



**T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® MINNESOTA**

# Sponsoring Program Manual

**March 2019**

## Introduction to T.E.A.C.H. and Overview

### **What is the Sponsoring Program Manual?**

This manual is considered an extension of the contract signed by the scholarship recipient (the employee), the sponsoring program (the employer) and T.E.A.C.H. MINNESOTA. Child Care Aware reserves the right to change, add to, eliminate or modify any of the procedures in this manual at its discretion, with or without notice. The most updated version of the manual will always be available on the T.E.A.C.H. MINNESOTA website: [www.childcareawaremn.org/teach](http://www.childcareawaremn.org/teach)

### **What is the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Program?**

T.E.A.C.H. MINNESOTA is a higher education scholarship program intended to help early childhood and school-age care professionals increase their levels of education, compensation and commitment to the field.

### **History of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® MINNESOTA**

T.E.A.C.H. MINNESOTA, a program of Child Care Aware of Minnesota, began in 2002. T.E.A.C.H. is a national program, licensed by the nation office located in North Carolina. As the licensee agency, Child Care Aware sets the policies and procedures for operating the T.E.A.C.H. program in the state of Minnesota within the guidelines established by the T.E.A.C.H. National Center. When making decisions that may impact the T.E.A.C.H. program, Child Care Aware utilizes input from the T.E.A.C.H. Advisory Committee and other key early care and education stakeholders.

### **T.E.A.C.H. MINNESOTA's Mission Statement**

The mission of T.E.A.C.H. is to promote and provide support needed for child care professionals to increase their level of education, retention and compensation, while ensuring that it is economically and professionally feasible for individuals to stay in the field.

### **Administering Organization**

Child Care Aware of Minnesota, a nonprofit corporation, administers T.E.A.C.H. MINNESOTA. Child Care Aware is dedicated to assisting families, providers and communities with child care information and services. For more information about Child Care Aware visit <http://childcareawaremn.org/>. T.E.A.C.H. MINNESOTA is funded largely through federal dollars but also receives some foundation support. T.E.A.C.H., the scholarship recipient and the sponsoring child care sponsoring program each pay a portion of educational costs.

## Available T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships

- Associate Degree Scholarship (covers 9-18 semester credits per year)
- Bachelor's Degree Scholarship (covers 9-18 semester credits per year)
- CDA Training for College Credit
- 3 to 8 Credit Scholarship (covers a smaller amount of credits intended for staff who are trying to earn enough credits to become assistant teacher/lead teacher qualified or finish the last credits of a degree)
- Student Teaching Scholarship
  - This scholarship is available to child care and school-age care professionals who are enrolled in Student Teaching and are able to work 10 hours per week while completing their student teaching requirements (this does not have to be in a classroom). The scholarship also includes a stipend to the sponsoring program for \$1,000.
- Achieve-approved Trainer Scholarship

With the exception of the trainer scholarship, all scholarship models are available to Minnesota early childhood and school-age care professionals who work at least 20 hours per week in a legally regulated or licensed child care/school-age care program for at least 6 months at time of application. Early childhood professionals include lead teachers, assistant teachers, aides, center directors, and assistant directors as well as school-age care staff.

## Role of the Counselor

T.E.A.C.H. MINNESOTA counselors answer questions regarding scholarship contracts and policies/procedures and provide suggestions regarding scholarship options. They also provide suggestions of college options for potential applicants or current recipients planning to change schools or degree programs. The counselor communicates on behalf of recipients with participating colleges and universities to ensure prompt payment for approved classes. Counselors are an important component of the program; they help make T.E.A.C.H. MINNESOTA a success for everyone.

## Sponsoring Program (Employer) Responsibilities

Below is a brief timeline of how your employee's scholarship year is laid out. Once your employee (the scholarship recipient) has been awarded a scholarship, you will receive an award packet with the sponsoring program manual (this document), Form C instructions and Form Cs.

1. **Sign the contract** – Once your scholarship recipient has been awarded a scholarship they will receive a contract that you must also sign. Please note the credit limits and release time requirements. Sign the contract and return it to the scholarship recipient. **T.E.A.C.H. scholarships being three times a year on January 1<sup>st</sup>, June 1<sup>st</sup> or September 1<sup>st</sup> and last for 12 months.**
2. **Set up a release time schedule** – Release time (see more detailed description below) is the paid time off that scholarship recipients are required to receive each term they are attending classes while on a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship. Generally, this is 3 hours per week but those hours can be combined across one or more weeks if this is easier to schedule. Work with your scholarship recipient to determine the best schedule for release time. Release time should be tracked on the Release Time Reimbursement Form (Form C) . See below for the general schedule of college semesters or quarters:

Colleges follow the **semester** schedule below (with one exception):

