



Excellence in Teaching Act Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program

Information for recipients who apply for the first time after April 2009

Purpose

The purpose of the *Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program* is to:

- Provide forgivable loans to Nebraska undergraduates or graduates enrolled in an eligible program at an eligible Nebraska institution resulting in an initial teaching certificate;
- Attract outstanding students to major in teacher shortage areas at the teacher education programs at Nebraska colleges and universities;
- Retain resident students and graduates as teachers in Nebraska schools; and
- Establish a loan contract that requires a borrower to obtain employment as a Nebraska teacher upon graduation from a college or university.

Applications for the 2026-27 award year will be made available approximately **April 15, 2026**, with a deadline of **June 1, 2026**.

Note that current and previous recipients must submit a 2026-27 application to be considered for 2026-27 funding

Eligibility

An eligible student:

- Is a full-time student enrolled in 24 semester undergraduate credit hours or 18 semester graduate credit hours of classroom, laboratory, clinical, practicum, or independent study coursework in a 12-month period;
- Is enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate teacher education program at an eligible Nebraska institution that is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education as determined to be acceptable by the Board, has a teacher education program accredited by the State Department of Education, and, if a privately funded college or university, has not opted out of the program pursuant to rules and regulations;
- Is majoring in a teacher shortage area, as determined annually by the Commissioner of Education;
- Is working toward his/her initial certificate to teach in Nebraska;
- Is a resident student, as defined in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 85-502 or, if enrolled in a privately funded eligible institution, would be deemed a resident student if enrolled in a state-funded eligible institution;
- Has a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or has graduated in the top quarter of his or her high school class (you must attach an unofficial transcript or high school transcript to your application to verify your cumulative GPA and/or high school graduating class ranking);
- Agrees to complete the teacher education program that he or she is enrolled in and to complete the major on which his or her eligibility is based within five years of the initial AETP award; and
- Commits to become certified with an endorsement in a teacher shortage area and teach in an accredited or approved public or private Nebraska school at least a portion of the time in said teacher shortage area.

Amount of Forgivable Loan

Eligible students can apply for loans in an amount of \$3,000 per year. Students can apply for, and receive, loans annually for up to five (5) years. Students must complete and submit a new application annually.

Application Deadline

The 2026-27 applications are to open approximately April 15, 2026. Completed applications must be submitted by June 1, 2026.

Loan Forgiveness Obligation*

Following the loan recipient's successful completion of the teacher education program and major for which the AETP loan was awarded, becoming certified, employed as a full-time teacher in a Nebraska school within six months of graduation, and otherwise meeting the requirements of the signed contract between the student applicant and the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, AETP loans will be forgiven in the following manner:

- Beginning in August 2022, upon successful completion of student teaching, AETP recipients are forgiven \$1,000 of AETP funds received.
- At the end of the third year of teaching, \$3,000 of the total amount awarded, OR
- If recipient is teaching in a school district that is in a local system classified as very sparse or in a school building considered low-income in which at least 40% of students qualified for free lunches, as determined by the State Department of Education, will be forgiven up to \$6,000 of AETP funds received.
- Each following year of full-time teaching, the recipient will be forgiven up to \$3,000 OR \$6,000 (depending on school designation) of AETP funds received until the recipient's outstanding AETP loan balance is exhausted.
 - ❖ If you are a recipient of both AETP and AETP-ST: AETP-ST awards are **not** forgiven simultaneously alongside the AETP awards. The total of all awards is combined and forgiven as detailed above.

Repayment

If the recipient does not meet the loan forgiveness obligations described above, then the loan must be repaid, with interest accruing as of the date the borrower signed the contract.

For more information about the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program, please contact the financial aid office of the institution in which you are currently enrolled or Celeste Thompson, CCPE, at 402-471-4454 or celeste.thompson@nebraska.gov.

*For purposes of this loan program, the definition of teacher means "any certified employee who is regularly employed for the instruction of pupils pursuant to Section 79-101 R.R.S." This definition **does not include** administrative or special services certificate holders who function exclusively in positions requiring these endorsements. Those individuals who enter into these fields of education will not be eligible for loan forgiveness.