	Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma Policy & Procedure	Date submitted/author: 01/14/2020 Compliance Review: 01/14/2020 Tribal Administrator Approval: 01/14/2020 Business Committee Approval: 01/14/2020
	Policy & Procedure #: GS-TA16-01	Revision Dates: 5/8/14; 8/31/15; 3/17/16; 10/11/16; 10/13/17; 8/16/18; 09/20/2018; 10/30/2019; 12/05/2019; 01/14/2020
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	Program: Tribal Assistance Program	
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Purpose: The Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma (ITO) has established the Tribal Assistance Program (TAP) to financially supplement enrolled Tribal members in the areas of Burial Assistance, Household Assistance, Hearing Aid Assistance, Elder Living Assistance, Veteran Assistance, School Expense Assistance, College Expense Assistance, Education Incentive, Education Incentive – Higher Education, High School Senior Assistance, and Hardship Assistance. The Tribe also offers a supplemental healthcare benefit through CoreSource.

Scope: Enrolled Tribal Members; specific areas have specific age requirements for eligibility.

Policy: The following guidelines apply to all assistance Programs:


1. Applicant must be an enrolled member of the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma.
2. All requests must be submitted on an official Tribal Assistance Application.
3. Forms must be complete, legible, and include all required documents.
4. Incomplete applications will not be processed and will be returned to the applicant for corrections.
5. After 1 business day, applications may not be cancelled or rescinded once submitted.
6. All receipts must be from January 1 through December 31 of current year, with date and name of vendor.
7. Fraudulent activity is subject to prosecution. Any fraud investigation of Iowa Tribal programs will result in suspension of all Tribal benefits.
8. Allow fourteen (14) business days for processing.
9. Weekly cutoff time for receiving and processing applications is Thursday at 3:00 PM. All requests received after 3:00 PM on Thursday will be processed the following week.
10. All vendors paid by the Tribe must complete and have on file a W-9 Form.
11. If Tribal member is not named on lease, statement, or bill, a written statement must also accompany request stating that the Tribal member is residing there.
12. The Tribe will retain confidential files documenting all requests and will shred supporting documents after two (2) years.
13. In the event the utility account is closed any remaining funds paid by the Iowa Tribe must be returned back to the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma. Funds will be credited back to the TMs tribal assistant account provided the refund is received in the same calendar year.
14. The Iowa Tribe will accept applications for 5 business days following the end of each calendar year for reimbursement applications only. Applications must be accompanied by a receipt dated within the previous calendar year's eligibility period from June-December.

Procedure: Each type of assistance has specific procedures as listed below.

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1. Burial Assistance

- a. Burial Assistance is provided to assist in the cost of the funeral and traditional ceremonial expenses at the time of death of a Tribal member.
- b. Amount of assistance: \$9,000
- c. Specific guidelines:
 - 1) The deceased must have been an enrolled Tribal member.
 - 2) The person completing the application on behalf of the deceased family must be the next-of kin. Cases of dispute will be determined by action of the Business Committee.
 - 3) The application must be supported by presentation of the death certificate or other official documentation of death provided by a funeral home. If the funeral home is unable to provide documentation in a timely manner, program staff may verify the information via telephone so that the family's portion of the assistance may be paid.
 - 4) Written documentation must be received before the Tribe will release the check to the funeral home.
 - 5) The Tribe will pay \$7,500 directly to the funeral home and up to \$1,500 to the family to provide for additional funeral expenses, or the family may request that all funds will be paid to the funeral home.
 - 6) Pre-payment of funeral expenses will be made directly to the chosen funeral home with submission of estimate or proposed package.
 - 7) Reimbursements for pre-paid funeral costs are ONLY available if purchased before March 31st, 2016.

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2. Burial Assistance – Infants

- a. Burial Assistance for infants is provided to assist in the cost of funeral expenses at the time of death of an infant of an enrolled Tribal member.
- b. Amount of assistance: \$1,500
- c. Specific guidelines:
 - 1) The infant deceased must have been the biological child of an enrolled Tribal member, who, if they had survived, would have been eligible for membership with the Tribe.
 - 2) The application must be supported by presentation of the death certificate or other official documentation of death provided by a funeral home.
 - 3) Total funds will be paid directly to the funeral home.

