The CIRI Foundation – How to Apply Online & Guidelines

Eligibility

Original enrollees of Cook Inlet Region Inc. (CIRI) and their direct lineal descendants (e.g. children, grand children, great-grandchildren, etc) are eligible to apply for post-secondary scholarships and grants through The CIRI Foundation (TCF). Individuals with inherited or gifted shares do not qualify as original enrollees, but may be eligible if they are a direct lineal descendant to apply online. *Alaska Native, voting CIRI shareholders that are not direct lineal descendants of an original enrollee may be eligible to request a paper RAVEN Fund application.*

GENERAL SCHOLARSHIPS – JUNE 1 DEADLINE
For **full-time and part-time**, degree-seeking students at an accredited or recognized institution. Provides funding for the **academic year (AUG-JUL).**
Must apply online and have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or above.
Full-time students: Up to $6,000* per year | Part-time students: Up to $5,500* per year

MID-YEAR AWARDS – DECEMBER 1 DEADLINE
For eligible scholarship applicants beginning Winter/Spring term. Provides funding to support one (1) semester/term. Must apply online and have cumulative 2.5 GPA.
Full-time Students: Up to $3,000* per term | Part-time Students: Up to $2,750* per term

VOCATIONAL TRAINING GRANTS
For students in vocational training or certificate programs.
Up to $5,500* per calendar year

Application deadlines:

March 31	September 30
June 30	December 1

*All awards are subject to available funding and the number of eligible applicants at each deadline.

Step One – Create a student profile at *www.thecirifoundation.org* at any time!

New applicants must create an online account and student profile. You provide basic information and identify how you are eligible (either as an original enrollee of CIRI or as a direct lineal descendant of an original CIRI enrollee).

If you are a direct lineal descendant, you must provide the name of the original enrollee of CIRI from which you are a descendant and indicate your relationship. *For example – the original enrollee may be your parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, etc… If you are not sure, ask your family.* You will also create a username and password. Your username should be easy to remember. Once submitted, your request for a student account will be reviewed by TCF. Please allow two (2) business days for new accounts to be reviewed/approved.

Step Two – Login at *www.thecirifoundation.org*

After your student account is approved, you will receive an email confirmation. Go to our website, click on the "**Apply Online**" button, and login with your approved username and password.

What do I see after I login?

After you login, you will be on the **Student Dashboard**. From this screen, you can manage several different aspects of your student account:

Update My Profile

This is where you can change your personal contact information. This information will be automatically entered on applications submitted through the online system.

Apply for a Scholarship or Grant

This is where you begin the process of submitting an online application. While you are working on an online application, you can save your progress and return at a later time. **Please note** – you can **only** apply for a scholarship or a grant when the application period is opened by TCF. Depending on the time of year when you click on this link, you may not see any active scholarship or grant application periods. In general, the online application will be accessible to students *30 days* before the deadline.
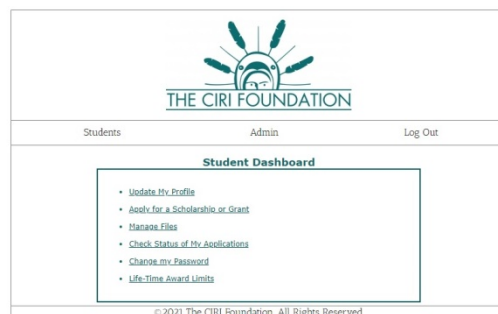
Manage Files

You must attach your own supporting documents (such as your statement of purpose, acceptance letter, class schedule, letter of reference, or other documents) that are required as part of your complete application. Documents can be attached if they are saved in Acrobat PDF, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, TIFF, or JPEG formats. Documents can be uploaded through "*Manage Files"* to your student dashboard at any time. It is good practice to notify TCF via email when you have added files.

Check Status of My Applications

After you finish and submit an online application, this is where you can view basic information about the status of your request. If you receive an email asking you to edit your application, this is where you go to make edits to your application. You can also print your application from this screen.

Change My Password

Your application information is confidential and your password keeps your data secure. If you forget your password, you can request a temporary password from the login screen that will be emailed to you, at any time. After you login with the temporary password, you should change your password to something unique that you will remember.

