



Kansas Teacher Service Scholarship Program
Requested Supplemental Information
 March 9, 2017

The 2001 Legislature consolidated four separate teacher scholarship programs into one, now contained in KSA 74-32,100 through 74-32,107 as the Teacher Service Scholarship Program, administered by the Kansas Board of Regents. The purpose of this financial aid program is to reduce the impact of recurrent shortages of teachers in hard to fill disciplines and underserved geographical areas in Kansas as annually determined by the Kansas Department of Education.

Program Description and Mechanics

Students with competitive academic profiles, including college grade point average and strong college advisor recommendation letters are considered, as well as current teachers seeking licensure or endorsement in hard-to-fill disciplines or underserved geographic areas. The maximum award is adjusted annually by the Consumer Price Index. Currently, the maximum award is \$5,514 annually.

The scholarship is not need-based primarily due to the service obligation that requires teaching in the specified discipline or geographical area, in Kansas, one year for each year of scholarship support. Recipients who do not serve must repay the scholarship amount at the interest rate made under the federal PLUS program at the time the student entered into the agreement plus five percentage points (currently 11.84 percent). Board of Regents staff selects recipients and priority is given to students in the final two years of teacher education programs, as well as current teachers seeking additional licensure or endorsement in hard-to-fill disciplines or plan to teach in underserved geographic areas of the state. A five-year trend is shown below for this program.

Kansas Teacher Service Scholarship Awards
 2011-2016

Academic Year	Applicants	Recipients	Funding Awarded
2011-12	529	249	\$1,057,923
2012-13	502	259	\$1,033,529
2013-14	472	250	\$1,076,889
2014-15	480	221	\$921,868
2015-16	433	207	\$799,322

Source: KBOR Annual Student Financial Aid Reports

Applicant Processing

In order to apply for the program, a complete file must be submitted, which includes an application, transcript of college work, at least one letter of recommendation, a personal statement of the applicant's educational plans, and if the applicant is a current teacher, a copy of the teaching license. Anywhere from 10 to 15 percent of applicants never provide a complete file.

A variety of factors explain the difference between the number of applicants and the number of awards. Because the program is a merit scholarship, students whose cumulative grade point average is below 3.00 are not considered. Awards are not made to entering freshman or sophomore-level students because of the service obligation; most education majors start taking classes in the School of Education as juniors. The funds are therefore best deployed to those who are more certain they want to pursue the field of education as a career. This scholarship becomes a costly loan (with 11.84 percent interest) if the student has to repay the scholarship for noncompliance with the agreement. There are generally about 10-15 students a year who are freshman or sophomore level students who apply but not awarded. There are also students who may receive an award but later decide to decline the scholarship because they have concerns about the service obligation.

As shown in the table above, there has been a decline in applications for this program over the last few years. There are multiple factors affecting applications: fewer students pursuing education degrees, concern by applicants about securing a teaching position because of the service obligation, budget cuts in elementary and secondary education in Kansas with fewer positions available.