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3. Household Assistance

- a. Household Assistance is to supplement the cost of household expenses.
- b. Eligibility requirements: 18 years of age or older.
- c. Eligibility Time Period: January 1 – June 30 and July 1 – December 31
- d. Amount of assistance: \$4,000 (Allotted \$2,000 January-June; \$2,000 July-December)
- e. Specific guidelines:
 - 1) Eligible items include ONLY: Property taxes, property/ rental insurance, utilities, rent, mortgage, HOA dues, auto insurance, cable, phone, and internet payments. This does not include phone cards, phone purchases, or equipment costs.
 - 2) Applicants should continue paying their household i.e. utility/ rent, insurance payments during the processing period. The Tribe is not responsible for late charges that may incur or cut-off notices.
 - 3) Rent, mortgage, HOA dues, utility, property taxes and property/ rental, or auto insurance payments may be reimbursed with current year receipts or paid directly to the vendor.
 - 4) Applications must be supported with an invoice, a current utility bill, current lease, or original, current year receipt of payment.
 - 5) Rent paid to an individual will be paid to the property owner only. We can only pay an individual landlord one month of rent per month.
 - 6) Pledges to vendors may only be made once a year per household and cannot be cancelled.
 - 7) Full loan agreement must be provided on mortgage and mobile home payment requests; a payment stub is not considered sufficient backup for these types of requests.
 - 8) Applicant must reside at same location for at least 6 months or the utility deposit paid will revert back to the Iowa Tribe, unless service is transferred to a new location.
 - 9) In the event the utility account is closed any remaining funds paid by the Iowa Tribe must be returned back to the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma. Funds will be credited back to the TMs tribal assistant account provided the refund is received in the same calendar year.
 - 10) Auto insurance assistance requires that the tribal member must be named on the auto insurance policy. A detailed insurance policy identifying the Tribal member's cost is a requirement. The Tribe will only pay the tribal member's portion of the policy.

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4. CoreSource Supplemental Healthcare Benefit

- a. The Tribe has contracted CoreSource to provide a supplemental benefit card to each Tribal member to quickly process dental, vision, prescription, and other healthcare assistance needs. The website for this vendor is www.CoreSource.com.
- b. Eligibility Time Period: May 1 - December 31 2014; January 1 - December 31 2015 (and each year thereafter)
- c. Amount of assistance: \$3,000 per year per minor and \$4,000 per year per adult (can be used at any time during the year)
- d. Specific guidelines:
 - 1) Each adult Tribal member will be issued a debit card, called a Benny Card that automatically deducts payment from the member's benefit account when presented to a health-related vendor that accepts MasterCard. Dependent benefits will also be placed on the adult guardian's card. Directions for activating the cards will be mailed to each Tribal member and is also available on the CoreSource website.
 - 2) Tribal members must save their original receipts when using the Benny Card in case an expense must be verified.
 - 3) Samples of eligible items include: dental services, lab exams/ tests, vision services, medical equipment supplies and services, medical treatment, medication, medical supplies prescribed by a doctor, and other qualified medical expenses. Detailed information is available at the CoreSource website.
 - 4) Samples of ineligible expenses include cosmetic surgery, toiletries, diaper service, hair loss medications, hair transplants, health club dues, insurance premiums, marriage counseling, and vitamins or nutritional supplements. Detailed information is available at the CoreSource website.
 - 5) Approved health-related items can be reimbursed by check from CoreSource by submitting reimbursement request form and receipts. Forms are available at the website www.CoreSource.com.
 - 6) Approved health-related items can be reimbursed by deposit directly into your bank account by submitting reimbursement request form and receipts.
 - 7) Account balances may be checked online at www.myCoreSource.com or by calling 1-877-267-3359.

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5. Hearing Aid Assistance

- a. Hearing Aid Assistance supplements costs for hearing wellness.
- b. Eligibility Time Period: January 1 – December 31
- c. Amount of assistance: \$2,500 initial set-up/ \$1,000 maintenance
- d. Specific guidelines:
 - 1) Open to all ages.
 - 2) Applicants may elect to have funds paid directly to the provider or may be reimbursed for expenses.
 - 3) For provider payments, applicants must be pre-approved before the medical exam. Following approval, a letter of authorization will be issued to applicant to schedule an appointment. The letter must be used with sixty (60) days or the applicant must re-apply.
 - 4) For reimbursements, applications must be supported by an original, current year receipt before funds are released to the applicant.

