

# COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING T.E.A.C.H. EARLY CHILDHOOD® NEBRASKA SCHOLARSHIPS



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

The T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps) Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Scholarship Program is a statewide scholarship program designed to help family child care providers, child care center teaching staff, preschool teachers, Head Start teacher assistants, and child care center directors meet their professional goals while continuing their current employment. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA:

- Links education, compensation, and commitment to improved quality of early childhood programs.
- Involves a partnership for the sharing of expenses by the recipient of the scholarship, the sponsoring program, and T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA.
- Provides financial and other supports to complete a degree in Early Childhood Education.

## How is a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Scholarship different from other scholarships?

- The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Scholarship requires everyone to contribute financially to the scholarship. Scholarship recipients and their sponsoring programs all must pay for part of the cost of tuition and books.
- T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Scholarship recipients continue to be scheduled to work at least 30 hours per week. Programs and scholars are provided with additional funding, which can include: paid release time or reimbursement for a substitute care provider, a bonus, and a travel stipend.
- T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA scholarship recipients agree to remain in their current early childhood program for 12 months after they complete the coursework for their specific contract. (18 months for Bachelor Degree students)

## Who is eligible for a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Scholarship?

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA scholarships are provided to anyone who:

- Works 30 hours per week or more in a licensed early childhood program, preschool in a public school district, or Head Start.
- Works as a family child care provider, teacher, assistant teacher, or director of an early childhood program or as an assistant teacher or director of a Head Start Program.
- Earns less than \$17.50 per hour.
- Is working towards an **Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education or a Bachelor Degree in Inclusive Early Childhood Birth – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade.**
- Additional criteria must be met by Bachelor Degree candidates. Call and talk with a scholarship counselor about the BA scholarship.

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## **Are T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA scholarships limited to those people working in programs licensed by the Health and Human Services System Department of Regulation and Licensure Child Care Licensing System?**

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Scholarships are available to people working for DHHS licensed child care programs, Head Start, or those programs operating under Rule 11 and approved by the Nebraska Department of Education. (These are typically public school preschools.) The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Counselor will verify that all applicants work for programs operating under at least one of these sets of program standards. If a program is not operating under one of these sets of standards and wants to participate in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA program, they will need to become licensed.

## **Who is not eligible for a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Nebraska scholarship?**

At this time, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA needs to prioritize those persons working most directly in early childhood care and education settings. The scholarships are intended for providers who work directly with children in early childhood care and education settings and directors that supervise teachers. At this time, those employed in the following positions are not eligible for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA scholarships:

- Cooks, van drivers
- Home visitors, family support workers
- Head start teachers
- Licensed exempt providers

## **Are people who live in Nebraska, but work in early childhood programs outside of Nebraska, eligible for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA scholarships?**

No, people who live in Nebraska, but work in early childhood programs outside of Nebraska, will not be eligible for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA scholarships.

## **Are people who work in early childhood in Nebraska, but live outside of Nebraska, eligible for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA scholarships?**

Yes, people who work in Nebraska, but live outside of Nebraska, will be eligible for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA scholarships. However, these recipients must still attend a Nebraska college/university that participates with T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA.

## **Which colleges/universities partner with the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA scholarship program?**

Community Colleges:

- Central Community College
- Metro Community College
- Mid-Plains Community College
- Northeast Community College
- Southeast Community College
- Western Nebraska Community College
- Nebraska Indian Community College
- Little Priest Community College

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#### Colleges/Universities:

- Chadron State College
- Peru State College
- Wayne State College
- University of Nebraska – Kearney
- University of Nebraska – Lincoln

A current list can also be found at [www.nebraskaeyc.org](http://www.nebraskaeyc.org). Click on the “Programs/Services” tab for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA general information.

#### **Will T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA pay for courses taken through out-of-state colleges or universities, or through internet based colleges or correspondence courses?**

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA scholarships only pay for courses taken at a Nebraska college/university that participates with T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA. T.E.A.C.H. will also pay for online classes only taken at a participating Nebraska college/university.

#### **What additional financial aid forms must a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Scholarship recipient complete?**

All approved T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA scholarship recipients are required to apply for the Pell Grant and other financial aid by completing a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form. This form is available online at [www.FAFSA.ed.gov](http://www.FAFSA.ed.gov). Please note that there should NEVER be a charge for filing.

