



TRIBAL COMPUTER PROGRAMMING-Scholarship Program

Purpose: To support the development of computer programming courses serving American Indian students.

Overview: Boost Scholarship Program awards were made available to eligible school districts on a competitive basis. The tribal computer programming boost scholarship program was established in § 20-7-106(2), MCA, to award scholarships to high school educators contracted within the seven Indian Reservations in Montana and high schools serving the Little Shell Chippewa Tribal members.

Eligible Applicants: An eligible school district must use the Boost Scholarship award to fund a high school teacher responsible for technology instruction and currently employed or with a contract for employment in a high school located any of the seven American Indian Reservations or serving members of the Little Shell Chippewa Tribe.

Range of Awards: Boost Scholarship awards may be up to \$2,000.

Project Period: Year 2022-2023. Boost Scholarship Award Applications were due to be submitted by November 21, 2022. The applications were open to school districts on June 1, 2022 and available via OPI's E-Grant at <https://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/Finance-Grants/E-Grants>.



How did OPI share the opportunity?

- The information was shared via American Indian Task Force and MACIE to help spread the word.
- School Improvement Specialist shared the opportunity.
- 21 Schools were contacted on average 5 times via phone conversations, email, and voicemail.
 - The district superintendent was initially contacted and then follow-up conversations and correspondence were with building principals.

Results to date:

- Of the 18 on-reservation high schools, 22% (4 out of the 18) of on expressed interested in applying for the grant, until they learned that the funds had to be specifically applied to course work that is completed within the Montana University System, community, or tribal colleges. The schools who were interested were searching for funds to purchase curriculum, materials, and resources to be used directly with students. It has also been difficult to get educators to take on extra tasks in the current educational climate with an already large workload.
- Montana Universities that are offering online courses related to computer programming were not coding specific. Since the grant must go to on-reservation high schools, we looked at offerings that would be accessible to teachers living on/near reservations. Those listed are programs relating to computer programming for informational technology degrees.
 - Great Falls College Online:
 - Computer Programming AAS
 - Cybersecurity AAS & CTS
 - University of Montana:
 - Introduction to Computer Science (3)
 - Intro to Computer Modeling (3)
 - Intro to Cybersecurity (3)
 - Montana State University- Billings:
 - Introduction to Computers (3)

- Tribal Colleges offering Computer Information System-related programs (in-person):
 - Aaniiih Nakoda College
 - Fort Peck Community College also has an IT Certificate
 - Little Big Horn College offers AS degrees & 1-year certificates.
 - Salish Kootenai College: Certification in Computer Applications as well as AS & BS in IT.
 - Stone Child College- AS in Information Systems and an Information Management Cert.

- The funds that were allocated to the Department of Labor were used to contract Code Girls United. This organization works directly with students and offers training and support to school staff who help with this program. Code Girls United currently offers OPI Renewal Units for educators who complete their training course. Depending on the training, 1-5 units are offered.