

Sponsoring Employer Policies and Procedures Manual

Dear Sponsoring Employer,

Welcome to the TEACH 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 TEACH 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 TEACH 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,

TEACH Minnesota scholarship program staff

Introduction and Program Overview

What is the Sponsoring Employer Manual?

This manual is the Sponsoring Employer Manual of Child Care Aware of Minnesota's TEACH Early Childhood® Minnesota program (hereafter referred to as TEACH). The Sponsoring Employer Manual is referred to in and supplements the separate contract between Child Care Aware of Minnesota (hereafter referred to as Child Care Aware) and each individual scholarship recipient. Child Care Aware reserves the right to change, add to, eliminate or modify any of the policies and procedures in this manual at its discretion, with or without notice. The most updated version of the manual will always be available on the TEACH website.

What is the TEACH Early Childhood® Program?

TEACH 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 the TEACH Early Childhood® Program

The Teacher Education And Compensation Helps (TEACH) Early Childhood® began as a program of The Early Years located in North Carolina, in 1990 to improve the level of education of early childhood educators working with young children, while making the educational process affordable, increasing wages, and reducing turnover.

Over the past few decades, the program has received national attention as one of the first to link teacher education and compensation. Because of the TEACH Early Childhood® Program early childhood educators have completed on average 14 credits each year, turnover rates have decreased and salaries have increased. The program has expanded to many states across the nation. For more information on the creation of TEACH in North Carolina and states that currently administer the program, visit the [TEACH National Center's website](#).

History of TEACH Early Childhood® Minnesota

TEACH Minnesota, a program of Child Care Aware of Minnesota, began in 2002. In its first year, TEACH served a select portion of Minnesota only, offering the CDA assessment fee and associate degree scholarship options. During the fall of 2003, TEACH awarded its first bachelor's degree scholarship. Currently, TEACH serves early childhood educators and sponsoring programs statewide, and it focuses solely on scholarships that cover higher education expenses. The CDA assessment fee is now covered by another program of Child Care Aware.

As the licensee agency, Child Care Aware sets the policies and procedures for operating the TEACH program in the state of Minnesota within the guidelines established by the TEACH National Center. When making decisions that may impact the TEACH program, Child Care Aware utilizes input from the TEACH Advisory Committee and other key early care and education stakeholders.

To continue operating a successful program, TEACH annually surveys scholarship recipients and sponsoring employers to better understand their experience with the program and to make necessary changes for improvement. Additionally, TEACH regularly surveys higher education staff and faculty to learn their perspectives of the program.

TEACH Minnesota's Mission Statement

The mission of TEACH 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 organization, administers TEACH Minnesota. Child Care Aware is dedicated to assisting families, educators, and communities with child care information and services. For more information about Child Care Aware visit the [Child Care Aware website](#). TEACH is funded largely through federal dollars but also receives

some foundation support. TEACH, the scholarship recipient, and the sponsoring employer (when applicable) each pay a portion of educational costs.

Available Scholarships

- Associate Degree Scholarship
- Bachelor's Degree Scholarship
- CDA Training for College Credit
- Student Teaching Scholarship
 - This scholarship is available to early childhood and school-age care educators who are enrolled in a bachelor's program that includes student teaching and are able to work 10 hours per week while completing their student teaching requirements. Contact a coordinator for more information about this scholarship.
- 3 to 8 Credit Scholarship
 - This flexible scholarship is designed to fill a variety of needs. It is for early childhood educators who are interested in beginning an associate or bachelor's degree program but want to build their confidence by easing into a higher education setting can use this scholarship to take a few classes. It is also intended for educators who are finishing a degree or want to take a few credits to complete their required Parent Aware training.
- Apprenticeship (see apprenticeship section for more details)
 - The apprenticeship project combines an expanded traditional TEACH scholarship with one-on-one mentoring for 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.

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 or operate a licensed family child care program and meet the eligibility requirements.

Eligibility Requirements

- Have a high school diploma or GED
- Work in a child care setting including:
 - Licensed child care program
 - Licensed family child care provider
 - Public prekindergarten program
 - School-age program exempt from licensing in Minnesota
- Be working at least 20 hours per week or participating in Empower to Educate
- 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 an active Develop Individual Membership
- Not currently receiving a REETAIN grant from Child Care Aware
- 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 TEACH Coordinator

Each scholarship recipient is assigned to a TEACH coordinator. TEACH coordinators answer questions regarding scholarship contracts and policies/procedures and provide suggestions regarding scholarship options. They also provide suggestions for college options for potential applicants or current recipients planning to change schools or degree programs. The coordinator communicates on behalf of recipients with participating colleges and universities to ensure prompt payment for approved classes. Coordinators are an important component of the program; they help make TEACH a success for everyone.