Additional financial aid helps stretch scholarship dollars and increases the number of people who can benefit from T.E.A.C.H. scholarships. Free assistance for filling out the FAFSA application is available through the recipient’s college/university or contact EducationQuest at <http://www.educationquest.org> or 1-800-303-3745. When recipients receive their award, we encourage them to accept any scholarships or grants that do not need to be repaid. Please do not accept any student loans. If a recipient has applied for the FAFSA in the past year and didn’t qualify, and they feel that their financial situation hasn’t changed since then, please contact the T.E.A.C.H. Counselor.

#### **What does T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA provide?**

- 80% of the cost of tuition and books
- A travel stipend each term
- \$\$ for hiring a substitute and/or paid time off work to study, go to school, etc.
- A bonus at the end of the contract year.
- College and career support and assistance.

#### **What are the scholarship recipient’s obligations to fulfill their T.E.A.C.H. scholarship contract?**

- Enroll in an early childhood education program at a college or university.
- Register for approved courses. Only those courses that are part of the early childhood degree program (including required general education classes and skill building classes) will be approved.
- Submit class schedules to the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Counselor.
- Attend classes regularly.
- Complete all coursework and successfully pass each course with a grade of “C” or better.
- Submit grade reports soon after the end of each quarter or semester.
- Reimburse Nebraska AEYC for 10% of the cost of tuition and books that exceed the travel reimbursement.
- Let the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Counselor know if additional financial aid has been received.
- Remain employed in their current early childhood program for 12 to 18 months after the T.E.A.C.H. contract has been completed.

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## **Once a recipient has been notified that they've been awarded a scholarship and they send in their signed contract, how do they proceed with registering for classes?**

- Call the college or university and have a course catalog and class schedule sent. (Or, look them up online.)
- Arrange a time to meet with an advisor from the college/university's early childhood education program. They will help students with course selection and be able to answer registration questions that pertain to their particular college or university. Then, register for course(s).
- Contact the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Counselor with course selection.
- The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Counselor will then notify the college or university that the course(s) and books have been approved and can be billed to Nebraska AEYC.
- ***Recipients will do this every term they take classes.***

## **What courses will be paid for through the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA scholarship?**

T.E.A.C.H. only approves coursework in an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Early Childhood Education, Associate of Arts Degree in Academic Transfer with an Early Childhood Education Emphasis, or a Bachelor's Degree in Inclusive Early Childhood Birth-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade. Scholarship recipients will need to work with their respective colleges or universities and the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Counselor to be sure that all courses taken apply to their degree and will be covered by the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Scholarship.

## **How many credit hours will T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA pay for and how long do I have to complete the coursework?**

All T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA scholarships are awarded for a 12 month contract period. If attending a community college on the quarter system (Metro and Southeast), scholars must complete 12-18 credit hours per contract year. If attending a college/university on the semester system (all other schools), a scholar must complete 9–15 credit hours per contract year. If a scholar does not complete the minimum number of credit hours during the 12 month contract period, it is possible that T.E.A.C.H. will be able to grant a one term contract extension. This is determined on a case-by-case basis.

## **Can a person receive more than one scholarship contract?**

When a scholar successfully completes their T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Scholarship contract, they are automatically eligible for another scholarship, provided there is funding available to support that contract. If a scholar wants to continue their studies, they need to notify the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Counselor to discuss the establishment of a new contract.

Sponsoring programs will also be required to sign the new contract indicating they are willing to sponsor the scholar for an additional year and will assume their portion of the financial commitment. Should a sponsoring program decide they cannot support the scholar for an additional year, the scholar is no longer eligible to participate in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Scholarship Program.

## **What if a recipient wants to take more credit hours than the contract allows?**

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA handles these situations on a case-by-case basis. Any scholarship recipient who wants to take more credits than specified in their contract **must first discuss the issue with the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Counselor**. Additional credits will only be approved for students who have demonstrated academic success and who have received permission from their sponsoring program.

Sponsoring programs and T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA incur additional costs when extra credit hours are taken. Therefore, scholarship recipients should not assume that additional credits will be approved.

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## **If a student completes their AAS or AA early childhood degree at a community college, will they be able to transfer their scholarship to the Bachelor Degree scholarship? What is the BA Gap Scholarship?**

Yes. Once a student has completed the credit requirements for an AAS or AA early childhood degree and wishes to continue their education, there are a few steps that will take place.

