

**Importance of Collecting ED506**

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## Context

The practice guide presented is to provide *context* for collecting ED506 forms, as a guide for those individuals assigned to collecting the forms. The *rationale* and *topic summary* will share the history of Native American blood quantum tracking. The Title VI Indian Education grant application will be shared with the *implementation plan*. The *assessment* section will have an explanation of sovereignty and review how to ensure no fraudulent claims discredit the Indian Education Formula grant program.

I introduce myself as an enrolled member of the White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT) residing on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. I am a full-blooded WMAT, my maternal clan is Tugaidn, which translates as White Water People; my paternal clan is Iyahaiye, the Mesquite People. I have worked for Whiteriver Unified School District as the Federal Programs Title VI Administrative Assistant. I worked toward earning my teaching degree, then moved into a teaching position for first and second grade students and was asked to return to Federal Programs as the coordinator. I am honored to be a member of the following associations and committees, although not consecutively, the National Indian Education Association, Arizona Indian Education Association, Arizona Association for School Business Officials, National Association of Federal Education Programs Administrators, and Arizona Indian Education Advisory committee member.

Whiteriver Unified School District resides on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation with a student population of ninety-eight percent (98%) White Mountain Apache students, one percent (1%) mixed Native American and other nationalities, and one percent (1%) non-native students. There are three elementary schools, one junior high and one high school in Whiteriver USD.

The Fort Apache Indian Reservation has two public schools Whiteriver Unified School District (Pk-12) and McNary Unified School District (K-8); one private school East Fork Lutheran School (K-8); two Bureau of Indian Education schools including, John F. Kennedy School (K-8) and Dishchii' bikoh Community School (K-12), and one tribally controlled boarding school Theodore Roosevelt School (6-8). Whiteriver Unified School District is the only public school on the reservation that collects ED506 forms for Title VI – Indian Education Formula Grant application.

The goal of collecting ED506 forms is to collect as many eligible forms as possible from only Native American students enrolling in a school that will be applying for the Title VI – Indian Education Formula Grant Program application. The minimum amount of ED506 forms that can be collected for the grant application is 10 forms. (OIE 2024) The ED506 forms is used to provide supplementary services for Native American students.

The following statement best explains to parents/guardians what the ED506 form is: “This form serves as the official record of the eligibility determination for each individual child included in the student count for the Title VI Indian Education Formula Grant Program. If you choose to submit a form, your child could be counted for funding under the program. The grantee receives the grant funds based on the number of eligible forms counted during the established count period. You are not required to complete or submit this form unless you wish for your child(ren)

to be included in the Indian student count. This form should be kept on file with the grant applicant and will not need to be completed every year.” (OMB 2024)

Applicants use the ED506 forms to complete Part I of the Indian Education Formula Grant program application by counting all eligible forms during a 31-day count period. Once the number has been submitted, that determines the allocation amount for Part II of the grant application.

## **Rationale**

In order to receive the maximum benefit of the Title VI – Indian Education Formula Grant funding source, schools are tasked with the collection of ED506 forms. Once Native American students enroll with the schools, the first point of contact are the school registrars. They need proper training in assisting parents/guardians with the completion of the ED506 form. For example, if the ED506 form is not signed or dated, the form is not valid and ineligible for counting. The next school support that would need to be trained are the office staff or other staff assisting parents/guardians with student enrollment. Staff members who are Native American who can assist by translating information to parents completing the ED506 form. Once ED506 forms have been entered into the school information system, school staff will need to be trained to run reports to check the status of incomplete or missing ED506 forms. Paper copies of the ED506 form can be sent home with students or by support staff visiting parents/guardians requesting for the missing information to be completed.

Staff development training is needed for staff members tasked with contacting parents/guardians. The statement on the ED506 form has the parent/guardian choose not to complete the form. Training would involve communicating clearly with parents on why the form is needed, explain the support services that their child would benefit from the Title VI – Indian Education Formula grant. Ultimately, parents have the decision to deny completion of the form.