Sponsor Employer Responsibilities

Sponsoring 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. **TEACH 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 TEACH scholarship. Generally, this is weekly time 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 deadlines below. 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 University follows the **quarter** system below:

Winter quarter: January-March

Spring quarter: April-June

Summer quarter: July-September

Fall quarter: October-December

Release Time (Form C) SEMESTER Deadlines

Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
February 1 st	July 1 st	October 1 st

Release Time (Form C) QUARTER Deadlines (Rasmussen University only)

Fall Quarter	Winter Quarter	Spring Quarter	Summer Quarter
February 1 st	May 1 st	August 1 st	November 1 st

3. **At the end of the semester or quarter** – Complete and sign Form C and email it to TEACH
4. **Receiving an invoice** – If you receive an invoice before you submit Form C, then please pay the invoice first, then TEACH 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 by indicating your choice on the Participation Agreement and it is also written in the contract. A scholarship recipient is only eligible for a bonus or raise if they have completed at least 9 semester (12 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 you also decide if you want to sponsor the recipient for another year, if so, sign a new participation agreement. Once the recipient has graduated or decided to stop renewing their scholarship, they then are committed to working for the your program for at least one more year, this is the commitment year.

Release time

As part of the TEACH scholarship contract, teachers, assistant teachers, and aides (directors and assistant directors are NOT eligible for release time) are eligible for paid release time (**at their normal hourly wage**) 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 paid for by TEACH.

Release time is a required component of the TEACH contract for classroom staff. Recipients can use paid release time to attend class, study, or handle personal needs. Release time hours are **not** PTO and should not be served while on site. 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. 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 employer 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 Form C, which TEACH sends to the sponsoring supervisor along with the award letter. The Form C is also available on the website under Forms and Resources. All release time reimbursements are issued to the employer to help subsidize the cost for release time paid to recipients and/or for substitute(s). TEACH 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 \$20.00 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 employer to receive a reimbursement.

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 employer is required to pay the recipient a \$250 bonus or a 2% raise. The sponsoring employer 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. TEACH 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. TEACH 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 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.

TEACH 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 TEACH 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 your program due to low enrollment, the closing of the program, or any other reason (including performance issues).

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 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 TEACH coordinator if your scholarship recipient's employment status changes.

Sponsoring programs will not be responsible for collecting the money from their former employees, the TEACH program will collect the money owed to the program from the former employee.

When a recipient is required to repay their scholarship, TEACH decides how much must be repaid based on the following process:

1. Generally, recipients are required to repay the portion your program paid for tuition and books based on the current scholarship year but not going back further. If a recipient has completed at least half of their commitment year, their debt will be reduced by 50%.
2. If an employee chooses to leave their sponsoring program before the end of their commitment year they will be required to repay the portion their employer paid for their tuition/books.

TEACH will invoice the recipient and reimburse your program for the amount, your program is not responsible for collecting the money from the recipient.

Appeal Process

If the scholarship recipient is required to repay but they feel that they have special circumstances that caused them to be unable to complete the terms of their TEACH contract, they can request to not be required to repay their scholarship.

The steps in the TEACH 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 TEACH office.
2. The TEACH team will submit the recipient's letter to the TEACH advisory committee who will consider the request and offer their decision.
3. A TEACH coordinator 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 in your 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 TEACH 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 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 TEACH coordinator.
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 TEACH 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 TEACH scholarship.
 - c. Have their college advisor sign the request form stating that they are academically a good candidate to take additional classes/credits.
 - d. Their employer must sign the form as this will mean an extra expense for the employer.

Anti-bias Statement

The TEACH scholarship program accepts eligible applicants without regard to age, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or veteran status. We encourage interested eligible applicants from all backgrounds to apply.

Bilingual Support

The TEACH program has recently expanded to include bilingual support for Spanish speaking applicants and recipients. In addition to being able to take early childhood classes completely in Spanish at Minneapolis College, there are now bilingual coordinators on staff for the TEACH program. There is a dedicated email address for applicants and recipients to connect with bilingual coordinators: becaTeach@ChildCareAwareMN.org

Apprenticeship

The TEACH Apprenticeship program was developed in partnership with the TEACH National pilot and the Apprenticeship Minnesota office inside the MN Department of Labor and Industry. Apprenticeship is managed and regulated by the Department of Labor and Industry (DLI). The TEACH apprenticeship program began in 2023 with the pilot of the center-based apprenticeship model, the scholarship model was approved by TEACH National and registered and approved by DLI. Initial apprenticeship funding came from the MN state legislature.

