

2025-26 Native American Fee Waiver Report

Department of Academic and Student Affairs

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The Nevada System of Higher Education

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Background

In 2021, the Nevada State Legislature enacted [Assembly Bill 262](#) (Chapter 349, *Statutes of Nevada 2021*) requiring the Board of Regents to grant a waiver of the base registration fee, laboratory fees, and all other mandatory fees associated with enrollment for an eligible Native American student who is a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe or nation, all or part of which is located within the boundaries of Nevada, or is certified by the enrollment department of a tribe or nation or the Bureau of Indian Affairs as being a descendant of an enrolled member of such a tribe or nation, all or part of which is located within the boundaries of Nevada. Additional eligibility requirements include enrollment in a school within the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE); being a resident of the State for not less than one year; maintaining a 2.0 grade point average (GPA); and completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

During the 2023 Session, the Nevada Legislature enacted [Assembly Bill 150](#) (Chapter 431, *Statutes of Nevada 2023*) which expanded student eligibility and fees covered by the waiver effective July 1, 2023. Accordingly, in June 2023 the [Board of Regents Handbook, Title 4, Chapter 17](#) was updated to bring Board policy into alignment with these new provisions. Assembly Bill 150 also appropriated General Fund dollars to NSHE in order to partially defray the cost of granting the waivers during the 2023-2025 Biennium. Additionally, during the 2025 Session, an appropriation from the General Fund was approved for the NSHE budget to continue to partially defray the costs of the fee waiver program.

This report is written to satisfy the annual reporting requirements outlined in *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 396.54495. Accordingly, information is provided on the number of students that qualified for the NSHE Native American Fee Waiver, ranging from 140 recipients in 2021-22 to 888 in 2025-26, as well as the “total funding made available for the waiver.” In addition to the \$457,449 appropriation made by the Legislature through Assembly Bill 150 for each fiscal year of the 2023-2025 Biennium, a one-time distribution of \$1,670,563 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds was made by the State of Nevada to offset waiver costs in 2023-24. Between the Assembly Bill 150 appropriation and these ARPA funds, NSHE institutions were reimbursed for all Native American Fee Waivers issued for 2023-24 as of April 1, 2024, resulting in foregone revenue of \$77,049 for that fiscal year. With no additional funding available beyond the annual state appropriation, foregone revenue increased to \$3,468,854 in 2024-25 and \$4,406,271 in 2025-26, a 27 percent increase over the prior year.

Program Eligibility

Institutional Eligibility

Eligible institutions where students may use the waiver include all NSHE universities and community colleges:

- University of Nevada, Las Vegas;
- University of Nevada, Reno;
- Nevada State University;
- College of Southern Nevada;

- Great Basin College;
- Truckee Meadows Community College; and
- Western Nevada College.

Student Eligibility

Effective July 1, 2023, in order to be eligible for the Native American Fee Waiver, a student must:

- Be a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe or nation or certified by the enrollment department of such a tribe or nation or by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as being a descendant of an enrolled member of a tribe or nation, regardless of membership status;
- Be enrolled at an NSHE institution; including, without limitation, enrollment in a dual credit course through a program for dual credit;
- Have maintained at least a 2.0 grade point average, on a 4.0 scale, each semester or the equivalent of a 2.0 grade point average if a different scale is used;
- Have completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid unless the student is or will be enrolled exclusively in one or more dual credit courses through a program for dual credit; and
- Meet one of the following criteria:
 - Be a bona fide resident of this State, as defined in NRS 396.540;
 - Be a member or descendant of an enrolled member of an Indian tribe or nation, all or part of which is located within the boundaries of this State; or
 - Currently reside on qualified tribal land, whether his or her actual residence was located within or outside of the boundaries of this State, and has been such a resident for not less than 1 year.