When can I apply?

In general, the online application will be accessible for students **30 days before the stated deadline**. Your online application must be finished and submitted before the deadline to be considered.

What do I need for my application?

In addition to the Required Documents listed on the right, the following information is critical to complete your application:

- **Name and Address of Financial Aid Office -** Please be sure that you submit the *correct* address information, since this is where any financial aid will be sent.

- **Start and End Dates for the Term -** Degree-seeking students are now able to apply for full academic year funding. If you wish to apply for full year funding, be sure to enter term dates that reflect your entire academic year and select "academic year" for your budget term.

- **Enrollment plans for the academic year/program (full-time or part-time)**

  o *Full-time = 12 or more undergraduate credits; 9 or more graduate credits per term.*
  o *Part-time = 11 or fewer undergraduate credits; 8 or fewer graduate credits per term.*

- **Budget Forecast** – Total expenses and sources of funds. You complete this section of the application. The CIRI Foundation does not require the Student Aid Report (SAR) that you receive after completing your FAFSA form.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

To prepare for submitting an online application, the following required documents should be saved in an electronic format:

- **Letter of reference** – Valid for three (3) years from the date written; must be signed, dated, and include contact information for the person giving the reference.

- **Statement of purpose** – Must be updated with each application, 300-word minimum for repeat applicants and 500-word minimum for first-time applicants.

- **Proof of acceptance by the institution** – If you are in a declared degree program, the acceptance letter should confirm your degree program.

- **Official grade transcripts/HS Diploma or GED** – For the most current coursework that you have completed.

- **Class schedule for the term** – To confirm your status (full-time or part-time) during the academic year/term.

- **Proof of Eligibility for Lineal Descendants** – Birth certificate(s) and/or adoption records connecting you to the Original Enrollee of CIRI

- **Proof of Name Change** – For any legal name change(s). *Sworn statements or affidavits are not accepted.*

Documents can be attached to your application at any time by selecting "Manage Files" on the Student Dashboard.

Guidelines

SCHOLARSHIP AND GRANT AWARD USES
The priority of The CIRI Foundation (TCF) is to help support your direct educational expenses including tuition, student registration fees, course-required books/supplies, and on-campus housing/meal plans. Above all other uses, approved scholarship and grant funds are intended to help you meet your direct educational expenses.

PERSONAL EXPENSES
A general scholarship recipient may receive up to $500 per semester/term for personal expenses - **only if funds remain after all direct educational expenses are met**. Grant recipients may receive up to $500 toward personal expenses per calendar year. Depending on the total cost of your program, you may not receive any funds for personal expenses.

SCORING AND SELECTION CRITERIA
During the TCF General Scholarship award determination process, all eligible applications are scored and ranked based on the following criteria for eligibility toward a competitive higher award:

- Completeness of application
- Cumulative GPA
- Rigor of coursework/degree program
- Grade level (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Graduate, Certificate)
- Personal financial contribution
- Financial need
- Employment preparation (Does the degree program directly relate to career goals?)
- Statement of purpose (Clarity of career goal, correct grammar, giving back to community, and overall quality)
- Extent of community involvement and volunteer/civic activities

MERIT-BASED ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP SCORING
The merit-based annual scholarship awards are highly competitive. Meeting the GPA requirement is only part of the selection process. Other factors considered in the selection of annual scholarship awards include an exceptional statement of purpose with a clear articulation of education and career goals; a high level of community service and civic activities; and a demonstrated intent to give back to community, especially the Alaska Native community.

NOTIFICATION OF FUNDING DECISIONS
Funding decisions are only released in writing. They are not released verbally over the telephone or in person. Funded students are sent an award letter that contains the award terms and the responsibilities of the recipient. It is essential that award recipients read and understand the terms of their financial aid. The CIRI Foundation's Education Awards Committee makes the award determinations. All decisions are final.

TERMS OF FUNDING
To remain eligible and in good standing for additional funding through TCF, all General Scholarship recipients must maintain the following Terms of Funding eligibility requirements: Any changes to an awardee's enrollment or course schedule must be submitted to TCF in writing.

Full-time Students

> Must maintain full-time enrollment for the academic year; **AND**

> Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher (on a 4.0 grading scale).

