

Tribal-ISAC Cybersecurity & Technology Leadership Scholarship Program Policy

I. Purpose

The Tribal-ISAC Cybersecurity & Technology Leadership Scholarship Program advances Tribal-ISAC's mission by investing directly in the people who protect and strengthen tribal cybersecurity and technology operations.

This Program supports professional education and leadership development that:

- Enhances cyber resilience
- Strengthens prevention and response capabilities within tribal organizations
- Supports responsible information sharing across tribal nations

Through this Program, Tribal-ISAC empowers tribal cybersecurity and technology professionals to grow their expertise, expand their impact, and bring knowledge back to their organizations and the broader Tribal-ISAC community, strengthening our collective defense and protecting tribal infrastructure for future generations.

II. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility is limited to employees of Federally recognized tribal governments and tribal enterprises wholly owned by Federally recognized tribal governments that are members of Tribal-ISAC.

Applicants must meet all the following requirements:

- Be employed by a Federally recognized tribal government or a tribal enterprise wholly owned by a Federally recognized tribal government
- Be listed on the official membership roster of a Tribal-ISAC member organization in good standing at the time of application and at the time of reimbursement distribution
- Hold professional responsibilities related to cybersecurity, IT operations, risk management, technology governance, digital infrastructure protection, or technology leadership
- Be employed in a role where the knowledge gained through the funded activity will directly benefit the cybersecurity or technology capabilities of the applicant's tribal organization

For purposes of this policy, "good standing" means the member organization has an active, paid Tribal-ISAC membership and all required agreements are fully executed and current.

The following individuals are not eligible to receive awards under this Program:

- Members of the Tribal Share Board of Directors

- Members of the Tribal-ISAC Steering Committee
- Tribal-ISAC staff

III. Eligible Activities

Scholarship Program funds may be used for:

- Professional cybersecurity certifications
- Technology leadership certifications
- Structured professional training programs
- Certification exam fees
- Conference registration

Eligible travel expenses are limited to:

- Economy airfare
- Standard lodging

The following are not eligible:

- Meal expenses
- Incidental travel costs

All certifications and training programs funded under the Scholarship Program must:

- Demonstrate clear relevance to cybersecurity, technology governance, risk management, IT operations, or digital infrastructure protection within tribal organizations
- Be delivered by a reputable training provider or certifying body
- Provide measurable professional development benefits (e.g., certification, credential, documented coursework, or structured curriculum)

Programs primarily focused on sales, vendor promotion, or general business topics unrelated to cybersecurity or technology operations are not eligible.

All funded activities must have a documented educational purpose directly supporting the applicant's tribal organization and aligned with Tribal-ISAC's mission.

Tribal-ISAC does not endorse or promote any specific vendor, provider, or conference.

IV. Award Structure

The Scholarship Program will operate under the following award parameters.

All awards are subject to available Program funding.

- Maximum award per recipient: \$5,000
- Scholarship funds must be used solely for approved purposes and eligible expenses in accordance with this Policy
- One scholarship per individual per calendar year
- A maximum of one scholarship per Tribal-ISAC member entity per calendar year

- Applicants must be listed on the official Tribal-ISAC membership roster for the applying tribal organization at the time of application and at the time of reimbursement payout
- Annual Program budget established by the Steering Committee
- Awards are non-transferable and may only be used for the approved educational activity

Awards will be reimbursed only for approved eligible expenses upon submission of proof of payment and completion documentation for the approved certification, training, or conference.

A. Reimbursement Requirements

- Reimbursement requests must include itemized receipts and documentation showing proof of payment.
- Reimbursements shall not exceed the approved award amount or the total of documented eligible expenses, whichever is less.
- Expenses incurred prior to formal award approval are not eligible for reimbursement under this Program.
- All reimbursement documentation must be submitted within 60 days following completion of the approved educational activity. Incomplete, inaccurate, or late submissions may result in denial of reimbursement.
- Reimbursement payments will be processed within 90 days after receipt of complete and accurate reimbursement documentation.
- Reimbursement payments will be issued to the respective Federally recognized Tribal-ISAC member entity, or one of its wholly owned subsidiaries, and not directly to individual recipients.

B. Expense Standards

- All expenses must be reasonable, necessary, and directly related to the approved educational activity
- Eligible travel expenses are limited to economy airfare and standard lodging
- Meal expenses and incidental travel costs are not eligible

Tribal-ISAC reserves the right to adjust or decline funding amounts based on available Program resources.

Tribal-ISAC retains sole discretion in determining the eligibility of expenses and final reimbursement amounts based on the Scholarship Program Policy and submitted documentation.