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6. Elder Assistance

- a. Elder Assistance promotes the quality of life for Tribal senior citizens age 55 years and older.
- b. Eligibility Time Period: January 1 – June 30 and July 1 – December 31
- c. Amount of assistance: \$3,000 (Allotted \$1,500 January-June; \$1,500 July-December)
- d. Specific guidelines:
 - 1) Items for assistance include: Household expenses and repairs, personal costs, appliances, furniture, medical expenses, loan payments, car payments, and utility payments.
 - 2) Application must be supported by estimated bids, invoices, and current year, original receipts.
 - 3) Gift cards may be requested with an itemization of proposed expenses.
 - 4) Applicants may elect to have funds paid directly to the vendor or may be reimbursed for expenses.
 - 5) For reimbursements, applications must be supported by an original, current year receipt before funds are released to the applicant.

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7. Veteran Assistance

- a. Veteran Assistance promotes the quality of life for Tribal Veterans and active duty military Tribal members.
- b. Eligibility Time Period: January 1 – June 30 and July 1 – December 31
- c. Amount of assistance: \$2,000 (Allotted \$1,000 January-June; \$1,000 July-December)
- d. Specific guidelines:
 - 1) Items for assistance include: Household expenses and repairs, personal costs, appliances, furniture, medical expenses, loan payments, car payments, cable, and telephone.
 - 2) Application must be supported by copy of DD214 showing honorable or general discharge, or current statement of active duty military service.
 - 3) Discharges other than honorable will be disqualified from the program.
 - 4) Application must be accompanied by estimated bids, invoices, and original, current year receipts.
 - 5) Available gift cards may be requested with an itemization of proposed expenses.
 - 6) Applicants may elect to have funds paid directly to the vendor or may be reimbursed for expenses.
 - 7) For reimbursements applications must be supported by an original, current year receipt before funds are released to the applicant.

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8. Hardship Assistance

- a. Hardship Assistance is provided to meet the emergency needs of our Tribal members.
- b. Eligibility Time Period: January 1 – December 31
- c. Amount of assistance: Hardship requests use any available Household Assistance funds.
- d. Specific guidelines:
 - 1) Death of a family member: (Hardship A)
 - 2) Work-related transportation need: (Hardship B)
 - 3) Medical emergency: (Hardship C)
 - 4) Payments are made directly to the vendor only; no reimbursements.
 - 5) Each Tribal member is allowed only one request per calendar year.
 - 6) If other programs offer assistance for the need in question, those avenues should be used and exhausted first.
 - 7) A written statement of need is required from the Tribal Member.
 - 8) Backup documentation may be required, such as a death certificate or statement of death, medical statement signed by the doctor, or auto estimate for auto repairs. (All Auto repairs must be submitted BEFORE repairs are made).
 - 9) Gift cards from Walmart may be used for gas and supplies under the Hardship requests A and C.

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9. School Expense Assistance – Grades 0-12

- a. School Expense Assistance is provided to encourage and promote education for youth.
- b. Eligibility Time Period: January 1 – June 30 and July 1 – December 31
- c. Amount of assistance: \$2,000 (Allotted \$1,000 January 1 – June 30; \$1,000 July 1 – December 31)
- d. Specific guidelines:
 - 1) Student must be enrolled in an accredited public or private school or licensed child care facility.
 - 2) Expense includes: year books, academics, extra-curricular activity participation and supplies, clothing, pictures, class rings, lunches, supplies, lab fees, testing fees, graduation expenses, sports activities, summer academic fees, science projects; computers, laptops, tablets, printers (computers, laptops, and tablets once every 2 years), and required accessories for school-age children pre-K through senior year.
 - 3) Gift cards from Walmart, JCPenney, Hibbett Sports, Academy Sports & Outdoors, or Target may be requested for school age children pre-K through senior year. Eligible purchases include any items *required* for school or extra-curricular activities, including: clothing, shoes, undergarments, school supplies, or computer/ printer. Gift cards may also be requested for infants 0-3, but the gift cards for infants may *only* be used for clothing, shoes, or undergarments (not including diapers or Pull-Ups). Receipts for all gift cards must be returned to ITO in two (2) weeks from the date the card was received. No exceptions will be made; if receipts are not returned, the applicant will no longer be eligible for gift cards. No more than \$200 in gift cards may be issued at a time. Full amount of gift card(s) must be used, and the guardian is responsible for any sales tax or balance exceeding the gift card amount. Guardian may be reimbursed for eligible expenses paid over the gift card amount. Each guardian is responsible for turning in receipts for gift cards issued to them.
 - 4) For joint custody, it will be agreed upon by both parents that the Iowa Tribal guardian will be the only guardian to apply for assistance.
 - 5) Childcare may be paid; however, vendor must be a Tribal or a state licensed child care facility.
 - 6) Applicants may elect to have funds paid directly to the vendor or may be reimbursed for expenses.
 - 7) For reimbursements, applications must be supported by original, current year receipts before funds are released to the applicant.
 - 8) Funds are paid directly to the applicant or legal guardian if under 18 years of age.