Waiver Amount

Effective July 1, 2023, AB 150 includes several provisions that increased the cost of providing the waiver. It expanded eligibility for the waiver to certain students who are enrolled members or descendants of enrolled members of tribes or nations from outside Nevada. It also significantly expanded the types of programs and courses for which the waiver may be used, to include dual enrollment, non-credit, non-state-funded (self-supporting) and summer term courses. Notably, AB 150 also eliminated the “last dollar” aspect of the fee waiver, no longer taking into account federal gift aid the student received when calculating the waiver amount. This means that all eligible students receive a fee waiver equal to the amount of the base registration fee and all other mandatory fees, regardless of other aid received.

Recipients and Cost Since Waiver Inception

Tables 1 and 2 below provide the number of recipients and dollars waived since the Native American Fee Waiver first became available to students in Fall 2021. With the enactment of Assembly Bill 150 in 2023, the fee waiver became applicable for summer; therefore, summer is included as a header beginning with the 2023-24 academic year.

Table 1: Number of Recipients by Institution – 2021-22 to 2025-26

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
UNLV	10	19	47	104	136
UNR	73	94	197	261	320
NSU	1	1	6	13	16
CSN	4	4	21	37	56
GBC	18	11	58	73	91
TMCC	24	26	105	158	185
WNC	10	19	52	62	84
NSHE Total	140	174	486	708	888

Source: NSHE Student Data Warehouse.

Note: Beginning with reporting year 2023-24, summer is included as a header.

Due to the last dollar structure of the waiver during Academic Years 2021-22 and 2022-23, it is important to note that in both years there were waiver applicants who met all eligibility criteria but did not receive a waiver due to receipt of federal education benefits equal to or greater than the amount of fees charged to each student. In 2022-23 there were 50 students in this category, and in 2021-22 there were 24. Beginning in 2023-24, all eligible applicants received a waiver due to the discontinuation of the last dollar approach with the enactment of Assembly Bill 150.

Table 2: Total Value Waived by Institution – 2021-22 to 2025-26

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
UNLV	\$39,609	\$141,661	\$429,075	\$1,094,649	\$1,329,420
UNR	\$330,655	\$443,479	\$1,275,664	\$2,052,261	\$2,500,846
NSU	\$653	\$3,135	\$24,907	\$50,125	\$61,583
CSN	\$7,056	\$6,448	\$37,335	\$84,620	\$128,440
GBC	\$26,626	\$29,079	\$156,481	\$209,229	\$277,837
TMCC	\$30,045	\$47,451	\$193,268	\$304,665	\$373,027
WNC	\$22,806	\$30,959	\$88,332	\$130,755	\$192,567
NSHE Total	\$457,449	\$702,212	\$2,205,061	\$3,926,303	\$4,863,720
State Appropriation	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$457,449	\$457,449	\$457,449
Other Funding	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,670,563	\$0.00	\$0.00
Foregone Revenue	\$457,449	\$702,212	\$77,049	\$3,468,854	\$4,406,271

Source: NSHE Student Data Warehouse.

Note: Totals may not match exactly due to rounding. Beginning with reporting year 2023-24, summer is included as a header.

Source of other funding in 2023-24 is the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Success Metrics

Systemwide fall-to-fall persistence among Native American Fee Waiver recipients has shown overall improvement since the program's inception, with persistence remaining relatively stable in 2024-25. While persistence varied by institution and academic year, the 2024-25 data continues to demonstrate strong year-to-year persistence among waiver recipients systemwide.

Table 3: Fall-to-Fall Persistence by Native American Fee Waiver Recipients – 2021-22 to 2024-25

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
UNLV	87.50%	88.24%	90.91%	88.24%
UNR	81.97%	87.50%	90.12%	87.50%
NSU	0.0%	0.0%	100.00%	88.89%
CSN	50.00%	33.33%	78.57%	90.91%
GBC	64.29%	62.50%	74.42%	73.58%
TMCC	50.00%	60.00%	68.92%	65.09%
WNC	66.67%	64.29%	58.06%	70.73%
NSHE Total	73.64%	78.87%	80.89%	80.74%

Source: NSHE Student Data Warehouse.

Note: Fall-to-fall persistence includes students who received the fee waiver in a fall semester and either enrolled the following fall or earned a degree at any NSHE institution. Recipients are counted in each year the waiver was received.