## **Topic Summary**

The responsibility of understanding the history of blood quantum as it applies to ED506 forms is greatly overlooked. Administrators are unaware of the crucial funding obligation to provide Native American student population the supplementary services to “address the unique academic and cultural needs of American Indian and Alaska Native children.” (Woodworth, et. al., 2019)

The term blood quantum as it applies to ED506 forms is derived from the government’s term to measure Indian Blood. “Federal Indian law maintains that the trust relationship extends only to those groups who are “recognized” by the government.” (Tsosie, 2002) The reason the government established this tracking system was based on land allotment. Schmidt, R. W. (2011), explains the use of blood quantum through defining “three categories of people: 1) all persons of Indian descent who were members of a recognized tribe under federal jurisdiction; 2) all persons who were descendants of such members who on June 1, 1934, were residing within

the present boundaries of an Indian reservation; 3) all other persons one-half or more Indian blood. This signifies the beginnings of “degree of Indian blood” as a means to establish membership in the tribe through the adoption of appropriate constitutions.” In plainer terms, the government came up with a tricky system in which the government would help settlers benefit from Native American ancestral lands.

Native Americans/Alaska Natives are the only ethnic group in the United States that blood quantum applies. “To obtain federal recognition and protection, American Indians, unlike any other American ethnic group, must constantly prove their identity, which in turn, forces them to adopt whatever Indian histories or identities are needed to convince themselves and others of their Indian identity, and thus their unique cultural heritage.” (Schmidt, 2011)

The reason for the use of the ED506 form is to determine whether the child, parent or grandparent is enrolled with a federally recognized tribe. Thus, if the above mentioned individuals are not enrolled with a tribe, “To be a descendant of a recognized tribe is insufficient when a person’s blood quantum falls below a certain measure.” (Tsosie, 2002)

Unfortunately, the generation is approaching where the child, parent or grandparent are not enrolled with any federally recognized tribe due to not meeting the minimum blood quantum requirement. Forbes, J.D. (2001), states in *The Blood Grows Thinner: Blood Quantum*, “because if one loses one’s Indian identity or if tribes are terminated because of low “blood quantum” the impacts are economic, psychological, and severe, as witness the condition of still-terminated California rancherias”. Schmidt, R.W. (2011) states in *American Indian Identity and Blood Quantum in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Critical Review* that “the continued use of blood quantum as a way to ascribe membership in a Native American tribe has dire consequences. These authors feel blood-quantum policies are little other than genocidal (or “autogenocide by definition and statistical extermination” as characterized by Churchill [3, page 51]), which will ultimately end with extension of the original Indigenous people of native North America...When that happens, the federal government will be freed of its persistent ‘Indian problem’”.

Thus, the purpose of this practice guide is to provide administrators a tool to reference on the importance of training staff members with due diligence to provide parents/guardians every opportunity to complete the ED506 form.

## **Implementation Plan**

Implementing a plan requires schools to uphold their fiduciary responsibility for the interests of Native American/Alaska Native students. Fairbanks, R. A. (1995) explains that “Native American peoples continue to face significant challenges to the sovereignty which they have so steadfastly claimed. These challenges come from within – through the loss of language and culture – and without – from local, state, and federal political forces to counter these challenges, Native American peoples must act decisively to ensure their governments demonstrate the instructional quality of inherently sovereign political personalities.”

When new students enroll with a school district, the parent/guardian completes registration. Families are asked 1) Is your child enrolled with a tribe? 2) Is the parent enrolled with a tribe? 3) Is the grandparent enrolled with a tribe? If they answer yes, the ED506 form will be completed. If they answer no, the ED506 form is not collected.

The school registrars will review the ED506 form completion, if any information is lacking, the form will be forwarded to the parent liaison or other assigned staff member to contact parent/guardian and provide assistance with completing the ED506 form.

The Title VI grant director will run a district enrollment report. Each form is verified with the ED506 forms on file. Schools will know which ED506 forms are missing and track reasons why the form is not completed. The reasons may vary from parent declining; no student/parent/grandparent enrolled with any tribe; student is living with a guardian; no information on tribal enrollment is available; or the information on the ED506 form was incomplete.

The ED506 forms are used as the main funding source for filing Part I of the Title VI – Indian Education grant application. The ED506 forms are counted in a 31-day consecutive window, aim for the highest enrollment in the school year.

