosts Local Graduation Ceremonies

Navajo graduates from Fielding Graduate University's Educational Leadership and Change doctoral program had an opportunity to celebrate their achievements at graduation ceremonies held at the Navajo Nation Museum, Library, and Visitor Center in Window Rock, Ariz., in 2023 and 2024.

Rose Graham, director of the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship & Financial Assistance (ONNSFA), thanked Dr. Barbara Mink, former Dean of the School of Leader-

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.

ship 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 friends who otherwise may not have been able to attend the university's ceremony in Santa Barbara, California," Ms. Graham said.

In 2024, the university conferred EdD degrees upon three exceptionally accomplished students: Jason Arviso, Maxine Sloan, and Delphina Dayish. In 2023, EdD degrees were conferred upon Rolanda Billy, Martha S. Guy, Viola J. Hoskie, Michelle Tsosie, Telletha Valenski, and Perry R. James.

Ms. Graham also thanked Fielding Graduate University for offering a program to help Navajo educators enhance their credentials with an advanced degree without uprooting them from the communities where they are genuinely 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."

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.

Through the partnership, students who receive financial awards from the ONNSFA agree to teach or serve in a leadership capacity where the needs are the greatest 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.

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 grandmother. 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, Page 19

DOCTORAL GRADS, continued from page 18

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.



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 on my second.

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?..."



Viola J. Hoskie, EdD

"Yá'át'ééh, shik'éi dóó shidine'é. My name is Dr. Viola J. Hoskie. Halstooi nishłį, Tsi'naajinii bashishchiin, Bit'ahnii dashicheii, Kinyaa'áani dashinalí. Kin Hozhoni dę́ę́ 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 de-

velopment 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.



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Deadline to apply: June 25, 2025 @ 5 pm MDT