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CTE Board Suspends Scholarships Amid Funding Freeze, Federal Delays, and Unpaid Bills

With no scholarship disbursements for the current fiscal year, the CTE board points to delays from local finance agencies and a Trump administration freeze on federal Perkins funds—jeopardizing not only awards but day-to-day operations.

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Applicants for scholarships offered by the Board of Career and Technical Education must make other arrangements to finance their education and training due to the lack of available funding, CTE officials say. They blame intransigence from central government's finance agencies for the debacle.

Earlier this year, board members lamented that scholarship funds had not [been distributed in the usual manner](#). Now, with application deadlines long past and still no funding in sight, scholarship hopefuls have been advised to seek support elsewhere.

During a board meeting on Wednesday, Executive Director Anton Döös read from a letter issued to applicants. “We regret to inform you that at this time, the board has not received funding for either scholarship for the current fiscal year,” he quoted, referring to the Albert Ragston Sr. and James Peterson Jr. scholarship awards. “We advise you not to rely on these awards as part of your current financial planning,” Mr. Döös continued.

In a further complication for the CTE board, other essential funding is also unavailable to them. “Right now, consolidated funds are on hold by the Trump administration, and so our Perkins funds are also on hold,” said CTE board chair Joann Murphy. This occurred after this set of funding was moved under the purview of the Department of Labor at the federal level, Ms. Murphy explained. She promised to explore a possible remedy with the commissioner of the territorial department of labor. “If the commissioner takes Perkins out of the consolidated funds, then we can resume our activities with those funds,” Ms. Murphy indicated. “I’m hoping that is going to happen.”

Amid the dismal news, one bright sport for career and technical education in the territory is the renewed interest in certification among the cohort of teachers. “It’s not so much of a tug of war with us contacting them,” Ms. Murphy disclosed. “They are contacting us and submitting the information that we need to certify them.”

Despite this small sign of progress, the territory is still in need of attracting more CTE instructors to meet demand. Ms. Murphy believes that seeking additional grant funding for the purpose of engaging more teachers would be a necessary next step for the board. She has already made contact with a grant writer to that end.

In addition to not receiving funding specifically for scholarships, the CTE executive director explained that money for regular operations also continues to be scarce. “We still have outstanding bills that have not been paid,” Mr. Döös said, noting that the Department of Finance seems reluctant to relinquish its grip on funding “until third quarter monies come into the government.”