

-STUDENT HANDBOOK-
Effective April 2005

**WOODLAND CREE ENTERPRISES
INCORPORATED
STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAM**

WOODLAND CREE ENTERPRISES INCORPORATED

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“Providing Opportunities to Our Membership”

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WOODLAND CREE ENTERPRISES INC.
Employment and Training

“PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO OUR MEMBERSHIP”

MISSION STATEMENT

To further the employability of the members of the Woodland Cree First Nations in a culturally sensitive manner.

MANDATE

Research, develop, implement and promote the employability of the members of the Woodland Cree First Nations.

GOAL

To deliver employment services to Woodland Cree communities; to reduce the unemployment rate and to advocate the process for the development of an overall training and employment plan for the membership of the Woodland Cree First Nations.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The policies set out in this Student Handbook have received the approval of the Board of Directors of Woodland Cree Enterprises Incorporated.
- 1.2 Woodland Cree Enterprises Incorporated is the administering organization. WCEI is comprised of the following Bands:

Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Montreal Lake Cree Nation, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation
- 1.3 This Handbook provides information on WCEI as it relates to Student Support.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 “**SITAG**” means Saskatchewan Indian Training Assessment Group.
- 2.2 “**WCEI**” means Woodland Cree Enterprises Incorporated.
- 2.3 “**Dependent Spouse**” means a person who is married to a student or a person who has lived with the student as husband or wife for a period of at least one year prior to application for educational support. This person is dependent upon the student and does not receive income from other sources.
- 2.4 “**Dependent**” means a person other than a spouse, who is dependent upon a student as defined by the Woodland Cree Enterprises Incorporated Bands.
- 2.5 “**LLRIB**” means the Lac La Ronge Indian Band.
- 2.6 “**PBCN**” means the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation.
- 2.7 “**MLCN**” means the Montreal Lake Cree Nation.
- 2.8 “**Community Based Training Program**” means those programs for which a student attends in their home communities.
- 2.9 “**Full-time Students**” and “**Part-time Students**” are as defined by the educational institution.
- 2.10 “**Bill C-31 Student**” means a person who has gained treaty status under the provisions of Bill C-31 of the federal government.

3.0 ELIGIBILITY

- 3.1 The student must be a member of any First Nation in Canada, and have a social insurance number
- 3.2 The student must have met entrance requirements and been accepted for enrolment in a recognized post-secondary institution for a program of studies.
- 3.3 Support **MAY BE** provided within the limits of funds available in accordance with WCEI funding arrangements. If demand for funding exceeds availability, applications will be deferred. The student must have met the criteria of their respective First Nation.
- 3.4 Any financial assistance the applicant may have previously received from their Post Secondary student support program will be taken into consideration when the application is reviewed. The limits of support outlined in Section 5.0 will apply.
- 3.5 Those students that have already obtained a degree through Post Secondary assistance will be dealt with on an individual basis with their respective First Nation.
- 3.6 Any financial assistance the applicant may have previously received from another Local Indian Management Board (LIMB) will be taken into consideration.
- 3.7 Individuals **SHALL NOT** enter into training until funding has been confirmed and approved. Financial Assistance **WILL NOT** be provided without approval prior to start date of course.

4.0 PRIORITIES FOR APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS

- 4.1
 - a) Walk In Client Policy - First Come - First Served, as per eligibility and long term planning of his/her First Nation.
 - b) Eligible students who have not previously received funding from his/her First Nation or WCEI.
 - c) Students who require upgrading of skills and retraining in order to enter the labor market.
- 4.2 Priorities for approval of applications will be determined by each First Nation with consideration of the Post Secondary Board and/or designate in accordance to community priorities and training needs.

- 4.3 Students who took previous training course with financial assistance his/her First Nation in the past 2 years but did not complete his/her course. Student **MAY BE** considered after 1 year in exceptional circumstances.

5.0 LIMITS OF SUPPORT

- 5.1 Support for travel and living expenses **MAY BE** provided.
- 5.2 Funding arrangements will be dealt with on an individual basis and arrangements will depend upon the program and local funding policy.
- a) Community Based Training Programs - Social Assistance **MAY BE** topped up to a maximum of \$300.00 per month. The top-up may be subject to deduction based on attendance and/or non-excused absences.
 - b) Non Community Based Training Programs - Living Allowances as per Appendix B if not eligible for Provincial Training Allowance.
 - c) If financial assistance is provided by other agencies, this will be considered when determining monthly rate (exceptions are scholarships, bursaries and apprenticeship assistance).
 - d) Students who transfer programs more than once require approval of the Manager and/or Board prior to approval of additional funding.
 - e) Students who drop out from any training institute without proper arrangements **MUST** wait two years before he/she is eligible for WCEI funding.
 - f) Students who are discontinued, are required to withdraw, or voluntarily withdraw from any training institute with prior approval from their respective First Nation, WCEI Board and/or Manager **MAY BE** required to wait two years before he/she is eligible for funding again.
 - g) Financial Assistance will not be provided for extensions of programs. Funding will only be provided for original program time frame.
 - h) Students must register for full-time courses/classes in order to receive a living allowance. This also includes 30 hours of study per week and an 80% attendance in class.