Spring semester: January-May

Summer semester: June-August

Fall semester: September-December

Rasmussen college follows the **quarter** system below:

Winter quarter: January-March

Spring quarter: April-June

Summer quarter: July-September

Fall quarter: October-December

3. **At the end of the semester or quarter** – Complete and sign Form C and submit it to T.E.A.C.H.
4. **Receiving an invoice** – If you receive an invoice before you submit Form C, then you may disregard the invoice and submit the completed/signed Form C first. If you have already submitted a Form C, you may receive a check or an updated invoice. If you receive an invoice, check the statement to make sure the release time reimbursement has been credited before paying the invoice.
5. **Scholarship completion** -- At the end of the 12 month scholarship year, your program has up to 6 months to provide the scholarship recipient with either a \$250 bonus or a 2% raise. Your program decided whether to provide a bonus or a raise at the time of the scholarship recipient's application and it is also listed in the contract. A scholarship recipient is only eligible for a bonus or raise if they have completed at least 9 semester (13 quarter) credits during their scholarship year.
6. **Commitment year/renewal** – At the end of the scholarship year, the recipient can decide to apply for another scholarship, at this time the sponsoring program also decides if they want to sponsor the recipient for another year, if so, they sign a participation agreement. Once the recipient has graduated or decided to stop renewing their scholarship, they then are committed to working for the sponsoring program for at least one more year, this is the commitment year.

### Release time

#### **Sponsoring Program Release Time (teachers, assistant teachers, and aides only)**

As part of the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship agreement with child care programs, teachers, assistant teachers, and aides (**directors and assistant directors are NOT eligible for release time**) are eligible for three hours of paid release time for each week that class is in session for up to 36 hours per quarter/48 hours per semester for terms with at least one college credit covered by T.E.A.C.H. **Scholarship recipients should receive their full regular wage while on release time hours, T.E.A.C.H. scholarships offer a partial reimbursement of those wages to the employer.**

Release time is a required component of the T.E.A.C.H. contract for classroom staff. Recipients can use paid release time to attend class, study or handle personal needs. Recipients and their supervisors should meet before the start of each semester or quarter to ensure that the program can provide release time during work hours that are convenient (such as for a class or daytime study hours). Release time is flexible and hours can be combined across more than one week to provide a recipient with a half day or full day off if needed, a recipient and their supervisor should work together to find the best schedule. If a program is closed during the summer then release time isn't required, however, the sponsoring program still needs to fulfil the requirement of paying a portion of tuition/books for the class(es) the recipient took during the summer.

Release time is tracked on the Form C, which T.E.A.C.H. sends to the sponsoring program supervisor along with the award letter. The sponsoring program should claim release time on Form C. All release time reimbursements are issued to the sponsoring program to help subsidize the cost for release time paid to recipients and/or for substitute(s). During a normal 16 week semester, recipients receive 3 hours of paid release time (at their current hourly rate) each week they are taking courses. T.E.A.C.H. will reimburse sponsoring programs for up to 36 hours per quarter or 48 hours per semester for a maximum of 144 hours per year at a rate of \$12 per hour (\$4.25/hour for KinderCare employees). Recipients should NOT sign Form C if they are not receiving release time.

Note: Recipients are NOT eligible for release time if they have reached the maximum credit limit and T.E.A.C.H. is not paying for tuition costs for that semester/quarter. **Center directors and assistant directors are NOT eligible for release time.**

### **Bonus and/or Raise**

Upon successful completion of at least 9 semester (13 quarter) credits during the scholarship year, within 6 months of the end of the scholarship the sponsoring program is required to pay the recipient a bonus or a raise. The sponsoring program compensation in the form of a bonus or raise is in addition to any other annual raise or bonus the scholarship recipient would normally receive. T.E.A.C.H. will notify the sponsoring program director approximately six months following the end of the term of the contract to award compensation as outlined in the contract. T.E.A.C.H. will not send

a reminder letter if the scholarship recipient has not completed and submitted all the documents required to complete or renew their scholarship or the recipient has not completed the minimum number of credits required to receive a bonus/raise.

**If the scholarship recipient chooses to terminate their employment at the sponsoring program before they have successfully completed their scholarship year or before they have successfully completed the commitment year, they will forfeit all future bonus and raise payments, if any.**

### **Repayment Policy**

If your scholarship recipient does not complete their scholarship or commitment year, they may be required to repay the money the sponsoring program paid on their behalf.

The scholarship recipient will **not** be required to repay the sponsoring program portion of tuition charges/books if:

- Medical reason(s) made it impossible for them to complete the terms of the scholarship/commitment year. (They will be required to submit to T.E.A.C.H. a letter from their physician stating that medical reasons made it impossible for them to complete the terms of the scholarship/commitment year);
- Their employment was terminated by the sponsoring program due to low enrollment, the closing of the program, or any other reasons

The scholarship recipient **will** be required to repay the sponsoring program portion of tuition charges/books if:

- They chose to terminate their employment at your sponsoring program during their scholarship or commitment year.

