



Sponsoring Program Manual

Dear Sponsoring Program,

Welcome to the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Minnesota scholarship program! We are very excited that you have decided to sponsor one of your staff in their effort to increase their education. To ensure that you have a successful experience in our scholarship program, we have created this manual to include a detailed description of our policies and processes.

We want you to have a clear understanding of the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship and its expectations. Each section is designed to provide you with specific information about how the program works. At the end of the manual, we have included a T.E.A.C.H. staff directory and contact information. Please contact us with questions or concerns you may have. We are here to help!

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

T.E.A.C.H. Minnesota scholarship program staff

T.E.A.C.H. Introduction 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. website: 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 educators 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., a program of Child Care Aware of Minnesota, began in 2002. T.E.A.C.H. is a national program, licensed by the national 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 the support needed for early childhood educators 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. 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 the website](#). T.E.A.C.H. is funded largely through federal dollars but also receives some foundation support. T.E.A.C.H., the scholarship recipient, and the sponsoring program each pay a portion of educational costs.

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

- Associate Degree Scholarship (18 semester/28 quarter credits per year)
- Bachelor's Degree Scholarship (18 semester/28 quarter 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 early childhood and school-age care educators 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.
- Achieve-approved Trainer Scholarship – stipend for approved trainers to raise their Develop career lattice step
- Apprenticeship
 - The apprenticeship project combines an expanded traditional T.E.A.C.H. scholarship with one-on-one mentoring for a minimum of 2 years. Apprentices are required to meet additional standards and are strongly encouraged to complete their degree by the end of their apprenticeship. Ideal apprentice candidates are those who have worked in the early childhood field for less than 5 years, are intending to complete a degree, and are interested in working with a mentor to build their job skills.

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

Eligibility Requirements

- Have a high school diploma or GED
- Be employed by a licensed early childhood or child care program, be employed by a public prekindergarten program, or be an employee in a school-age program exempt from licensing in Minnesota or participating in Empower to Educate
- Be working at least 20 hours per week
- Be committed to continuing working at current place of employment for one year beyond the scholarship year
- Be accepted into a Child Development or Early Childhood Education degree program or be pursuing college credits for a national Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) at an approved, accredited college or university in Minnesota
- Have a Develop Individual Membership with verified employment
- Not currently receiving a REETAIN grant from Child Care Aware of Minnesota
- Have completed a FAFSA application, Dream Act application, or submit evidence of ineligibility (ex: an email from the college's financial aid department)

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. successful for everyone.

Sponsor Responsibilities

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 release time instructions and Form C.

1. **Sign the contract** – Once your scholarship recipient has been awarded a scholarship they will receive a contract that you must also sign. The contract will be sent to you electronically and you will receive a signed copy. Please note the credit limits and release time requirements. **T.E.A.C.H. scholarships begin three times a year on January 1st, June 1st, or September 1st 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) and is due within 30 days of the end of each term. See below for the general schedule of college semesters or quarters:

Colleges follow the **semester** schedule below (with one exception):
Spring semester: January-May; Form C due June 30th

Summer semester: June-August; Form C due September 30th
Fall semester: September-December; Form C due January 31st

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

Winter quarter: January-March; Form C due April 30th

Spring quarter: April-June; Form C due July 31st

Summer quarter: July-September; Form C due October 31st

Fall quarter: October-December; Form C due January 31st

3. **At the end of the semester or quarter** – Complete and sign Form C and submit it to T.E.A.C.H. within 30 days.
4. **Receiving an invoice** – If you receive an invoice before you submit Form C, then please pay the invoice first, then T.E.A.C.H. will issue the reimbursement for release time.
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 fulfill 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, it can also be found on the [T.E.A.C.H. website](#) under Sponsoring a Recipient. 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 of 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. Recipients should NOT sign Form C if they are not receiving release time. Release time forms must be submitted within 30 days of the end of a term in order for the sponsoring program to receive a reimbursement.

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 (12 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.

T.E.A.C.H. Policies

Repayment Policy

If your scholarship recipient does not complete their scholarship or commitment year, they may be required to repay the money your 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 for collecting 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 a program that is licensed or legally regulated. The program must serve children birth-age 5 or be a school-age care program. Examples of programs in the early childhood field are: licensed child care centers, family child care programs, Head Start, 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, nanny 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, the recipient would not have to repay any of their scholarship, except possibly in the case of a recipient leaving their job.

Requesting Additional Credits

In most cases, once a recipient has reached their maximum scholarship limit for the scholarship year, no more credits are available until the recipient is eligible to renew their scholarship. There are two options for requesting additional credits:

1. For recipients who are in their last semester or quarter before graduating and find they need additional credits in order to graduate on time can request that their scholarship cover up to 2 additional classes (up to 8 credits maximum) past their scholarship limit. This can be done via email to their T.E.A.C.H. counselor.

2. For recipients who are **not** in their last semester/quarter before graduation, they may complete the Additional Credits Request form for up to 10 additional credits per scholarship year. The form can be found on the T.E.A.C.H. website (go to the “Resources and Forms tab”) as long as they meet the following:
 - a. Can show academic success for 1-2 previous semesters with a minimum of a 3.0 GPA.
 - b. Have completed (grades must be available) at least one semester on a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship.
 - c. Have their college advisor sign the request form stating that they are academically a good candidate to take additional classes/credits.
 - d. If applicable: have their employer sign the form as this will mean an extra expense for the employer.

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

Ongoing communication between T.E.A.C.H. staff and sponsoring programs is critical. Having updated contact information on file at all times ensures that you receive important scholarship information, reminders, and invoices. Email is the most frequent way counselors contact programs, so please ensure that the T.E.A.C.H. office has the correct email address of the program director. Please contact the T.E.A.C.H. staff if there are any changes.

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 on the [T.E.A.C.H. website](#).

Contact Information

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