Apprenticeship combines a traditional TEACH college scholarship with a trained mentor to support the apprentice through their college journey and implementation of early childhood best practices in their classroom. Apprentices work for two years towards an associate or bachelor’s degree in early childhood and partner with their onsite mentor in

completing all Knowledge and Competency Framework (KCF) criteria for either infants and toddlers or preschool (depending on which age group they work with). See below for the differences between traditional TEACH scholarships and apprenticeship. For more information, please contact an apprenticeship coordinator:

apprenticeship@childcareawaremn.org

Apprentice Eligibility Requirements

- Have a high school diploma or GED
- Have worked in the early childhood field for less than 5 years
- Work in a licensed/certified child care center or public school pre-K classroom
- Be working 30-40 hours per week for a minimum of \$15.46/hour
- Be committed to continuing working at current place of employment for two years plus one additional commitment year
- Be accepted into a Child Development or Early Childhood Education degree program (associate and non-licensure bachelor's degrees only) at an approved, accredited college or university in Minnesota
- Have an active Develop Individual Membership
- Not currently receiving a REETAIN grant from Child Care Aware
- Have completed a FAFSA application, Dream Act application, or submit evidence of ineligibility (ex: an email from the college's financial aid department)
- Be willing to work with a mentor

Differences from traditional TEACH

Apprenticeship applicants have slightly different eligibility requirements (see list above) but the main difference is working with a mentor focused on completing all KCF competencies. Additionally, while the apprentice is offered a college scholarship similar to a traditional TEACH recipient, there are the following additions:

- Unlimited credits (not limited to only 18 credits per year) but must complete at least 9 credits per year
- Apprentice receives a stipend of \$2,000 each year
- Up to 96 hours of paid release time each semester
- Employer receives a stipend of \$5,000 per apprentice, per year
- Mentor receives a stipend of \$3,500 per year plus free mentor training
- Only renewable once (2 years total)

Mentoring

Apprenticeship mentors are what makes the apprenticeship program unique. Apprentices are paired with a mentor who works at the same site and/or program but the mentor is not required to work in the same classroom as their apprentice.

Mentor eligibility:

- Have a college degree (bachelor's degree in early childhood preferred) – must be a minimum of a Step 9 on Develop's Career Lattice
- Work in a classroom for a minimum of five years
- Work at the same site/same program as the apprentice
- Be willing to commit to mentoring for two years

Once accepted into the TEACH apprenticeship program, mentors will complete a free 8 week online mentor training and then receive a \$500 stipend for completing the training. Mentors receive quarterly payments (\$3,500 per year) for their mentoring hours which include weekly informal check-ins and monthly scheduled meetings. During the check-ins and meetings, mentors will record the progress of the apprentice's work through the KCF competencies through the Apprentice and Mentor Companion App. Mentors will offer support to their apprentices in other ways depending on the needs of the apprentice including problem solving, support, goal setting, modeling different teaching techniques, and offering helpful resources.

Apprenticeship completion

Apprentices will complete their apprenticeship program within 2 years but completion also requires that the apprentice has completed: a minimum of 2,000 work hours, at least 18 college credits, and completed all KCF competencies (as signed off on by their mentor). Once an apprentice has met those requirements, they will be considered 'graduated' from the apprenticeship program and will receive a certificate of completion from DLI.

Communication with TEACH Staff

Ongoing communication between TEACH coordinators and employers is critical. Please 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 coordinators contact you. Please immediately contact a coordinator regarding any changes in employment of your scholarship recipient.

TEACH Website

Stay connected to TEACH information and resources online anytime. Please find application materials, forms, program resources, and announcements at: www.childcareawaremn.org/teach

Concerns or Complaints

To submit a concern or complaint about the TEACH scholarship program or its staff, please reach out to the TEACH Scholarship Manager – Erin Young: eriny@childcareawaremn.org or the Director of Financial Supports – Chelssi Klein: chelssik@childcareawaremn.org.

Mailing Address

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10 River Park Plaza, Suite 820
Saint Paul, MN 55107

Phone: (651) 290-9704

Website: www.childcareawaremn.org/teach

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