



Career-Readiness and Dual-Credit Education Grant Program

Program Guidelines 2025-26 Grant Year

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This guidance document is advisory in nature but is binding on an agency until amended by such agency. A guidance document does not include internal procedural documents that only affect the internal operations of the agency and does not impose additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties or include confidential information or rules and regulations made in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act. If you believe that this guidance document imposes additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties, you may request a review of the document.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Career-Readiness and Dual-Credit Education Grant Program is to provide grants for a.) tuition and fees for teachers who are enrolled in graduate course work necessary to meet postsecondary institution requirements to teach college-level courses (dual credit), b.) tuition and fees or related costs (e.g., testing and certification fees) incurred by teachers taking courses outside of a degree program to become qualified to teach career and technical education courses, or c.) tuition and fees or related costs (e.g., testing and certification fees) incurred by prospective teachers preparing for competency tests to become qualified to teach career and technical education courses, or d.) tuition and fees incurred by college faculty to obtain a postsecondary teaching permit.

The CRDC Education Grant Program is not intended for college students enrolled in a teacher education program leading to an initial teaching certificate or currently certified teachers seeking graduate degrees or endorsements other than career and technical education supplemental endorsements. Such students and teachers may be served by the existing Attracting Excellence to Teaching and Enhancing Excellence in Teaching programs.

II. STATUTORY PROVISIONS Neb. Rev. Stat. § 85-3111

- (1) The Career-Readiness and Dual-Credit Education Grant Program is established. The program shall be administered by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. The commission, in consultation with the State Department of Education, the Department of Labor, and any advisory committee established by the commission for such purpose, shall:
 - (a) Create and establish teacher education pathways enabling the instruction of dual-credit courses and career and technical education courses;
 - (b) Correlate and prioritize teacher education pathways with Nebraska workforce demand;
 - (c) Establish a grant program beginning on or after July 1, 2024, to distribute money from the Excellence in Teaching Cash Fund to teachers enrolled in education pathways leading to qualification to teach dual credit courses and career and technical education courses;
 - (d) Establish a directory of available teacher education pathways in Nebraska identified by sequence and location; and
 - (e) On December 31, 2025, and each December 31 thereafter, electronically submit an annual report on grants awarded pursuant to the Career-Readiness and Dual-Credit Education Grant Program to the Clerk of the Legislature. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the number and amount of grants awarded, the postsecondary educational institutions attended by grant recipients, and information regarding the completion of instructor requirements

to teach dual credit courses and career and technical education courses.

- (2) The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education may adopt and promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the Career-Readiness and Dual-Credit Education Grant Program.

III. DEFINITIONS

1. Career and technical education means the Nebraska Career and Technical Education Programs of Study and all related activities, curricular requirements, and faculty qualification requirements established by the Nebraska Department of Education.
2. Commission means the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.
3. CRDC Grant Program means the Career-Readiness and Dual-Credit Education Grant Program established in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 85-3111.
4. Department means the Nebraska Department of Education.
5. Dual credit course means a course taught to high school students for which credit is reported on both the students' high school and postsecondary institution transcripts.
6. Grant year means the academic year (August 1 to July 31) for which a grant is requested.
7. High school means an accredited or approved public or private high school located in Nebraska.
8. Postsecondary institution means a Nebraska public postsecondary institution or a Nebraska nonpublic, nonprofit postsecondary institution.
9. Teacher means a.) a teacher currently employed by an accredited or approved public or private high school located in Nebraska, b.) an instructor currently employed by a Nebraska postsecondary institution, or c.) an individual seeking to teach in a career and technical education field who is sponsored by an accredited or approved public or private high school located in Nebraska or a Nebraska two-year institution for the purpose of obtaining a career education teaching permit from the Nebraska Department of Education.
10. Teacher education pathway means a coordinated series of no more than a.) 18 graduate credit hours, b.) 18 undergraduate credit hours, or c.) test preparation for industry-recognized certification tests, which series leads to qualification and recognition by postsecondary institutions to teach dual credit courses or by the Department to teach career and technical education courses or to expand career and technical education program offerings and course content at high schools.
11. Test preparation means training and materials that are typically not offered for college credit but are necessary or helpful to an individual preparing to pass a competency examination approved by an industry or career area that will lead to a career education teaching permit granted by the Department.

12. Two-year institution means a Nebraska community college, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture, or a tribal college operating in Nebraska.

IV. START DATE

The CRDC Grant Program begins July 1, 2025. It is the Commission's intent to develop and release application materials by May 1, 2025, with a deadline of June 15, 2025. Should funds remain after the deadline date, the Commission will extend the application period until all funds are obligated. Applicants selected to receive a grant will be notified no later than July 15, 2025, for the 2025-26 grant year. Subsequent grant years will follow the same application and selection schedule unless modified by the Commission.

