

From July 21 to Aug. 4, Tribal students from Florida and Georgia will convene in Tallahassee to take part in the annual Florida Indian Youth Program. There, students will interact with other Native youth, gain insight into the college experience, attend a college and career fair and interact with representatives from more than 20 colleges, programs and professions, among much more.

The Florida Governor's Council on Indian Affairs (FGCIA, Inc.) has been in operation since its establishment in 1974 as a private not-for-profit 501(C) (3) organization. The Florida Indian Youth Program (FIYP) was developed by the State of Florida to give Native American Students the opportunity to spend two weeks in the State Capital and be exposed to higher education and state government. Native students from Florida and Georgia come to Tallahassee for the annual event. The students are 14 to 18 years of age, and are provided an opportunity to live in a residence hall on the campus of the Florida State University. During the two-week program, the students participate in scholastic, cultural and social events and activities, all designed to increase the probability of high school graduation and inspire the students to higher academic achievement.

The Florida Indian Youth Program has two levels: the youth program, which consists of students ages 14 to 17, and the leadership program, consisting of high school seniors or recent graduates. The Leadership Academy is made up of Native American students who are entering their senior year or who have just graduated from high school. They have a separate schedule of activities from the Youth Program. Students are provided with the opportunity to explore academic programs of interest through collaborative efforts made by FGCIA, Inc. staff, professional volunteers and academic advisors from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Florida State University and Tallahassee Community College. Each participant will be provided with an intensive, challenging, and fun educational experience designed to awaken and cultivate their full potential. Hands on experiences, practical applications and dynamic speakers are used to motivate and teach these important skills.

During the two weeks the students are on campus, classroom activities are conducted on the campus of Tallahassee Community College or at one of Tallahassee's other institutions of higher learning: Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University or Florida State University. Classes include STEM, writing, computer skills, tribal government, financial literacy, SAT/ACT prep, and art. Activities are planned for every day so there is no down time. Students are required to be with a counselor at all times and the group is accompanied by at a least one officer of the Florida State University Police Department. At the end of the two weeks participants, staff and special guests all attend a special banquet. Participants are recognized for their completion of the Florida Indian Youth Program and some are given special awards for outstanding leadership.

Applications are due June 22. For more information and to apply, visit fgcia.org/youth-program.

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