The following is a sample guideline on how to complete the information on the ED506 form.  
**ED506 FORM WILL REMAIN ACTIVE WHEN TRANSFERRING WITHIN OR RE-ENROLLING WITH THE DISTRICT, ONLY IF YOUR CHILD CHANGES THEIR LEGAL NAME OR TRIBAL ENROLLMENT AFFILIATION A NEW FORM IS REQUIRED.**

The ED506 form is solely used for Title VI – Indian Education grant application. The form assists our process when we apply for the application. Title VI funds Reading Specialists, Instructional Assistants, reading/math/cultural supplies, and the yearly calendar. Please complete the information to continue our efforts to meet the unique needs of our native students:

### **Student Information**

**Name of Child** [write name as shown on school enrollment records]; **Date of Birth** [child's date of birth]; **Grade** [write in child's current grade]; **Name of School** [write in which school your child attends]; **School District** [\_\_\_\_\_ Unified School District]

### **Tribal Membership**

**The individual with tribal membership is the (select only one):**  **child**  **child's parent**  **child's grandparent.** [State who the person who has tribal enrollment]

**If the individual with Tribal membership is not the child listed above, name the individual (parent/grandparent) with tribal membership:** [Are the parents

or grandparents enrolled with a tribe? Write down parents name or the grandparents name.]

**Name and address of Tribe or Band that maintains updated and accurate membership data for the individual listed above:**

**Name** [write name of tribe individual claims membership] **Address** [write in mailing address]

**City** [\_\_\_\_\_] **State** [\_\_\_\_] **Zip Code** [\_\_\_\_\_]

[Hopi Tribe: *P.O. Box 123, Kykotsmovi, AZ 86039*  
 Fort McDowell: *P.O. Box 17779, Fountain Hills, AZ 85269*  
 Gila River: *P.O. Box 97, Sacaton, AZ 85247*  
 Navajo Nation: *P.O. Box 9000, Window Rock, AZ 86039*  
 Salt River Pima-Maricopa: *Route 1, Box 216, Scottsdale, AZ 85256*  
 San Carlos Apache Tribe: *P.O. Box 0, San Carlos, AZ 85550*  
 Tohono O'odham: *P.O. Box 837, Sells, AZ 85634*  
 Tonto Apache: *Tonto Reservation #30, Payson, AZ 85541*  
 White Mountain Apache Tribe, *PO Box 700, Whiteriver, AZ 85941*  
 Yavapai-Apache: *P.O. Box 1188, Camp Verde, AZ 86322*

For other tribes, ask office staff to look up address]

**The Tribe or Band is (select only one):** [Select one]

- Federally Recognized Tribe** [WMAT, SCAT, NN, Hopi, etc.]
- State Recognized Tribe**
- Terminated Tribe**
- Alaska Native**
- Member of an organized Indian group that received a grant under the Indian Education Act of 1988 as it was in effect October 19, 1994.**

**Proof of enrollment in tribe or band listed above, as defined by tribe or band is:** [select one]

- Membership or enrollment number establishing membership (if readily available) or**  
 This number is listed on enrollment certificate or Tribal ID.
- Other Evidence of Membership in the tribe listed above (describe and attach)**  
 Example: Tribal Affidavit or BIA Degree of Indian Blood

**Membership or enrollment number establishing membership (if readily available) or other evidence establishing membership in the Tribe listed above (describe and attach).** [if social security -- use only the last 4 digits]

**Attestation Statement**

**I verify that the information provided above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.**

**Printed Name of Parent/Guardian** [Clearly write name] **Signature** [**\*\*SIGN the form**, not valid if it is not signed\*\*]

**Address/City/State/Zip Code** [Write your mailing address and phone number. This is only for contact information in case further information is needed. The address and phone number WILL NOT be given out to the public. All records are kept in a locked filing cabinet.]

**Phone Number** [only needed for any clarifications] **Email Address** [only needed for clarifications] **Date** [**\*\*Write in the date you completed the form\*\***]

As staff members are trained on the processes of collecting ED506 forms, they also need to be trained in understanding that “Without sovereignty, we don’t have the basis to protect our culture, to educate our youth, to protect our elders and care for our elders, to keep our songs alive – all of that is done with the power that we have as a government. (Daniel, F. Decker, Salish and Kootenai) (Cavalieri, C.E., 2013)

## Assessment

The success of collecting ED506 forms is measured by the total number of Native American students enrolled in the district, divided by the eligible forms on file. If there are ninety-five (95%) eligible forms collected, the remaining five percent (5%) should have statements documenting reason why ED506 forms are not collected: parent declined, no student/parent/grandparent enrolled with a tribe; student adopted or lives with guardian. The goal is to check the ED506 forms with the district enrollment report to ensure inactive ED506 forms are included with the active forms. The school registrars, parent liaison, and Title VI grant director remain in contact every month and aim for the ninety-five percent (95%) form collection.

