

CPA Canada Mentorship Program for Indigenous Students



A Quick Guide to Postsecondary Scholarships and Bursaries in Canada

What is in this guide?

This is a Quick Guide to Postsecondary Scholarships and Bursaries in Canada.

We want to provide you with a short introduction to scholarships and bursaries available to Indigenous students in postsecondary education. As a high school student preparing to go to university, college or trade school, it is important to learn the basics about scholarships and bursaries. That is what this guide will help you to do.

What is in the guide?

1. **What are scholarships and bursaries?** A introduction to the basics of scholarships and bursaries.
2. **The Big Three.** Not sure where to start? This section will introduce you to the big three scholarships and bursaries for Indigenous students in Canada.
3. **And the list goes on...** You know about the Big Three, and now you're looking for more. Here is a shortlist of awards for your consideration, as well as a search engine to get you started with your own research into what is available.
4. **Five Tips for Success.** How to increase your chances at winning scholarships and bursaries.
5. **Q&A.** Find answers to common questions about scholarships and bursaries.

What are scholarships and bursaries?

Scholarships and bursaries are financial awards that are given to students that do not need to be repaid.

There are two main steps to winning awards:

1. Searching for the right scholarships and bursaries for you
2. Filling out and submitting your applications

Scholarships and bursaries are adjudicated by committees that consider an array of factors in your application, including:

- financial need
- academic achievement
- community involvement
- athletic achievement
- regional requirements
- specific field of studies
- student essays or contests
- other special abilities or circumstances

If you weren't a star athlete or volunteer, don't let that dissuade you from applying. Sometimes it is worth the time it takes to submit an application, even if you aren't sure about your chances.

Bursaries and scholarships are an effective way to offset the costs of postsecondary education. The more time you invest in applying to a range of awards, the greater your chances of accumulating funds to support your postsecondary journey.

The Big Three

- 1. Indspire**
- 2. Future Generations Foundation**
- 3. RBC Future Launch Scholarship for Indigenous Youth**

If you are not sure where to start when it comes to applying for scholarships and bursaries, these are “The Big Three” we recommend.

1. Indspire

- Along with delivering programs and sharing resources, Indspire awards scholarships and grants to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students. In 2017-18, they awarded over \$14.2 million worth of scholarships and bursaries to Indigenous students across Canada.
- To be eligible for a Building Brighter Futures Bursary, Scholarship, or Award offered by Indspire and its partners, applicants must be Indigenous and enrolled in an accredited institution, whether it be an accredited education program or trades training.
- You are eligible for one award per academic year. Fortunately, you do not need to reapply to the next deadline. Your application will stay valid for all three deadlines (August 1, November 1 and February 1). You only need to complete the application once per academic year to be considered for all applicable bursaries, scholarships, and awards.

2. Future Generations Foundation

- The Future Generations Foundation (formerly the NIB Trust Fund) supports education programs aimed at healing, reconciliation, and knowledge building. The goal of the Future Generations Foundation (FG) is to help First Nations and Métis people, organizations, and communities address the long-lasting impacts of the Indian residential school’s system and to support educational programs aimed at healing and reconciliation over many years.
- Once per year, the FG Foundation accepts applications from individuals to support postsecondary education.
- Grounded in the preservation and revitalization of First Nations language, culture and way of life, the FG Foundation provides resourcing to create meaningful opportunities that improve the quality of life for First Nations and Métis people.

3. RBC Future Launch Scholarship for Indigenous Youth

- The RBC Future Launch Scholarship for Indigenous Youth will award 20 scholarships annually valued up to \$10,000 each per year (up to 4 years) to First Nations, Inuit and Métis students across Canada demonstrating strong academic performance and community involvement.
- RBC has been providing a scholarship for Indigenous students to complete post-secondary education since 1992. To date, more than \$2 million dollars have been awarded to 258 Indigenous youth across Canada pursuing post-secondary education. These scholarships are offered to Status Indians, Non-status Indians, Inuit , or Métis.

A note on the post-secondary education funding provided by the federal government:

Indigenous Services Canada administers the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) and the University and College Entrance Preparation Program (UCEPP). These programs are neither scholarships nor bursaries. The PSSSP provides tuition, living allowance and other funding for students in post-secondary programs. The UCEPP provides non-repayable financial support for First Nations students, registered under the Indian Act, who are enrolled in accepted university and college entrance preparation programs.

Funding for this program is provided to First Nations or First Nations-designated organizations as part of core funding agreements with Indigenous governments and organizations. First Nations students who want to pursue post-secondary studies and access available funding programs should contact their local band office or [ISC regional office](#) And the list goes on...

Other scholarships and bursaries

Here is a shortlist of additional awards that are worth checking out. Simply copy the name of the award and paste it into a search engine to get started. We did not provide direct links because the names and online locations of the awards might change.

Metis Nation of Ontario

The MNO bursary program is currently available through 43 post-secondary institutions across Ontario. Métis students can apply to the bursary through their Financial Aid Office once they begin postsecondary studies.