V. CONSULTATION

The Commission will consult with the Department and the Nebraska Department of Labor and may create an advisory committee of representatives from postsecondary institutions and K-12 education to:

1. Advise the Commission on the teacher education pathways and their component courses and certifications that will lead to a teacher's ability to meet requirements to teach dual credit courses and/or career and technical education courses.
2. Assist the Commission in prioritizing the teacher education pathways that will be eligible for funding based on the workforce needs of the state.
3. Assist the Commission in identifying existing teacher education pathways and working with postsecondary institutions, Educational Service Units, and certification entities recognized by the Department and/or the postsecondary institutions to develop new teacher education pathways that could be included in the directory of education pathways maintained by the Commission.
4. Aid the Commission in publicizing the CRDC Education Grant Program to prospective applicants, high schools, school districts, and postsecondary institutions.

VI. TEACHER EDUCATION PATHWAYS ENABLING INSTRUCTION IN DUAL CREDIT COURSES AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION COURSES

For the purposes of the CRDC Grant Program, a teacher education pathway enabling instruction in dual credit courses and career and technical education courses encompasses the following:

1. For dual credit courses:
 - A. A coordinated series of graduate-level courses not exceeding 18 graduate credit hours that will allow a high school teacher to meet the requirements of a postsecondary institution to teach dual credit courses. It is anticipated that many applicants will be pursuing an 18 graduate credit hour certificate; however,

individualized education pathways and graduate courses that coordinate with previously taken graduate coursework to meet requirements will qualify as a teacher education pathway. In all cases, an applicant must demonstrate that the graduate courses will result in qualification and recognition to teach for a particular postsecondary institution.

B. Any coursework necessary for a currently employed college or university faculty member to qualify for a Postsecondary Teaching Permit issued by the Department. In most instances, this will consist of the Department's Human Relations Training requirement.

2. For career and technical education courses:

A. A coordinated series of courses making up less than a bachelor's or master's degree that will allow an individual to qualify for a career education teaching permit in one or more of the Department's 16 career education endorsements.

B. Training and/or testing necessary to pass an industry-approved competency examination that *may* be recognized by the Department after Departmental review as a demonstration of proficiency adequate to qualify for a career education teaching permit with one or more of the Department's career education endorsements.

C. Training for career and technical education teachers that includes the award of graduate or undergraduate credit and will allow the teachers to expand career and technical education program offerings and course content options in their school.

D. A coordinated series of undergraduate and/or graduate courses leading to career and technical education supplemental endorsements recognized by the Department.

VII. ELIGIBILITY

The CRDC Grant Program is not intended for postsecondary students enrolled in a teacher education program leading to an initial teaching certificate or currently certified teachers seeking graduate degrees or additional endorsements other than career and technical education supplemental endorsements. Such students and teachers may apply for a forgivable loan from the Attracting Excellence to Teaching or Enhancing Excellence in Teaching programs.

An eligible applicant will be one of the following:

1. A teacher currently employed by a high school who is pursuing graduate course work not leading directly to a graduate degree that will enable the teacher to be approved by a postsecondary institution to teach dual credit courses.

2. A teacher currently employed by a high school who is pursuing undergraduate or graduate coursework outside of a degree program that will enable the teacher to qualify for an initial or additional career education endorsement (including a supplemental endorsement) from the Department or allow the teacher to expand career and technical education program offerings and course content options at their high school.

3. An instructor/faculty member currently employed by a postsecondary institution who is seeking a postsecondary teaching permit from the Department. Instructors/faculty members whose postsecondary institutions offer the required human relations coursework at no cost are not eligible for an award.

4. An individual seeking to teach in a career and technical field who is sponsored by and will be employed by a high school or a two-year institution for the purpose of obtaining a career education teaching permit from the Department or meeting institutional requirements.

Per Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 4-108-112, an eligible applicant must attest that the applicant is a U.S. citizen or a qualified alien under the federal Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq., as such act existed on January 1, 2009, and is lawfully present in the United States.

VIII. APPLICATION PROCESS

Application must be made annually on a form developed by the Commission and submitted to the Commission, and include, at a minimum:

1. Current or anticipated employer (must be a high school or a postsecondary institution as defined in these guidelines).
2. Currently held degree, certificate, and endorsement information.
3. Educational objective (qualification to teach dual credit courses; training required to demonstrate proficiency for a career education teaching permit or additional career education endorsement; or training to expand career and technical education program offerings and course content).
4. The teacher education pathway in the directory of available teacher education pathways maintained by the Commission that the applicant is or will be pursuing.
5. The requirements that the applicant has yet to meet within their teacher education pathway to achieve their educational objective.
6. The courses or test preparation and examination fees for which the applicant is requesting a CRDC Grant in the grant year for which the applicant is applying and the estimated cost of tuition and fees or preparation limited to three courses or test preparations per grant year.
7. Written affirmation from the provider of the teacher education pathway that the applicant is enrolled in or has been accepted to enroll in the teacher education pathway for which the applicant is applying for a CRDC Education Grant.
8. Written affirmation by the applicant's current or anticipated employer (a high school or postsecondary institution) that completion of the teacher education pathway will meet the employer's requirements to teach dual credit or career and technical education courses.

