

2024

SHEFA CITIZEN CENTRIC REPORT



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Who We Are

Established under Saipan Local Law 13-21, this financial assistance program aims to empower students by alleviating some of the financial burdens associated with higher education. By supporting educational endeavors, SHEFA contributes to the development of a well-educated workforce that can drive innovation and economic growth within the region. Eligible applicants must meet certain residency and academic criteria to qualify for funding, ensuring that the support is directed toward those who are most committed to their educational and professional goals. Through its efforts, SHEFA not only invests in individual futures but also nurtures the broader community, fostering a culture of learning and opportunity.

Our Mission

The SHEFA program, established by the Municipality of Saipan under the Office of the Mayor, aims to cultivate a more educated, skilled, and productive workforce. This initiative seeks to broaden educational opportunities for qualified residents of Saipan, including those from the Northern Islands.



LEADERSHIP

Mayor of Saipan
Ramon "RB" Jose Blas
Camacho

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Chairwoman

Henry Kyle B. Hofschneider
Vice-Chairman

Eluene Baza
Treasurer

Florence Calvo
Secretary

Guadalupe Attao
Member

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Merissa S. Rasa
Administrator

Doreen C. Masga
Administrative Assistant

Tricia B. Dela Cruz
Compliance Officer

Makenzie S. Hensley
Office Clerk



OUR PROGRAM



Eligibility Requirements

In order to obtain funds through SHEFA, applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents, be enrolled in or accepted at an institution of higher learning, Northern Marianas Trades Institute or recognized trade institution by the SHEFA board and be able to prove one-year residency on Saipan prior to application date. Applicants must also be full-time students and maintain a 2.5 cumulative grade point average (CGPA) for those pursuing an academic degree and a 2.0 cumulative -grade point average for those pursuing a trade/vocational certificates. Upon certification of eligibility, recipients are required to complete, sign, and notarize a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) which acknowledges their agreement to return to Saipan to provide services in either the public or private sector. Failure to adhere to the MOA should result in aid received being converted to an interest-bearing loan. SHEFA currently administers three types of financial assistance: Grant-in-Aid, Field of Study (priority fields) and Merit Incentive Award. Grant amounts vary by the type of financial assistance and whether the study is on Saipan or off-island. Maximum duration of eligibility for financial assistance per degree type: Less than 2 years -Trade/Vocational Certification, 2 Academic Years - Associate Degree, 4 Academic Years - Bachelors' Degree, 2 Academic Years - Graduate Degree, 3 Academic Years - Advanced Degree.

Grant - In - Aid

- This program provides financial assistance that converts into a loan if the grantee does not return to Saipan after completing their studies or does not enroll. The SHEFA fund plus interest must be repaid according to the terms and conditions outlined in the promissory note/memorandum of agreement attached to the grant.

Merit Incentive Award

- This award is based on academic performance, requiring students to maintain a minimum of 3.5 GPA at the end of every term. However, students in their first term of college and/or those taking remedial or developmental courses in fulfillment of a full-time enrollment, are also not eligible.

Priority Fields

- This award is granted to junior and senior college students, along with those pursuing advanced degrees, who pursue a field of study identified by SHEFA as a priority field for Saipan and meet other established criteria.

Status	Award Amount
Vocational/Trade	\$700
Undergraduate/Graduate On-island or Online	\$1200
Advanced Degrees (dependent upon availability of funds)	\$2000

Responsibilities of the SHEFA Board of Directors

- Oversee the SHEFA Program.
- Establish and implement regulations
- Develop policies.
- Manage authority and control over all funds allocated by the Saipan Northern Island Legislative Delegation.
- Review requests for appeals, deferments and forbearances.
- Propose legislation and provide relevant recommendations to the legislature regarding policies that govern the program.

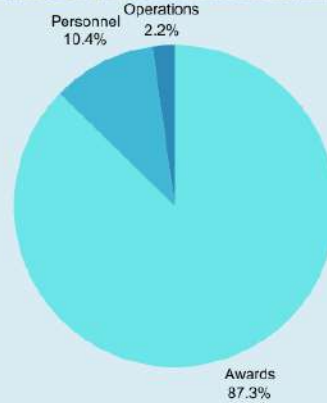


OUR FINANCES



GENERAL EXPENSES

- Awards: \$1,696,100
- Personnel/Fringe: \$202,836
- Operations: \$43,548



Fall 2023–Fall 2024	Total
Award Count	1666 recipients
Disbursement Amount	\$1,696,100



Compliance SECTION

- No. of previous recipients currently in the workforce (Saipan): 1259
- Total loan collections from 2012 to 2024: \$794,488
- Student loan collections for 2024: \$126,646



OUR OUTLOOK



Timeframe	Project
2025	Exploring alternative means of generating scholarship funds.
2025	Reintroduction of the Merit Incentive Award and Priority Field Award.
2025	Providing financial support to part-time students who are employed full-time.
Goals	
1	Continue to broaden educational and vocational/trade opportunities.
2	Improve the collection of academic, graduate, and employment data.
3	Establish a system that effectively links graduates with public and private sectors for internships, career development, financial assistance, and employment opportunities.
4	Reinforce compliance, collection, and enforcement initiatives.
5	Continue to work with the Department of Finance to provide convenient repayment options for previous recipients that are in default.
Highlights	
1	The timely appropriation and allocation of SHEFA funding allowed us to provide financial assistance to our recipients before the commencement of the school year.
2	Our team extended support to 2,707 students, parents, and visitors through a range of services. This assistance included educational resources, counseling, and community outreach initiatives designed to create a nurturing atmosphere. The effectiveness of these efforts was reflected in the positive feedback from those we helped, who shared their appreciation for the guidance and opportunities offered.
3	This year, eighteen US Permanent Residents and Green Card holders have gained from our program. We appreciate the benefits of having a diverse array of individuals from different backgrounds who seek our support as they work towards their degrees and make positive contributions to our workforce.
4	Our team conducted eight outreach presentations to a variety of agencies, high schools, training institutions and community events.
5	With the timely appropriation from Saipan Local Law 23-07 and Saipan Local Law 23-13, we extend our appreciation to the Saipan Northern Island Legislative Delegation for prioritizing our students and education. Because of this, we were able to provide financial assistance to all eligible applicants. This included students attending NMTI, NMC, online and off-island institutions, from trades school students pursuing certification in their chosen field to advanced degrees in the doctorate level.
6	Upcoming professional development trainings: May 19-21, 2025 Western Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.
7	A steady increase in collections and timely compliance is a welcoming trend showing increasing awareness among students regarding their service or financial obligations to SHEFA.
8	Award amounts were increased, beginning fall 2024, for students attending Northern Marianas Technical Institute (NMTI), Northern Marianas College (NMC), online institutions and other trade/vocational institutions on and off-island.