

- 1. What is the Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver (MITW)?**  
It is a program enacted by Public Act 174 of 1976, which waives the tuition costs for eligible Native American students in a public community college/university within Michigan.
- 2. How are students determined eligible for this program?**  
To be considered eligible, Native American students must be a Michigan resident and resided in Michigan for twelve consecutive months at the time of application; must qualify for admission at a public, state-funded institution in Michigan; and must be one-quarter (1/4) Native American blood quantum **AND** an enrolled citizen of a U.S. Federally Recognized Tribe (this does not include First Nations from Canada).
- 3. If the student lives in another state or in Canada during the summer, are they eligible to receive the MITW? If a relative lives in Michigan, is eligibility granted if the student resides with that relative during the school year?**  
No. The applicant must be a legal resident of Michigan and resided in Michigan for at least twelve *consecutive* months prior to the time of application.
- 4. Does a student meet the criteria if they are a citizen of a state or historic Tribe or a member of a First Nation in Canada?**  
No, the student must be a citizen of a Federally Recognized Tribe as identified by the United States. The student must be able to submit the application to their Tribal Enrollment Department for certification by an enrollment officer. State/historic Tribes and Canadian First Nations are not recognized by the U.S. government and, therefore, are not eligible.
- 5. How does an individual determine blood quantum? Is there a blood test that an individual can take to determine Native American blood quantum?**  
The blood quantum calculation must be determined *before* the application is submitted. The State of Michigan does not determine blood quantum. A Tribal Enrollment/Membership Department or Tribal genealogy office must complete this process. A blood test will not provide this information. Native American blood quantum is calculated by tracing ancestors and establishing genealogy according to federal and Tribal records.
- 6. When should the student begin the application process for the tuition waiver?**  
The student should begin at the same time as the admissions process and financial aid process. MITW applications may take 2-4 weeks to process. It is the student's responsibility to allow the appropriate amount of time for processing to ensure that the waiver can be sent to the institution. After the application has been processed and if the student is determined eligible, a verification letter will be sent to the institution. If determined ineligible, a denial letter will be sent to the student stating for the reasons for denial.

7. **When will the student receive money for tuition costs?**  
No actual funds are received by the student. Tuition is “waived;” therefore, no monies are applied to the student’s account. All additional expenses (student fees, lab fees, room and board, books, etc.) are the responsibility of the student.
8. **If the student began school before the MITW was approved, is there reimbursement for previously incurred tuition expenses?**  
No. Reimbursement for *prior* semesters is not permitted. The MITW is only applied to the student’s current and subsequent future semesters.
9. **Will the student be required by the college/university to fill out any additional forms?**  
Institutions may have a short financial aid application that is necessary to process the MITW and activate the student’s account. However, completing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is not a requirement but is highly encouraged, regardless of financial status
10. **If the student plans to transfer to another public institution in Michigan, what is required?**  
The student must have a verified MITW application with MiLEAP before requesting a transfer. If a student has already applied and been verified, the student can submit an updated application to MiLEAP, utilizing the ‘Continuing Student’ box to make the request.
11. **Can a student be dual-enrolled at more than one institution and utilize the MITW at both institutions simultaneously?**  
Yes, the MITW can be applied at more than one institution as long as they are public, state-funded colleges/universities in Michigan.
12. **Can the student use the MITW as a part-time student? Can the student use the MITW after graduating with a degree?**  
Yes, the MITW can be used for either part-time or full-time enrollment during any term; and, yes, the student can use the MITW through post-graduate work and for multiple degrees.
13. **Does the student need to reapply every semester/year?**  
No. As long as the student is continuously attending the same school, the statute does not require that a student’s tuition waiver status needs to be renewed once it is in place. A college or university is, however, free to require that a student’s eligibility be re-verified at any time, and might determine it is legally required under some circumstances.
14. **Why is the MITW not available to Native Americans who are not members of U.S. Federally Recognized Tribes?**  
In 2006, Michigan voters passed Proposal 2, (now Article 1, Section 26, of the Michigan Constitution). As a result, it is unconstitutional to provide a benefit to persons based only upon their race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin. The MITW statute remains constitutional only to the extent that it is *not* based on a student’s race or national origin, but on the political interrelationship that exists with sovereign Tribes. The political relationship a student has with their Tribe and the Tribe has with the federal government is what must be evidenced through Tribal citizenship and by a Tribe’s sovereign status.

**15. Does the MiLEAP independently verify a student's blood quantum or qualifications for Tribal citizenship?**

No. Only Federally Recognized Tribes have the sovereign authority to determine their own citizenship. MiLEAP does not certify enrollment in a Federally Recognized Tribe or the student's blood quantum. MiLEAP is responsible for reviewing the application to determine all necessary information has been submitted and all eligibility criteria has been met (residency requirement; eligible college/university; federally recognized Tribal Nation/Alaskan Native Village; Tribally certified membership and blood quantum).

**16. Is the Michigan Tuition Waiver Act based upon a treaty obligation?**

No, the MITW Act was not passed to enforce a particular treaty obligation and there is no particular treaty obligation requiring a college and/or university to waive tuition. Public Act 174 of 1976 (MITW Act) does, however, have a basis which is rooted in treaty history and treaty provisions (specifically the Treaty of Fort Meigs, 1817) and in the Indian Child Removal Policies, specifically the boarding schools, via the Comstock Agreement of 1934.

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