Applications will open May 1 and close on June 15. The Commission reserves the right to extend the application period until all funds are obligated to awardees.

IX. AWARDS

Applications addressing teacher education pathways prioritized by the Commission after consultation with an advisory committee will receive priority. Awards will be made based on the order in which applications that meet all CRDC Grant Program requirements, including pathway priority, are received by the Commission except that previous grant recipients who reapply prior to the June 15 deadline will receive priority consideration. Applicants will be notified of the disposition of their applications by July 15; however, the Commission reserves the right to extend the awarding period until all funds are obligated.

Grants are limited to an amount equal to tuition and required fees for three courses, or costs of three test preparations and certification examinations, per grant year. (However, in the event that funds are available after consideration of all applications, the Commission may fund more than three courses per grant year.) Grant recipients may not receive funding for more than 18 credit hours per teacher education pathway. Awards will cover actual tuition and fees or test preparation and examination fees not to exceed the tuition and fee charges for three online graduate courses at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln at the published base rate for the grant year. Awards may not be used to retake courses or certification examinations previously paid by a CRDC grant. All prior term courses must be completed before receiving an award for subsequent terms.

X. DISBURSEMENT AND REFUNDS

1. Awardees who are enrolling in undergraduate or graduate courses who are notified that they have received an award must submit proof of registration and tuition and fee charges to the Commission by August 15 for the fall semester, November 15 for a winter term, December 15 for the spring semester, and April 15 for summer terms.

A. The Commission will make payments on behalf of awardees directly to their postsecondary institution by September 15 for the fall semester.

B. The Commission will make payments on behalf of awardees directly to their postsecondary institution by December 15 for a winter term.

C. The Commission will make payments on behalf of awardees directly to their postsecondary institution by January 30 for the spring semester.

D. The Commission will make payments on behalf of awardees directly to their postsecondary institution by May 15 for summer terms.

2. Awardees who withdraw from a class paid for by a CRDC grant during their postsecondary institution's refund period are responsible for notifying the Commission of their withdrawal. The postsecondary institution will refund the unearned balance of the award to the Commission.

3. Awardees who incur test preparation and examination fees will be reimbursed by the Commission for their test preparation and examination fees upon confirmation that the examination has been taken. The Commission will reimburse the awardees within 30 days of receiving complete reimbursement information.

XI. AWARDEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Awardees agree to provide evidence of progress toward completing their teacher education pathways to the Commission within 30 days of the end of each term. Evidence of progress includes:

1. Grade reports for each course paid for by a CRDC grant. The grade report may be a copy or an original end-of-term grade report or an official or unofficial transcript.
2. A copy of the certification earned by examination for awardees who received a CRDC grant to cover the costs of test preparation and/or examination fees.

At the completion of their teacher education pathway, awardees must provide the Commission with evidence that they have completed all requirements of the pathway. Evidence includes:

1. A copy of the postsecondary teaching permit issued by the Department, or
2. A copy of the career education teaching permit issued by the Department, or
3. A copy of a supplemental teaching endorsement issued by the Department, or
4. A written statement from the awardee's high school stating that the awardee's training has allowed the school to expand its career and technical education course offerings, specifying the additional offerings, or
5. A written statement from a postsecondary institution stating that its requirements to teach college-level courses have been met by the awardee.

Before accepting a CRDC grant, an awardee must provide assurance to the Commission that they will provide to the Commission the teacher education pathway completion information, including but not limited to the course and certification testing results, required by the Commission to comply with statutory reporting responsibilities. The agreement will explicitly grant authorization to the Commission to request and receive the education pathway completion information directly from an awardee's employer or sponsor (high school or postsecondary institution as defined in these guidelines) in the event the awardee does not provide the information directly to the Commission.

XII. REPORTING

By December 31, 2025, and by each December 31 thereafter, the Commission will report to the Legislature:

1. The number and amount of grants awarded.

2. The Nebraska postsecondary institutions attended by the awardees and, if applicable, the industry certification examination providers.

3. Information regarding the awardees who completed the instructor requirements necessary to teach career and technical education and dual enrollment courses, including the subject areas in which they qualified.

The report will include no personally identifiable information from applicants or awardees.