



Montana OPI Special Education: SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY STIPEND PROGRAM

To apply, a potential candidate must meet the following basic criteria:

- a. Must be a legal Montana resident.
- b. Must be admitted to the Master of Specialist in School Psychology Program Degree at the University of Montana.

Potential candidates to the School Psychology Stipend Program:

1. A potential candidate will engage in an intake call with the Program Director to discuss the project in depth. OPI School Psychology Stipend applications are only available from the Program Director post-intake conversation with the potential candidate sign off indicating understanding of program parameters.
2. A completed OPI School Psychology Stipend Program application must be submitted, preferably at the beginning of Year 1 in a potential candidate's educational program. Applications are accepted at the start of Year 2 in a potential candidate's educational program. Applications are NOT accepted in Year 3 of a potential candidate's educational program.
3. Upon acceptance to the OPI Stipend program, a stipend candidate is eligible for **tuition assistance of up to \$6,000** per fiscal year of the 3-year program (\$18,000 maximum in total) for allowable expenses. Allowable expenses only include tuition and/or books. The funds are awarded annually (maximum of \$6,000 per year) on a 'use it or lose it basis.' No left-over funds can be transferred to the next year.
4. If selected for the project, the stipend is paid at the end of each academic semester after submitting the required reimbursement paperwork.
5. School Psychology Stipend Program stipend candidate must maintain all standards of academics expected of them from the University and the program.
6. A candidate admitted to the stipend program is under legal contract with the Montana Office of Public Instruction for a period of 5 years.
7. Upon completion of the University program, stipend candidates are required to provide two years of service payback to any public Montana K-12 system or Special Education Cooperative as a School Psychologist. After successful completion of the Montana OPI contract requirements over the 5 years, the candidate is released from their contract with the Montana OPI.
8. The stipend dollars are taxable income on both the state and federal levels. All successful stipend candidates will receive a 1099 statement for tax filing purposes. Tax debt is not a reimbursable expense for the School Psychology Stipend Program. Successful stipend candidates are solely responsible for any personal income tax debt they may incur because of this stipend program.
9. Failure to successfully complete the OPI contract requirements results in default status on said contract. The stipend candidate will be required to pay the Montana OPI back the total amount spent on their behalf in a non-interest-bearing loan.

For further information, contact Annette Viciedo Young at ayoung3@mt.gov or 406-444-0299.