5.3 Maximum, Minimum, and Individual Support.

- a) The maximum support for an individual is 30 months, in which 20 months is the maximum for adult basic education.
- b) Minimum age for adult basic education is eighteen (18) years of age with one year out of school. This will be dependent upon their respective First Nation and if the class/course is available within his/her community.
- c) Individuals who have successfully completed a program and/or project will not be eligible for assistance to repeat the same program and/or project.

5.4 That because training dollars are limited and the demand for training is high the WCEI Board of Directors will review all applications that are considered high cost by the Manager. Furthermore, students will be encouraged to seek training from accredited and/or government subsidized institutions, which offer similar programs at a lower cost. Financial Assistance may not be provided for private institutions.

5.5 Students **MAY BE** eligible to receive Employment Insurance Benefits.

- Students must not quit their current employment prior to contacting WCEI.
- Student must apply for benefits.
- Students must be documented by WCEI or a Human Resources Development Canada representative.

5.6 Students **WILL BE** required to re-apply for Student Support annually.

6.0 TYPES OF SUPPORT AND ALLOWANCES

6.1 Tuition and Book Support

This includes student's fees for registration, tuition, tutorials, initial professional certification and examination fees, and reasonable cost of books and supplies which are listed as required by the educational institution.

6.2 Apprenticeship Training

If a student is enrolled in an apprenticeship program, Employment/Unemployment Insurance students **MAY BE** eligible to receive a 2 week waiting period based on the Living Allowance rates as described in Appendix B. Travel coverage may also be available to and from the training site.

6.3 Travel and Relocation and Commuting Support

- a) Students **MAY BE** eligible for travel support to training site and return back home upon completion of studies per year. Students may also be eligible for travel at Christmas Break. To be eligible a student must relocate to pursue or complete the program of studies. If a student is providing his/her own transportation, mileage will be reimbursed at the rate established in operating guidelines, to a maximum of \$300.00. Currently, the rate is \$0.30 per kilometer. The student must apply for travel assistants (Appendix A).
- b) New students with dependents may be eligible for a reasonable relocation allowance to move from the student's home community to the community where the educational institution is located. Relocation will also be paid to return to home community. The rates will be as follows:
- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|----------|
| 1. | 50 to 100 km from residence | \$100.00 |
| 2. | 101 to 300 km from residence | \$200.00 |
| 3. | 301 km and further from residence | \$300.00 |
- c) Approval for a relocation allowance will be dependent upon the student providing verification of the change of address. The student must apply for this assistance. In a household where more than one individual is being sponsored, relocation will be provided to only one person.
- d) Should the student discontinue from training no relocation will be paid for the return to residence?

- e) During the program of studies, students may be required to go on field trips. A daily meal allowance of \$30.00 per day and hotel **MAY BE** provided to participate in these field trips, to a maximum of 1 field trip per program, and a maximum of 3 days. This will be dependent on availability of funds.

6.4 Part-time Studies Support

- a) When a student is taking studies for what is termed less than full time by the institution which offers this program, that student will be eligible for assistance to pay for books, supplies, and tuition fees. Proof of successful completion of studies must be provided before any further funding can be provided.
- b) Students enrolled in correspondence studies or distance education may be eligible for tuition and books assistance if the course/class enhances their education and/or career goal. Student allowances will not be provided for these courses.

6.5 Living Allowance

- a) The living allowance rate structure and entitlement will be set annually in Operating Guidelines. For the current year the rates are attached to this Handbook as Appendix B.
- b) Where there is more than one person in a family receiving living allowance one must claim the living allowance rate equivalent to a married student with employed spouse or a single student.
- c) The support for living is expected to cover such costs as: food, shelter, transportation, clothing, day care, damage deposits and housing costs.
- d) The living allowance will be advanced/issued with 80% on the last Friday of each month and the next 20% on the second Friday of each month.
- e) WCEI will implement a high cost supplement into the existing student allowance structure. The supplement will include an additional one hundred (\$100.00) dollars per month to those individuals residing in non-subsidized rental units; La Ronge will be designated as a high cost area. Individuals must make application for the supplement.

6.6 Advances

- a) Advances are defined as monies that have to be deducted from future student allowance payments.
- b) Advances will be limited to a maximum of one month's living allowance.
- c) Advances will only be given in situations of emergency (i.e. death or illness in the family). The Manager will exercise fair judgment discretion when an advance is requested.

6.7 Allowances for Special Needs Students

- a) Students with special needs (i.e. physically challenged persons) requiring additional assistance related to their educational programs shall have their request considered on an individual basis. Approval of assistance will take into consideration the following factors:
 - Actual cost of intervention services;
 - Availability of assistance from other sources either public (government) or private (association or non-profit group);
 - Practicality as well as convenience.