Title VI – Indian Education funds are meant to “meet the educational needs of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students” (OIE ,2024) The funds are similar to Title 1 by assisting AI/AN students to “meet the same challenging academic standards as other students. (OIE, 2024) Reading and Math Specialists are examples of supplemental support for increasing reading and math achievement. Other supplemental support examples for funding are; extended day tutors, professional development consultants, training focused on cultural sensitivity for all staff, curriculum extension trips, college/university campus visits, transitions academic advisors, family engagement activities that support cultural enrichment activities.

Understanding what makes a group of people sovereign is explained by Krakoff, S. (2017), in *They Were Here First: American Indian Tribes, Race, and the Constitutional Minimum*, “In American law, Native nations are sovereign with a direct relationship with the federal government.” By seeking maximum collection of ED506 forms, sovereign federally recognized tribes are taking back, and most importantly, empowering parents/guardians the opportunity to continue the legacy of their ancestral ties to their homelands. Krakoff, S. (2017), further explains “American Indians have a unique legal and political status in the United States.” Sharing this information with parents/guardians will help heal generational trauma caused by distrust with the educational system from past school experiences.

“U.S. courts set a precedent in 1905 in the case of *Waldren vs. United States* that upheld tribal authority to determine enrollment policies. Most federally recognized tribes (as implicitly prescribed under the Federal Acknowledgement Act of 1978) require a certain level of blood quantum, ranging from “full” Indian blood to 1/32 Indian blood”. (Schmidt, 2011)

Even the Bureau of Indian Affairs has to uphold the Indian Recognition Act (IRA) which gives Native American preference for job promotions and appointments, although the minimum requirement states “an individual must be one-fourth or more degree Indian blood and be from a member of a federally recognized tribe.” (Krakoff, 2017)

Handling fraudulent claims is a protection for Native American/Alaska Native people coined by the term ethnic fraud. Identifying pretend Indians is much more common where individuals pass themselves off as having Native American/Alaska Native ancestors in order to receive benefits entitled by the government. Pewewardy and Frey (2004), explain that “claiming one’s ancestral background is not, in and of itself, problematic, but when such claims are opportunistically used to cash in on scholarships, jobs, set-aside programs and other affirmative economic incentives, it becomes a highly questionable practice – particularly when such ‘fraudulent Indians’ quickly discard their new identity as soon as it no longer serves them”. Pewewardy and Frye (2004), also state, “Ethnic fraud directly affect those college students who have a legal right to financial aid and designated specifically for American Indians.”

Another example is shared by Viren, S. (2021), “The Detroit news published an investigation into what were then known as box-checkers students who identify as Native American on their college applications...of the 1,500 university educators listed as Native American at the time, said Bill Cross...”we’re looking realistically at one-third of those being Indians.” The most prominent example of this is Senator Elizabeth Warren, who was listed as Native American by Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania Law School when she was on the faculty at these institutions and has since apologized for claiming that identity.”

Staff development training is a component that is overlooked when determining whether an unfamiliar tribe is listed on the ED506 form. Awareness is needed to familiarize staff members with the Federal Registry to verify tribe names. Schools may have to payback funds for reporting incorrect information from the ED506 form count. Schools ensure “Tribes that are federally recognized receive the benefits and services exclusively reserved by the federal government for those classified as Indians.” (Mather, 2003)

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, there has been a gradual decline with the collection of eligible ED506 forms. The generation of students, parents, and grandparents who are not enrolled with a Federally recognized tribe or band is increasing. The lack of understanding from school administrators and staff members is negligent. Training is needed to assist administrators with the weight of their responsibility to ensure the needs of Native American/Alaska Native students are met.



To best sum up the importance of collecting ED506 forms, Fairbanks, R. A. (1995), shares “As Ojibwe writer and artist Larry Cloud-Morgan has said, “The language is the people; the language is the people!” In other words, for a “people” to exist they must be distinguishable in some significant way. And, the important point here is that there is no “sovereignty” if there is no “people”. Before Native American people can claim any measure of sovereignty according to international law, they must exist as a distinct people that occupy certain territory and they must have a government that is capable of existing jurisdiction over both the territory and the people and the capacity to relate to other sovereign entities.”

## Resources

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