- Fill out a new T.E.A.C.H. application. It is important that the student's sponsoring program agrees to continue to sponsor them.
- Choose a participating college/university and have an informal degree audit completed. To complete an informal degree audit, the student will send their associate degree transcripts to the four year college/university they would like to attend. The college/university will then use those transcripts to determine what classes the student has already taken that will transfer, credit-for-credit, into their college/university. In order to qualify for the traditional Bachelor Degree scholarship model, students will need to be able to transfer at least 60 credits. Classes that transfer for electives will not be counted in the total. Most AAS graduates don't have 60 transferable credits.
- However, students are still able to receive a scholarship if they do not meet the 60 transferable credit hour requirement. A student in this situation will be selected to follow the Bachelor Degree **Gap** Scholarship model. This scholarship is for students who aren't able to transfer at least 60 credits, but meet the rest of the requirements. This scholarship requires students to first take all the possible classes that they can at a community college first that will then transfer to their four year college/university they would like to attend. (Ex. College Algebra, Biology, Western Civilization)

## **What if a recipient is having trouble and is not sure they can complete the coursework at this time?**

**All scholarship recipients should call their T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Counselor first, if they are struggling for any reason.** Scholars should be familiar with the drop/add policies at their college or university. Students are encouraged to drop a class as early as possible, if they won't be able to complete the required coursework or are receiving a failing grade. Courses dropped or withdrawn from after the first week of classes will still require full tuition payment.

## **What happens if a recipient fails a course?**

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA handles these situations on a case-by-case basis. Typically, the T.E.A.C.H. program will pay for a course once, but will consider paying for a class a second time, if the scholarship recipient can explain how a special circumstance contributed to the failure of the class. Should T.E.A.C.H. decide to pay for the course to be taken a second time, the scholar will need to outline what additional supports will be put in place to ensure a grade of "C" or better is achieved. **However, if a recipient is ever having trouble with a class, the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Counselor needs to be notified immediately.** The Counselor may advise the recipient to withdraw from their course rather than receive a failing grade. The Counselor may also be able to let the recipient know what else they could do to improve their grade. Do not wait until the term is over to contact your T.E.A.C.H. Counselor.

## **Can T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Scholarship recipients take a term off?**

Yes. Recipients will still need to meet the minimum number of credit hours during the 12 month contract period in order to complete their contract. Recipients taking a term off will also still need to inform the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Counselor that they won't be taking any classes.

If a student takes two consecutive terms off, and does not enroll in classes by the third consecutive term, the student will have to reapply for their scholarship.

Again, if a recipient does not complete the minimum number of credit hours during the 12 month contract period, it is possible that T.E.A.C.H. will be able to grant a one term contract extension. This is determined on a case-by-case basis.

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### **What if a recipient doesn't pay their part of the cost of tuition and books on time?**

Scholars are expected to make prompt payments of any fees owed to Nebraska AEYC for their T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Scholarship. If fees owed are more than one term behind, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA will determine whether to provide any additional support for the scholarship recipient. Scholars can also contact the T.E.A.C.H. Counselor to set up a payment plan. T.E.A.C.H. will also withhold any reimbursements, including bonuses, to pay the recipient portion of tuition/books.

### **What if a recipient quits their job at their sponsoring program or quits operating their family child care home before they complete their 12 or 18 month commitment as promised in the contract?**

- **Contact the T.E.A.C.H. Counselor as soon as possible if a change in employment/location is being considered. Stop incurring expenses to T.E.A.C.H. immediately.**
- Any scholarship recipient who leaves their program or quits operating their family child care home is in breach of their scholarship contract. All pending reimbursements will be suspended. The scholarship recipient will not receive the \$350 bonus, travel stipend, or substitute reimbursement from T.E.A.C.H. and will not receive their raise/bonus from their sponsoring program.
- Scholarship recipients who do not remain in their current early childhood program may also be required to repay the costs of the scholarship to Nebraska AEYC and/or the sponsoring program.
- Scholarship recipients who do not remain in their current early childhood program may become ineligible for any future T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Scholarships.
- **Scholarships are not transferable between programs.**

### **What if a recipient is fired from the early childhood program where they teach?**

If a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA scholarship recipient is fired from their sponsoring program, their scholarship contract will end. The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Counselor will work to determine the circumstances of the firing. Future eligibility to apply for a scholarship will depend on the reason for termination, conversations with the recipient's sponsoring child care program, and the recipient's compliance with the contract requirements.

Based upon those circumstances, a new scholarship may or may not be awarded. The scholar would need to submit a new application. The student's new employer would need to agree to commit to participate as a sponsoring program, thereby assuming the financial responsibilities associated with the T.E.A.C.H. program.

### **Where can I get more information?**

Contact the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA Scholarship Counselor for more information. Contact information can be found at the bottom of each page. You can also visit our website at [www.NebraskaAEYC.org](http://www.NebraskaAEYC.org) and click on the "Programs/Services" tab for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA general information and scholarship applications.

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