6.8 Contingency Allowance

- a) Contingency Allowance **MAYBE** provided to students in situations of emergency (i.e. Death or serious illness in the immediate family). The maximum allowed will be \$150.00 per year per student. The manager will exercise fair judgment and discretion when a contingency allowance is requested.

6.9 Medicals may be paid if it is a requirement for a particular program.

7.0 COMPLETION OF COURSE INCENTIVES

Woodland Cree Enterprises Incorporated may establish a process for administration and disbursement of the following incentives subject to the availability of funds. This incentive is available to individuals completing a technical course.

7.1 Graduation Assistance

- a) Graduation Assistance **MAYBE** provided when the student graduates from his/her program of studies at the following rates:
 - 3 to 8 month course \$100.00
 - 9 month to 1 year course \$150.00
 - 1 year plus course \$250.00
- b) The student **MUST** apply for the graduation assistance.
- c) The student **MUST** complete all assignments and studies before any graduation assistance can be given.
- d) Graduation assistance will be released upon proof of successful completion of program requirements.
- e) Students **MAY** apply for graduation assistance **NO LATER** than 30 days after the graduation ceremony.
- f) A graduation bursary of one hundred (\$100.00) dollars **MAY** be granted to individuals who complete each level of an apprenticeship program. Further that the grant be released upon proof of achievement.
- g) For community-based programs, assistance for graduation ceremonies may be provided to a maximum of \$500.00 per program. This will be dependent on availability of funds.

8.0 ACCOUNTABILITY

- 8.1 Every effort will be made by WCEI to recover overpayments to students who misuse funding by not fulfilling the terms of the annual contract entered into, or misrepresent their marital, dependent, or program status on the application.
- 8.2 When misuse of WCEI funds is discovered, the WCEI Student Support Program will adopt the following procedures:
 - a) Write a letter to the individual stating the findings and inviting an explanation.
 - b) If the student is in fact, found to be a misuser of funding, the WCEI Student Support Program will suspend that student from further funding or take other corrective action.

8.3 Any student who quits or withdraws from classes must obtain authorization from the WCEI prior to formal cancellation of classes.

9.0 FUNDING APPEALS PROCESS

9.1 Every student has the right to appeal a WCEI decision regarding funding; however, when a student application has been refused because there are no funds, this appeal process will not be considered.

9.2 The matter, after discussion with the Manager, must be referred, in writing, to the Chairman of the Board of Director's of Woodland Cree Enterprises Incorporated, who must reply within 7 days.

9.3 If misuse, funding is suspended, the student will be notified in writing. If there is no response, funding will be terminated. The student may appeal within 14 days.

9.4 The WCEI Board of Directors has 14 days from the receipt of the appeal to make their decision. It is understood that a decision can be recommended in less than 14 days.

9.5 If the issue is still not resolved then SITAG can hear the student's appeal. SITAG's decision is final and binding on all parties.

9.6 If at any of these steps the student(s) presence is requested the student(s) travel expenses **MAY BE** reimbursed or covered according to Operating Guideline rates.

10.0 OBLIGATIONS OF STUDENTS

10.1 It is understood that the WCEI Student Support Program is intended to provide support for students with a serious intent to succeed in his/her education. Expectations are that the student will attend classes regularly, submit assignments as required by their programs, and generally apply themselves to their studies. Students are expected to conduct themselves so as to bring credit to their peers and to themselves. A student contract such as the one at Appendix C must be signed and returned to the WCEI Student Support Program office before their first cheque is issued.

10.2 Staff and Board try to work with professionalism and diligence to serve our communities and First Nation members in the WCEI area. There is a ZERO TOLERANCE policy towards any abusive behaviour directed at our staff and board, this includes:

1. **Physically abuse or threaten staff or board member**
2. **Verbally abuse; -swearing or causing a disturbance
 -using obscene language**
3. **Being intoxicated or drunk within the Band Offices.**

We cannot tolerate any abusive behaviour toward our staff and board.

10.3 Students will be dealt with fairly and equitably under the WCEI Student Support Program and are expected to diligently apply themselves to their duties as students.

10.4 In the event that the student, through his/her department, indicates a lack of success in his/her studies and if this opinion is borne out through the institution being attended, it may be necessary to reallocate resources by terminating the student's support and applying the funds in areas showing greater promise or success.

10.5 It is the responsibility of the student to notify the WCEI Student Support Program staff in writing of any changes in address, telephone, marital status, dependents, etc. as soon as possible.

10.6 In the event of unauthorized withdrawals any living allowance or other payments must be recovered before additional funding is approved.

11.0 OBLIGATION OF THE WCEI PROGRAM

11.1 WCEI administration will clearly set out obligations to and of students regarding policy and related documents or by such other means as may be mutually advantageous to the students and WCEI.