In the above situations, the scholarship contract will be terminated as of the last day of the scholarship recipient's employment. Please contact a T.E.A.C.H. counselor if your scholarship recipient's employment status changes.

**Sponsoring programs will not be responsible to collect the money from their former employees, the T.E.A.C.H. program will collect the money owed to the program from the former employee.**

When a recipient is required to repay their scholarship, T.E.A.C.H. decides how much must be repaid based on the following process:

1. If a recipient has had more than one scholarship year, the T.E.A.C.H. team determines if they have fulfilled the commitment year for the previous scholarship(s). Generally, recipients are required to repay funds based on the last scholarship year and current scholarship year but not going back further than 1 previous completed contract. If a recipient has completed at least half of their commitment year, their debt will be reduced by 50%.
2. The amount that must be repaid by the recipient is different based on whether or not they are going to continue being employed in the early childhood field. Choosing to leave the early childhood field completely will result in the recipient being required to repay the full amount of their scholarship.

The definition of "working in the early childhood field" is : in a program that is licensed or legally regulated. The program must they serve children birth-age 5 or be a school-age care program. Examples of program in the early childhood field are: licensed child care centers, family child care programs, Head Starts, school based pre-k/school readiness programs, or school-age care programs. Working in a nonregulated or unlicensed program would **not** be considered staying in the field. (For example, nannying or family, friend or neighbor care.)

3. If an employee chooses to leave their sponsoring program before the end of their commitment year but stays in the field they will only be required to repay the portion their program paid for their tuition/books. However, if the recipient leaves their program and does not continue to work in the early childhood field, they will be required to repay their whole scholarship.

## **Appeal Process**

If the scholarship recipient is required to repay some or all of their scholarship but they feel that they have special circumstances that caused them to be unable to complete the terms of their T.E.A.C.H. contract, they can request to not be required to repay their scholarship. The steps in the T.E.A.C.H. appeal process are as follows:

1. Scholarship recipient writes an appeal letter explaining their situation and requesting that they not be required to repay scholarship money. The recipient emails/mails this letter to the T.E.A.C.H. office.
2. The T.E.A.C.H. team will submit the recipient's letter to the T.E.A.C.H. advisory committee who will consider the request and offer their decision.
3. A T.E.A.C.H. counselor will get in touch with the recipient to let them know the team and committee's decision.

## **Commitment year**

For each scholarship year a recipient completes, they are committed to working at least one additional year for their sponsoring program. A commitment year immediately follows the completion of the scholarship year. All scholarship models require a commitment period. A commitment year may be served at the same time as another scholarship contract.

## **Scholarship Termination**

There are only a few reasons why the T.E.A.C.H. staff would end a scholarship before the year was complete. Those reasons include:

- No activity for two terms in a row
- Lack of communication from the recipient (despite multiple attempts to connect)
- Recipient left their job before the end of the scholarship year
- Recipient left the college before the end scholarship year

In most cases, above the recipient would not have to repay any of their scholarship, except possibly in the case of a recipient leaving their job.

## **Brief Outline of Recipient Responsibilities during the Scholarship year**

1. Recipient and sponsoring program sign the contract
2. At the beginning of each term: recipient submits class information and book reimbursement requests so T.E.A.C.H. can set up payment with their college.
3. Recipient receive release time over the course of their term.
4. Term ends: recipient submits a completed and signed release time form (Form C) and a copy of their grades.
5. Recipient pays the invoice (if applicable) for their share of tuition to the T.E.A.C.H. program.
6. The next term begins and repeats steps 2-5.
7. Scholarship year ends
8. Renewal/commitment year: the recipient submits renewal paperwork or exit paperwork if they are not seeking a new scholarship and then serves their commitment year to the sponsoring program by staying employed for an additional year.

## **Communication with T.E.A.C.H. Staff**

Ongoing communication between T.E.A.C.H. MINNESOTA counselors and scholarship recipients is critical. You must have updated contact information on file at all times to ensure that you receive important scholarship information, reminders and reimbursements. Email is the most frequent way counselors contact you, so you must ensure that the T.E.A.C.H. office has your most current email address on file, in addition to phone number and address. Please immediately contact your counselor regarding any changes in employment, college enrollment, or if you have moved.

### T.E.A.C.H. Website

Stay connected to T.E.A.C.H. information and resources online anytime. Please find application materials, forms, program resources and announcements at: [www.childcareawaremn.org/teach](http://www.childcareawaremn.org/teach)

### **Contact Information**

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T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® MINNESOTA  
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Saint Paul, MN 55107

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### **The T.E.A.C.H. Team**

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