Graduation data below reflects the percentage of students who received the Native American Fee Waiver in a given academic year and subsequently earned a degree or certificate by June 2025, based on the most recent graduation data available (Table 4). An individual student may be included in multiple academic-year cohorts if they received the waiver in more than one year. Additionally, a student may have received a first or subsequent waiver at any point during their academic career.

Because the Native American Fee Waiver was first introduced in academic year 2021-22, recipients from more recent waiver cohorts may not yet have had sufficient time to complete a degree or certificate. Accordingly, the percentages shown represent graduation outcomes as of June 2025 and are expected to increase as additional graduation data becomes available.

Table 4: Native American Fee Waiver Recipient Graduation by Institution – 2021-22 to 2024-25

	Received Fee Waiver in 2021-22 & Graduated by 6/2025	Received Fee Waiver in 2022-23 & Graduated by 6/2025	Received Fee Waiver in 2023-24 & Graduated by 6/2025	Received Fee Waiver in 2024-25 & Graduated by 6/2025
UNLV	50.00%	52.63%	36.17%	17.31%
UNR	61.64%	50.00%	39.09%	20.31%
NSU	100.00%	0.00%	16.67%	23.08%
CSN	25.00%	50.00%	52.38%	21.62%
GBC	66.67%	36.36%	36.21%	27.40%
TMCC	45.83%	36.36%	31.43%	13.29%
WNC	50.00%	36.84%	36.54%	14.52%
NSHE Total	57.14%	45.40%	36.83%	18.64%

Source: NSHE Student Data Warehouse.

Conclusion

Approved by the Nevada Legislature during the 2021 Legislative Session, the Native American Fee Waiver program was first implemented in academic year 2021-22. During that year, 140 students received \$457,449 in fee waivers, while an additional 24 students qualified for the waiver but did not receive one because federal education benefits covered the applicable fees. In 2022-23, 174 students received \$702,212 in fee waivers, representing a 53.5 percent increase in dollars waived over the prior year. An additional 50 students qualified for the waiver but did not receive one because their applicable fees were covered by federal education benefits. Over the first two academic years, the program resulted in approximately \$1.16 million in foregone revenue for NSHE institutions.

Following the expansion of the fee waiver under Assembly Bill 150, participation increased substantially in 2023-24, with 486 students receiving waivers totaling \$2,205,061. This represented a 179 percent increase in recipients and a 214 percent increase in dollars waived over the prior year. Of the total cost of waivers provided in 2023-24, only \$77,049 resulted in foregone revenue due to the legislative appropriation provided through Assembly Bill 150 and an allocation of ARPA funds from the State.

Following continued growth in 2024-25, the program reached its highest level of participation to date in 2025-26, with 888 students receiving a Native American Fee Waiver and \$4,863,720 in total fees waived, representing increases of 25.4 percent and 23.9 percent, respectively, over the prior year. The \$457,449 state appropriation covered approximately 9 percent of the total cost of waivers in 2025-26. With no additional funding available to offset these costs, foregone revenue

across NSHE institutions totaled \$4,406,271, an increase of approximately 27 percent from the prior year.

According to the requirements of Senate Bill 72, during the 2023-24 Interim, the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education conducted a study concerning NSHE fee waivers. At its August 22, 2024, Work Session, the Committee voted to propose legislation standardizing the conditions and requirements of NSHE fee waivers and recommended that the Legislature consider state funding to offset costs associated with new or expanded fee waiver programs.

During the 2025 Legislative Session, Assembly Bill 532 and Senate Bill 308 included provisions to standardize fee waivers, but neither measure advanced by the applicable legislative deadline. Assembly Bill 397, which proposed revisions to eligibility criteria, was approved by the Legislature but ultimately vetoed by the Governor. As a result, the Native American Fee Waiver continues as provided in NRS 396.5449. For each fiscal year of the 2025-2027 Biennium, \$457,449 is included in the NSHE budget to partially defray program costs. As participation and waiver costs continue to grow, the amount of foregone revenue borne by NSHE institutions is also expected to increase.