Part-time Students

> Must complete the courses on your submitted schedule; **AND**

> Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher (on a 4.0 grading scale).

PROBATION PERIOD / INFRACTION POLICY

General Scholarship recipients who do not maintain the Terms of Funding eligibility requirements during the academic term may be in a probation or infraction situation. Details are communicated in writing for any student in these situations.

The first time a student does not maintain the eligibility requirements; he/she will be placed on probation. Students on probation are eligible to receive one (1) probationary term of scholarship or grant funding (defined by TCF as the period between the June 1 and December 1 deadlines for scholarships and as the vocational training grant period for vocational training grants). During the probationary term, a student has the opportunity to improve their academic performance to reinstate their eligibility for funding.

A student who does not successfully maintain the eligibility requirements at the end of the probationary period will be in an Infraction Status. Students on Infraction Status are ineligible to receive funding for one (1) term (as defined above), and will sit out for one deadline from the date determined by TCF. Infraction status determination is made *after* reviewing official transcripts; therefore, *timely submission of transcripts is required*.

CHANGES IN ENROLLMENT

In general, enrollment changes made within the add/drop period at your institution are permissible. However, schedule changes made after the add/drop period that change your status from full-time to part-time may result in a probation / infraction situation. There is no penalty for completing more credits or courses, but completing fewer courses may result in a probation / infraction. Please send written notification of any enrollment or schedule changes to TCF immediately.

CONDITIONAL AWARDS

If you have an incomplete application and receive a *conditional* award, you have approximately thirty (30) days from the date on the conditional award letter to fulfill the award requirements (TCF will notify you of the exact date). Funds will only be released if the requested information is provided to TCF by the conditional award deadline. **If an application remains incomplete after the conditional award deadline, the award is automatically canceled**.

DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

In general, award checks are made payable to *both the student and the university/school*, and must be endorsed by both parties to be processed. Award checks are sent directly to the financial aid office at the institution specified on your application. *Please make sure the financial aid office address is correct to avoid delay in the receipt of your financial aid*. Students receive a photocopy of the disbursement letter that accompanies the award check. If your educational program requires a different payment procedure (i.e. payable to school only, online program), please indicate on the application.

PROOF OF COMPLETION

Scholarship and grant recipients must submit final official grade transcripts or certificates at the end of each term of funding. Please submit the official transcripts after the courses are completed and grades are posted. Your official grade transcript is reviewed by TCF staff to ensure that you have satisfied the requirements to remain in good standing for additional funding.

NUMBER OF AWARDS

An individual is permitted to receive one (1) scholarship or grant award funded by The CIRI Foundation at a time. Eligible applicants may receive more than one award if applying for an award administered by TCF but funded by a partner, such as CITC, Alyeska Match, Eklutna Inc., Ninilchik Native Association Inc., and Salamatof Native Association Inc.

SUMMER FUNDING

At the current time, TCF does not offer a separate scholarship or grant program specifically for the summer term. General Scholarship recipients should work with their school to allocate a portion of a General Scholarship award towards summer term enrollment.

LIFE-TIME AWARD LIMIT POLICY

The CIRI Foundation (TCF) has implemented a Life-Time Award Limit Policy. This policy will help ensure that all CIRI original enrollees and their lineal descendants have an opportunity to benefit from the support of TCF.
The information included in this packet is to guide you through the new Life-Time Award Limit Policy.

The policy means TCF applicants have a Life-Time Limit Amount for each degree-level category noted below. As with all of TCF's policies, applicants must meet all of TCF's funding requirements to be considered. All awards are subject to available funding. The policy's effective date was January 1, 2014 and the March 31, 2014 deadline was the first deadline included in the policy. An update was made April 7, 2017 to count all graduate work in the same category. **An additional update to the policy will be implemented effective March 1, 2019 regarding an increase to the Life-Time Award Limit amount for each degree-level category due to an increase in the general scholarship and vocational training grant award amounts.** The policy will be implemented as follows:

DEGREE-LEVEL CATEGORY	DEGREE PROGRAMS	MAXIMUM AWARD AMOUNT	LIFE-TIME AWARD LIMIT AMOUNT
UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE-SEEKING	Includes: Fellowships, Vocational Training, Certificates, 2-year and 4-year Degrees	• Fellowship: up to $250 • Vocational Training/ Certificate-seeking: up to $5,500 per calendar year • 2-year and 4-year degree-seeking: up to $5,500 for part-time, up to $6,000 for full-time, per academic year	$36,000
GRADUATE LEVEL DEGREE- SEEKING	Includes: Masters, Ph.D., professional degree, and doctorate level degrees	• Graduate degree-seeking: up to $5,500 for part-time, up to $6,000 for full-time, per academic year	$48,000
TOTAL LIFE-TIME AWARD LIMIT			**$84,000**

Note: the previous policy and explanation of changes may be found at www.thecirifoundation.org in the FAQ section.

HELPFUL TERMS:

Degree-Level Category: Each degree program is categorized under a degree-level category. Each degree-level category has its own Life-Time Award Limit Amount.

Degree Program: Your degree program indicates which degree you are receiving funding to complete. Fellowships, Vocational Training Programs, 2-year or 4-year degree-seeking programs, masters degree-seeking programs, or Ph.D. or professional degree-seeking programs are all various degree programs as defined by TCF. Each degree program determines what degree-level category you are in.

Maximum Award Amount: Your maximum award amount is the amount of funding in which you are eligible for each individual award or application.

Life-Time Award Limit Amount: Your life-time award limit amount is the cumulative amount of funding you are eligible to receive for each degree-level category.

LIFE-TIME AWARD LIMIT Q&A

Q: Why does TCF need a Life-Time Award Limit Policy?

A: The number of lineal descendants of CIRI original enrollees continues to grow each year. TCF would like to prepare to give every future applicant an opportunity to receive funding. TCF anticipates the new policy will allow educational funding to continually be distributed to all eligible applicants.

Q: When did the policy take effect?

A: The policy went into effect on January 1, 2014. All awards approved after the January 1, 2014 effective date will be included in an applicant's life-time award limit amount. The first application deadline after the effective date is the March 31, 2014 vocational training/certificate-seeking deadline. An additional update to the policy will be implemented effective March 1, 2019 regarding an increase to the Life-Time Award Limit amount for each degree-level category due to an increase in the general scholarship and vocational training grant award amounts.

Q: How will I know what my life-time award limit amount is?

A: Each time a recipient is awarded, their life-time award limit amount(s) will be communicated to them. In the future, your life-time award limit amount(s) will also be available to you via your online student profile.

Q: Will my awards before January 1, 2014 impact my life-time award limit amount?

A: No, previous awards will not be counted toward your life-time award limit amount(s).

Q: How are graduate level life-time limits calculated for awards received between January 1, 2014 and April 7, 2017?

A: Between January 1, 2014 and April 7, 2017, TCF's life-time award limit recognized two categories of graduate degrees; however, these are now considered one category. *All graduate level awards received in this time will count toward the $48,000 total graduate life-time limit.*

Q: What if I want to complete multiple degrees in each degree-level category?

A: Each applicant is able to use their life-time award limit amount as they wish, but you are only eligible for your life-time award limit amount for each degree-level category. Fellowships, Vocational Training Programs, 2-year degree, and 4-year degrees are combined into one category of undergraduate and certificate-seeking. Your total life-time award limit amount for your educational journey with TCF is $84,000. Annual Award recipients, who receive higher, competitive award amounts, will only have the maximum general scholarship amount added to their life-time award limit amount ($6,000 per year).

Q: What happens if I reach my life-time award limit?

A: If you reach your life-time award limit amount for a certain degree-level category, you will be eligible for additional funding when you enroll into a degree program that moves you to the next degree-level category. For example, if you reach your life-time award limit amount of $36,000 for your undergraduate/certificate-seeking degree-level category, then you will not be eligible for more funding until/if you enroll into a masters, graduate or Ph.D. program. Upon enrollment into a graduate program you would then be eligible for an additional $48,000 in awards.

Q: If my school returns a portion of my award because it was not used, will that amount be subtracted from my life-time award limit amount?

A: If a significant portion of your award is returned to TCF (more than $1,000), then TCF will subtract the total returned funds from your life-time award limit amount.