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10. High School Senior Assistance

- a. High School Senior Assistance is provided to offset the added expenses for graduating seniors.
- b. Eligibility Time Period: Once/lifetime, academic year: August 1 – June 30
- c. Amount of assistance: \$3,000 (Allotted \$1,500 August 1 – December 31 and \$1,500 January 1 – June 30.)
- d. Specific guidelines:
 - 1) Applicant must be a high school student anticipating 12th grade graduation.
 - 2) Application must be supported by a statement from the high school on an official school letterhead stating the date of planned graduation and signed by a school official.
 - 3) The Iowa Tribe reserves the right to independently verify the submitted statement.
 - 4) Expenses may include: senior yearbook, cap and gown, announcements, pictures, class ring, computer, senior trip, college testing, or other related graduation expenses.
 - 5) Applicants may elect to have funds paid directly to the vendor, or may be reimbursed for expenses.
 - 6) For reimbursements, applications must be supported by original, current year receipts.
 - 7) Reimbursed funds are paid directly to the applicant or legal guardian if under 18 years of age.

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11. College Expense Assistance

- a. College Expense Assistance is provided to encourage and promote education for post - secondary students.
- b. Eligibility Time Period: January 1 – June 30 and July 1 – December 31
- c. Amount of assistance: \$1,600 (Allotted \$800 January 1 – June 30; \$800 July 1 – December 31)
- d. Specific guidelines:
 - 1) Students must show proof of enrollment with current class schedule leading to a degree.
 - 2) Expense includes school associated cost i.e. supplies, books, technological aides, computers, tablets, or laptops (computers, laptops, and tablets once every 2 years). No clothing or transportation will be covered under this program.
 - 3) Applicants may elect to have funds paid directly to the vendor or may be reimbursed for expenses.
 - 4) For reimbursements, applications must be supported by original, current year receipts.
 - 5) Reimbursed funds are paid directly to the applicant or legal guardian if under 18 years of age.
 - 6) For all other post-secondary education needs (such as vocational programs),-please refer to the Higher Education Program at Iowa Tribe.

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12. Education Incentive

- a. Education Incentive is given to promote education achievement for completion of the 8th grade, 12th grade, and GED or Vocational training.
- b. Eligibility Time Period: January 1 - December 31 Once per year
- c. Amount of assistance: Individually calculated
- d. Specific guidelines:
 - 1) Applications must be signed by the education institution supported by the graduation certificate submitted, within 120 days after the close of the semester, verifying completion of the following:
 - \$200 – 8th grade graduate
 - \$300 – 12th grade graduate
 - \$300 – GED Completion
 - \$300 – Vocational training of 800 clock hours or more
 - 2) Funds are paid directly to the applicant or legal guardian if under 18 years of age.

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13. Education Incentive-Higher Education

- a. Education Incentive-Higher Education is given to promote higher education achievement.
- b. Eligibility Time Period: Once per academic semester
- c. Amount of assistance: Individually calculated
- d. Specific guidelines:
 - 1) Applicant must be enrolled in an accredited university or taking college courses leading to a degree program.
 - 2) Applications must be supported by an official transcript submitted within 120 days after the close of the semester and/or receipt of grades.
 - 3) The Tribe reserves the right to independently verify the submitted grades.
 - 4) Incentive is calculated by multiplying the dollar amount, which is based on current grade point average (GPA), times the credit hours passed per semester.
 - \$92 – Graduate level
 - \$70 GPA of 3.5 or higher
 - \$65 GPA of 2.5 to 3.49
 - \$60 GPA of 2.0 to 2.49
 - \$00 GPA of less than 2.0
 - 5) Funds are paid directly to the applicant or legal guardian if under 18 years of age.