Canada Post Awards for Indigenous Students

The Canada Post Awards for Indigenous Students were created in 2004 to celebrate the hard work and determination of individuals of Indigenous heritage who've embraced a renewed pursuit of learning. The awards are granted annually to select applicants from across the country, and recipients are awarded \$2,000 in recognition of their efforts.

AFOA Indigenous Learning Centre Bursary Program

AFOA Canada runs an Indigenous Learning Centre bursary program. Bursaries are available to post-secondary students attending university or college as a full-time student in an academic program such as Business Administration, Business Management, Accounting, Commerce and/or other finance related programs.

Helen Bassett Commemorative Student Award

Every year, the Native Women's Association of Canada coordinates the Helen Bassett Commemorative Award granted to four young Indigenous women in the amount of \$1,000 each.

Tom Longboat Awards

The Tom Longboat Awards were established in 1951 to recognize Aboriginal athletes for their outstanding contributions to sport in Canada. With a few exceptions, the Awards have been given out every year since its inauguration. It remains the longest standing and one of the most prestigious awards for the Aboriginal athletes in the country.

Canadian Nurses Foundation

The Canadian Nurses Foundation in collaboration with TD offers the TD Aboriginal Nursing Fund, a scholarship that supports Canadian Aboriginal nursing students at the Bachelor, Master's or PhD level.

Cenovus Energy Indigenous Scholarship Program

Cenovus helps Indigenous students living in communities near its operations pursue post-secondary education. The company also provides opportunities for work experience and professional development through the Indigenous Mentorship Program.

The awards listed above are a small selection of scholarships and bursaries available for Indigenous students. There are many more awards that have eligibility requirements specific to certain First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, and different areas of study. It is important to do your own research to find out which awards would be the best fit for you!

Indigenous Bursaries Search Tool

This is a search engine that will get you started browsing scholarships and bursaries available for Indigenous students in Canada. Operated by the Government of Canada, this search engine contains information for hundreds of scholarships and bursaries!

Windspeaker and Students.Indigenous.Link are other resources you can access during your search.

Five Tips for Success

Boost your chances of securing a bursary or scholarship by following the steps below:

1. **Build a Profile on Scholarships Canada.** By building a profile on a website like Scholarships Canada, you will be sent a notification when certain scholarships or grants you may be interested in become available. This also gives you access to discussion boards to share strategies and ask questions. Although this guide focuses on scholarships specifically for Indigenous students, you are also eligible for the wide range of awards provided to postsecondary students in Canada.

You may also visit scholarships.universitystudy.ca: This site offers a comprehensive list of scholarships available to Canadian and International students. Use the search tool to find scholarships with criteria that match your profile.

2. **Network.** This means talking with friends, families, and colleagues. A good starting place is to find out if the employer of a parent or guardian offers any scholarships.
3. **Put in the Effort.** Scholarship applications can take a lot of time in terms of research and submitting applications. The best way to be successful at finding scholarships and bursaries is to plan ahead and to do extensive research to find out what is offered. Consider creating your own system to track deadlines, eligibility and requirements of the scholarships and bursaries you're interested in.
4. **Seek Help from School.** Guidance counselors and teachers can be of great help in finding scholarships, and also in providing guidance about a student's application.
5. **Get a Second Opinion.** Many applications for bursaries and scholarships require you to submit written information, such as personal statements, answers to questionnaires and budgets. Give yourself enough time to draft your applications and ask for feedback from a CPA mentor, teacher, family member or peer to make it its best.

Q&A

Here are a few common questions about scholarships and bursaries:

What is the difference between a scholarship and a bursary?

Generally speaking, bursaries are provided to students in financial need and scholarships are awarded based on specific criteria, such as high grades, individual life journey, innovative projects or career goals. “Awards” is a general term for both scholarships and bursaries.

Who provides scholarships and bursaries?

Postsecondary institutions, private and nonprofit organizations, governments and employers all award bursaries and scholarships.

Do I have to pay back my scholarship or bursary?

Unlike student loans, you do not have to pay back your bursary or scholarship. That means the money you get goes into your pocket and you do not have to worry about repayment. While student loans do require you to pay them back upon completion of your studies, even Canada Student Loans offers bursaries that may be applied toward your loan.

Are there any awards I can win without applying first?

Entrance scholarships are one of the few awards for which you will be automatically considered. Entrance scholarships are assessed using your application to college or university and are offered to students with good grades as incentive for you to attend that institution. An entrance scholarship comes with your acceptance to a postsecondary institution, and the dollar amount and “fine print” varies by institution. They are most commonly granted by universities.

What can I do with the money?

Always check with the organization issuing the award for specific rules. For the most part, however, you are responsible for spending your money in ways that support your postsecondary journey. This can include anything from tuition and books, to rent and transportation, to food, clothing and other personal expenses.

I am interested in trade school. How can I find a scholarship or bursary?

The information in this guide is also useful for students training in the skilled trades. We suggest that you start with the scholarship databases recommended and pay particular attention to scholarships offered by private industries, who tend to support and employ tradespeople. Indspire, one of “The Big Three” in the following section, also offers an award for Indigenous students in the skilled trades.

Here is the good news: There are a great number of bursaries and scholarships in Canada eagerly awaiting your application!