

\$3M in State Funding for Minnesota's Tribal Colleges Talking Points - May 2022

Q: What do the Sovereigns need Minnesota State funding for?

A: Federal funding to Tribal Colleges covers only the bare minimum, leaving many operational issues.

- Chronic understaffing – All staff members commonly fulfill 2-3 roles and jobs.
- Salaries are only 50-80% of other Minnesota public colleges, resulting in burnout and higher turnover, on top of other rural HR challenges.
- There is no funding for Infrastructure, e.g. housing, wellness centers, storage facilities.

Almost 100% of Tribal College students live in extreme poverty, so tuition & fees cannot be increased to provide more college funding.

For the past 30 years, Tribal Colleges have been the ONLY public schools in Minnesota required to educate Minnesota residents without receiving any state public operational and capital funding.

- Native Americans living in Minnesota are **UNIQUE**, essentially **Dual Citizens** – citizens of their Tribal Nation, **AND ALSO** residents of the State of Minnesota.
- Those who attend Tribal Colleges in Minnesota are the **ONLY** Minnesota residents who are **NOT** supported by operational funding at the public school of their choice.

This educational inequity is unfair and is contrary to Minnesota's constitutional laws, statutes, and policies intended to prevent any discrimination in education based on race, nationality, or minority status.

**Q: Why don't the Tribal Colleges just ask for one year of funding?
Maybe they could seek full funding in next year's budget?**

A: Like every other public institution of higher education in Minnesota, Tribal Colleges have an urgent annual need for funding. Tribal College funding should be part of the regular MN higher education annual budget.

Would any other public college or university in Minnesota be able to operate without State funding? Probably not. Most other Minnesota schools receive approximately 15%-18% of their operational funding from the State. Tribal Colleges have been struggling without this.

Tribal Colleges have gone without State funding for almost 30 years. Postponing funding further, or limiting it to one year is unreasonable and unjust.

Q: Why would we fund the Tribal Colleges if we have no accountability from them at all?

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A: Tribal Colleges are currently required to provide the State with **ALL** student data and information because of State funding of individual Native students, the Minnesota Indian Scholarship Program, and non-Natives at Tribal Colleges. The State **ALREADY** receives reports of enrollment, degrees conferred, FTE, completion and graduation rates.

The State of Minnesota CURRENTLY has the same accountability for Tribal Colleges as it has with ALL MN public schools. This will continue. Tribal Colleges volunteer this information and will continue to do so in order to continue to receive funding for their students and their schools. In addition, we follow MNSCU academic goal areas, so our students can transfer and feed into the MN State system. Tribal Colleges ARE feeder schools for MN State schools.

TOP 7 REASONS TO APPROVE THIS FUNDING PROPOSAL

1. To adhere to Minnesota Law, Statutes, & Policies.

MN CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE 1 BILL OF RIGHTS, *Sec. 2. RIGHTS & PRIVILEGES.*

No member of this state shall be disfranchised or deprived of any of the rights or privileges secured to any citizen thereof, unless by the law of the land or the judgment of his peers.

Minn. Stat. § 363A.01

The Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability.

It prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, **education**, credit, and business based on protected class, such as: race, religion, disability, national origin, sex, marital status, familial status, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

The MN Department of Education statement on Discrimination:

Discrimination means that an individual (or group) is being treated unfairly or unequally based on a protected characteristic. In Minnesota, these protected characteristics are race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability. Discrimination can occur as a result of stereotype or intentional discrimination, or it can occur when an organization's policy or practice affects a group of people differently than it affects another group. Although everyone is protected from discrimination, discrimination occurs when you are treated differently because of a particular protected characteristic.

MN Tribal Colleges are being treated differently than ALL other MN public colleges and, therefore, are being discriminated against, by NOT receiving MN public funding for MN public schools.

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2. Tribal Colleges ARE Public Institutions.

Tribal Colleges students are Minnesota residents attending public schools in Minnesota. All Tribal Colleges get Federal funding, which requires that they be open to the public.

3. Equity between Native & Non-Native Students attending Tribal Colleges.

Native students at Minnesota Tribal Colleges do currently receive:

- MN State Scholarships
- MN Indian Scholarship Program (MISP)

Non-Native students attending Minnesota Tribal Colleges receive \$ for their schools:

- MN Non-Beneficiary Funding

MN Tribal Colleges get NO FUNDING for Native students attending their schools. This great contradiction against ALL MN laws, highlights the tremendous inequity of only Native students NOT being able to get supported with funding for their schools of choice at MN Tribal Colleges.

4. To Help Address Historical, Social and Racial Inequities.

Minnesota exists on traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of Indigenous people. For almost two centuries, Natives have suffered the effects of loss of land, language, and culture, and have been left with a legacy of intergenerational trauma and poverty. Funding this proposal will be a small step toward helping address the historical inequities and education tragedies which continue in Minnesota for Natives and Tribal Colleges.

Funding this Tribal College proposal is the right thing to do.

5. The Timing is Perfect during a MN State Budget Surplus.

Minnesota currently has a \$9 billion budget surplus.

There has been discussion of using the surplus to address the most urgent of educational issues in MN. This is one of the most urgent of items. The timing is right to address it now. This is the perfect time to address the worst education gaps in the state.

Without funding, the education gap for Natives will only continue to grow worse. Tribal Colleges are one of the best solutions to addressing Native education gaps.

6. Huge MN Return on Investment (ROI). Tribal Colleges educate students out of poverty and assist them in becoming more independent, productive, tax-paying MN citizens. Tribal College graduates also feed into the MN State system schools.

7. Our Request is a Relatively Tiny Investment & Huge Return on Investment (ROI).

\$3M is a tiny investment for the most underserved of Minnesota residents in higher education, especially when compared to the approximate \$1.1B, 2022 budget allocation for the U of M and MN State system schools, and \$57B total MN 2-year, budget.