

TEACH Grant

Thanks to the passing of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007, a new grant program has been established to help future teachers cover the cost of their education. Starting July 1, 2008, the new TEACH Grant program will provide future teachers up to \$4,000 a year in grant aid to undergraduate and graduate students. This new grant program is also available to students enrolled in post-baccalaureate teacher credential programs.

The TEACH Grant program is in place to cover any excess costs that current financial aid does not cover for prospective teachers. The award amount of a TEACH Grant, when combined with other financial aid, may not exceed the student's cost of attendance.

For recipients of the TEACH Grant, students must agree to serve as a full-time teacher at specified schools and teach in a specified field for four academic years. This requirement must be completed within 8 years of completing the degree.

Some say that TEACH is misleading in calling itself a grant program rather than a loan program, in that if a recipient doesn't meet the full requirements, the grant must be paid back. TEACH Grant recipients that do not fulfill their teaching obligations must repay the grant as if it was an unsubsidized Direct Loan. This is unfortunately one downside of the new TEACH Grant program; the fact that the grant turns into a loan, should a student change his or her mind about teaching.

The grant does however give prospective teachers more financial options when covering the cost of college tuition, and other various college expenses. It may, in fact, encourage those still unsure about whether they want to teach or not, to do so, by giving them this financial incentive to move forward with a teaching program.

There are limits to the TEACH Grant program. Eligible undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students may not receive more than \$16,000 and graduate students may receive no more than \$8,000 in total TEACH Grants.

TEACH Grant Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for a TEACH Grant, requirements include:

- Undergraduate students must have a 3.25 GPA. First year undergraduates go by their high school GPA. If the student fails to meet the GPA requirement, they must have scored in the 75th percentile on at least one admissions test.
- GPA requirements do not apply graduate students who are currently teachers or who are retiring and have expertise in a subject where there is shortage of teachers. These include high demand subjects, such as: math, science, Special Ed, and English as a second language.
- Graduate students completing an alternative teacher certification program are also eligible for the program.
- Student must be completing, or planning to complete the coursework required to become a teacher.
- Must serve as a full-time teacher for at least four years within eight years of completing their course of study

- Comply with the requirements for being a highly qualified teacher as defined in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

- Teach in the subjects of math, science, foreign language, bilingual education, special ed, a reading specialist, or a subject designated as "high need" by the federal or state government.

Overall, the TEACH grant is definitely something to look into if you are considering becoming a teacher. For more information, be sure to check with financial aid counselors at your school, as well as the elementary education department.

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