

2024-25 Native American Fee Waiver Report

Department of Academic and Student Affairs

August 2025



The Nevada System of Higher Education

Board of Regents

Mr. Byron Brooks, Chair

Ms. Stephanie Goodman, Vice Chair

Mr. Joseph C. Arrascada

Mr. Aaron Bautista

Mr. Patrick J. Boylan

Mrs. Susan Brager

Ms. Heather Brown

Mrs. Amy J. Carvalho

Mrs. Carol Del Carlo

Dr. Jeffrey S. Downs

Mr. Carlos D. Fernandez

Mr. Pete Goicoechea

Ms. Jennifer J. McGrath

Ms. Keri D. Nikolajewski, Chief of Staff

Officers of the Nevada System of Higher Education

Mr. Matt McNair, Chancellor

Dr. Chris Heavy, President
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Mr. Brian Sandoval, President
University of Nevada, Reno

Dr. DeRionne Pollard, President
Nevada State University

Dr. Stacy Klippenstein, President
College of Southern Nevada

Dr. Amber Donnelly, President
Great Basin College

Dr. Jeffrey Alexander, President
Truckee Meadows Community College

Dr. J. Kyle Dalpe, President
Western Nevada College

Dr. Kumud Acharya, President
Desert Research Institute

Contents

Background.....	4
Program Eligibility	4
Institutional Eligibility.....	4
Student Eligibility	5
Waiver Amount.....	5
Recipients and Cost Since Waiver Inception.....	5
Table 1: Number of Recipients by Institution – 2021-22 to 2024-25.....	6
Table 2: Total Value Waived by Institution – 2021-22 to 2024-25.....	6
Success Metrics.....	7
Table 3: Fall to Fall Persistence by Native American Fee Waiver Recipients – 2021-22 to 2023-24...	7
Table 4: Native American Fee Waiver Recipient Graduation by Institution – 2021-22 to 2023-24.....	8
Conclusion	8

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 708 in 2024-25, as well as the “total funding made available for the waiver.” In addition to the appropriation made by the Legislature in Assembly Bill 150, \$457,449 per each Fiscal Year 2023-24 and 2024-25, a one-time distribution of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds was made by the State of Nevada to cover waiver costs for 2023-24 in the amount of \$1,670,563. 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. However, without ARPA funds to offset the cost of the fee waiver, foregone revenue in 2024-25 amounted to \$3,468,854 after accounting for the \$457,449 state appropriation.

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 2024-25

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

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 2024-25

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

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 data for Native American Fee Waiver recipients reveals an upward trend over the first three years of the program. Additionally, all but one NSHE institution saw an increase in fall-to-fall persistence from 2022-23 to 2023-24.

Table 3: Fall to Fall Persistence by Native American Fee Waiver Recipients – 2021-22 to 2023-24

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

Source: NSHE Student Data Warehouse.

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

Early graduation data provided below reflects the percentage of students who received a waiver in a given academic year and subsequently graduated by June 2024. An individual student may be counted in multiple years, depending upon when they receive a waiver. In addition, a student may have received a first or subsequent waiver at any point in their academic career. It is important to note that since the Native American Fee Waiver was introduced in 2021, and the most recent graduation data available is from June 2024, many recipients have yet to graduate with a degree or certificate (Table 4). As additional years of data become available, the percentage of students from each year's waiver recipient pool who graduated will continue to increase.

Table 4: Native American Fee Waiver Recipient Graduation by Institution – 2021-22 to 2023-24

	Received Fee Waiver in 2021-22 & Graduated by 6/2024	Received Fee Waiver in 2022-23 & Graduated by 6/2024	Received Fee Waiver in 2023-24 & Graduated by 6/2024
UNLV	0.00%	0.00%	14.58%
UNR	15.07%	11.70%	17.00%
NSU	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
CSN	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%
GBC	27.78%	27.27%	15.52%
TMCC	12.50%	11.54%	16.19%
WNC	0.00%	15.79%	21.15%
NSHE Total	13.57%	11.49%	17.35%

Source: NSHE Student Data Warehouse.

Conclusion

Approved by the Nevada Legislature during 2021 Session, the Native American Fee Waiver program was first implemented during the 2021-22 Academic Year. During that year, 140 students had \$457,449 in fees waived, and 24 additional students qualified for the waiver but had fees paid by federal education benefits and therefore did not have fees waived under this program. During 2022-23, 174 students had \$702,212 in fees waived, which is an increase of 53.5 percent over 2021-22, and an additional 50 students qualified for the waiver but had fees paid instead by federal education benefits. Over the two academic/fiscal years, this totals \$1.16 million in forgone revenue for the NSHE institutions.

With the Assembly Bill 150 expansions to the fee waiver as well as a growing awareness by students and families of this program, in 2023-24 486 students received a Native American Fee Waiver and the total dollars waived amounted to \$2,205,061 (a 179 percent increase in recipients and a 214 percent increase in dollars waived over the prior year). Of the total Native American Fee Waiver cost for 2023-24, only \$77,049 was forgone revenue thanks to the legislative appropriation in AB 150 and an allocation of ARPA dollars from the State.

Further, in 2024-25 the program experienced significant increases as 708 students received a Native American Fee Waiver and the total dollars waived amounted to \$3,926,303 (an increase of 46.7 percent and 78.1 percent, respectively). With increased utilization of the waiver, the AB 150 appropriation only covered 11.7 percent of the cost of the waiver in 2024-25 and, with no allocation of ARPA dollars, the forgone revenue between all NSHE institutions totaled \$3,468,854.

According to the requirements of Senate Bill 72, during the 2023-24 Interim, the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education (COE) conducted a study concerning NSHE fee waivers. At its [Work Session on August 22, 2024](#), the Committee voted to propose legislation standardizing the conditions and requirements of NSHE fee waivers. In addition, a recommendation was included to encourage the Senate Committee on Finance and the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means of the 2025 Legislative Session to consider state funding support to offset the fee waiver costs should additional fee waiver programs be created or if student participation in current programs is expanded beyond current capacity.

During the 2025 Legislative Session, [Assembly Bill 532](#) and [Senate Bill 308](#) were brought forth with provisions to standardize all fee waivers (including those established by the Board of Regents), which likely would have decreased foregone revenue for all NSHE institutions due to stricter eligibility criteria. However, both Assembly Bill 532 and Senate Bill 308 failed to meet the deadline for consideration. Additionally, [Assembly Bill 397](#) was brought forth to revise eligibility criteria. This bill was approved by both the Assembly and Senate but was ultimately vetoed by the Governor due to unintended consequences to another waiver program included in the bill. As a result, the Native American Fee Waiver will continue as currently provided in NRS 396.5449. Likewise, for each fiscal year of the 2025-2027 Biennium, \$457,449 is included in the NSHE budget to partially defray the costs of the fee waiver program. However, due to the continuing growth of the program, it is likely the amount of foregone revenue by all NSHE institutions will continue to increase annually.