V. Recipient Responsibilities

Recipients of the Scholarship Program must:

- Provide proof of attendance and/or certification completion
- Submit a 1–2-page written summary of key takeaways and how the learning will benefit their tribal organization
- Provide a short-written testimonial describing the value of the educational activity and the impact of the Scholarship Program, which Tribal-ISAC may use for communications, outreach, and digital marketing purposes

Failure to meet these responsibilities may affect future eligibility under the Program.

VI. Program Liability and Participation Disclaimer

Participation in educational activities supported through the Scholarship Program is voluntary. Tribal-ISAC does not organize, sponsor, or control the training programs, conferences, or events for which scholarship funds may be used.

Recipients are solely responsible for all travel arrangements, participation decisions, and compliance with their employer's policies. Tribal-ISAC assumes no responsibility or liability for any and all claims, damages, losses, or expenses, whether direct or indirect, arising out of or related to participation in funded activities, including but not limited to travel, accommodation, personal injury, property loss, or the acts or omissions of third-party providers.

VII. Selection Process

The Scholarship Program will operate under the following procedures:

- Open application period announced to membership
- Written application required
- Eligibility verification conducted by staff
- Independent scoring by Steering Committee members using an established rubric
- Steering Committee members shall score applications independently prior to any collective discussion
- A minimum of three non-conflicted Steering Committee members must participate in the scoring process
- Conflict-of-interest disclosures and recusals documented
- Applications evaluated competitively based on merit, mission alignment, and anticipated impact
- Awards determined based on aggregate scoring results and available Program funding

Submission of an application does not guarantee funding. Awards are competitive and discretionary.

Staff will document award determinations and maintain Program records in accordance with Tribal-ISAC record retention practices.

Tribal-ISAC reserves the right to decline any application that does not sufficiently demonstrate alignment with the Program's purpose or eligibility requirements.

All award decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

VIII. Conference Attendance Eligibility

Conference attendance may qualify under the Scholarship Program when the primary purpose is professional education aligned with Tribal-ISAC's mission.

Eligible conferences must demonstrate substantial educational content directly related to:

- Cybersecurity operations
- Technology governance
- Risk management
- IT leadership
- Critical infrastructure protection
- Digital sovereignty
- Emerging technologies impacting tribal nations

Applicants requesting conference support must submit:

- Conference agenda or session outline
- Identification of specific sessions planned for attendance
- Written explanation of anticipated organizational benefit and how the educational content aligns with Tribal-ISAC's mission

Events primarily focused on vendor marketing, entertainment, recreation, or social networking are not eligible.

Approval of conference funding under this Program does not constitute endorsement of any specific organization or event provider.

IX. Conflict of Interest

Reviewers must certify that they have no financial or personal conflict of interest with the applicant and must score applications independently.

All conflict disclosures will be documented in Program records.

X. Tax Considerations

Scholarship reimbursements under this Program are issued to the applicable Tribal-ISAC member entity rather than directly to individual recipients.

Tribal-ISAC does not provide tax advice and makes no representation regarding the tax treatment of scholarship funds. Participating tribal organizations and recipients are responsible for determining any applicable tax obligations and should consult their own tax advisors if needed.

XI. Employment Status

Participation in the Scholarship Program does not create any employment relationship between Tribal-ISAC and scholarship recipients. Recipients remain employees of their respective tribal organizations, and all employment decisions, responsibilities, and policies remain solely under the authority of the recipient's employer.

Tribal-ISAC assumes no responsibility for employment-related matters, including compensation, job responsibilities, or continued employment of program participants.

XII. Program Impact and Recognition

Tribal-ISAC may share aggregate information about Scholarship Program outcomes, including certifications achieved, training completed, and organizational benefits, in reports or communications that demonstrate the impact of the Program.

Tribal-ISAC may also acknowledge organizations or sponsors that support the Scholarship Program through public communications, events, or digital platforms.

Any information shared publicly will not disclose confidential or sensitive information about recipients or their tribal organizations without permission.

XIII. Document Control & Version History

- Document Owner: Executive Director, Tribal-ISAC
- Approval Authority: Tribal-ISAC Steering Committee
- Review Cycle: Annual
- Next Scheduled Review: March 2027

Policy Administration: The Tribal-ISAC Executive Director is responsible for the administration and interpretation of this Policy.

Policy Modification: The Tribal-ISAC Steering Committee reserves the right to amend, suspend, or discontinue the Scholarship Program or this Policy at any time.

Version	Date	Description	Approval
Version 1.0	March 13, 2026	Initial adoption of Scholarship Program Policy	Steering Committee