



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 2120

RICHMOND 23218-2120

June 28, 2021

TO: Deans and Directors of Virginia Colleges and Universities

FROM: Tara McDaniel, Director
Office of Teacher Education

SUBJECT: 2021-2022 Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program

The Virginia General Assembly funds the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program (VTSLP) as an incentive for students interested in pursuing a teaching career. Subject to available funding, these scholarship loans are for teacher candidates, including graduate students and paraprofessionals from Virginia school divisions enrolled in an approved teacher education program at an accredited Virginia public or private four-year institution of higher education in the Commonwealth.

Candidates must (i) be enrolled full-time or part-time in an approved undergraduate or graduate teacher education program or are participants in another approved teacher education program; (ii) have maintained a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.7 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent; and (iii) be nominated for such scholarship by the institution where they are enrolled and meet the criteria and qualifications, pursuant to § 22.1-290.01, *Code of Virginia*, except as provided herein. Awards shall be made to candidates who are enrolled full-time or part-time in an approved undergraduate or graduate teacher education programs in one of the top ten critical teacher shortage disciplines; however, a minority teacher candidates may be enrolled in any content area for teacher preparation. **Teacher candidates who previously received funding through the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program are not eligible.**

Specifically, the Appropriation Act: 2021 Virginia Acts of Assembly, Chapter 552, 2021 Special Session I, Item 144, G. 1 a-c states the following:

- 1. Out of this appropriation, \$708,000 the first year and \$708,000 the second year from the general fund is provided for teaching scholarship loans. These scholarships shall be for undergraduate students in college with a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.7 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent, who are nominated by their Virginia*

regionally accredited college or university, and who meet the criteria and qualifications, pursuant to § 22.1- 290.01, Code of Virginia, except as provided herein. Awards shall be made to students who are enrolled full-time or part-time in approved undergraduate or graduate teacher education programs for the top ten critical teacher shortage disciplines, however minority students may be enrolled in any content area for teacher preparation. Upon program completion, scholarship recipients may fulfill the scholarship loan obligation by teaching in the public schools of the Commonwealth in the first full academic year after becoming eligible for a renewable teaching license in the appropriate endorsement area and teaching for at least two years in a school division (i) in one of the critical teacher shortage disciplines as established by the Board of Education; or (ii) in a Virginia public school with 50 percent or more of the students eligible for free or reduced price lunch; or (iii) in a school division designated critical shortage subject area, as defined in the Board of Education's Regulations Governing the Determination of Critical Teacher Shortage Areas. Scholarship recipients who only complete one year of the teaching obligation shall be forgiven for one-half of the scholarship loan amount. Scholarship amounts are based on up to \$10,000 per year for full-time students, and shall be prorated for part-time students based on the number of credit hours. The Department of Education shall report annually on the critical shortage teaching areas in Virginia.

a. The Department of Education shall make payments on behalf of the scholarship recipients directly to the Virginia institution of higher education where the scholarship recipient is enrolled full-time or part-time in an approved undergraduate or graduate teacher education program.

b. The Department of Education is authorized to recover total funds awarded as scholarships, or the appropriate portion thereof, in the event that scholarship recipients fail to honor the stipulated teaching obligation.

c. Within the fiscal year, any funds not awarded from this program may be applied toward the other teacher preparation, recruitment, and retention programs under paragraph G.

Pursuant to 8VAC 20-650-10 of the *Regulations Governing the Determination of Critical Shortage Teaching Areas*, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) conducts an annual survey of instructional personnel to determine critical shortage teaching areas in Virginia. The identified areas for the 2021-2022 Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program are as follows:

1. Special Education
2. Elementary Education PreK-6
3. Middle Education Grades 6-8
4. Career and Technical Education
5. Mathematics Grades 6-12 (including Algebra I)
6. Science (Secondary)
7. Foreign Language PreK-12
8. English (Secondary)

9. Library Media PreK-12
10. Health and Physical Education

For the 2021-2022 academic year, the General Assembly has appropriated \$708,000 in support of the VTSLP. Scholarships are based on \$10,000 per year for full-time students and shall be prorated for part-time students based on the number of credit hours. Each institution of higher education may nominate up to three candidates for consideration of the scholarship.

The application packet for the 2021-2022 Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program is enclosed. The packet includes the Institutional Nomination Form for listing nominees from your institution in rank order, the 2021-2022 Application Form, a sample Promissory Note, and a College/University Nominator's Checklist. Please submit the nomination form listing all nominees and the 2021-2022 Application Form for each candidate. Please note that the official Promissory Note (to be completed by the nominee) will be forwarded to selected nominees, along with the Virginia Department of Education award notification letter. The nomination form must be completed by the dean, chair, or director of the teacher education program and submitted with the candidates' application forms. **Nominations must be received by the Virginia Department of Education no later than Wednesday, July 21, 2021 submitted through the SSWS drop box.** Incomplete applications may not be considered.

Upon program completion, the recipients of the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan are expected to teach in the public schools of the Commonwealth in the first full academic year after becoming eligible for a renewable teaching license and **shall fulfill the teaching obligation in accordance with the Promissory Note by teaching full-time under contract continuously in Virginia for at least two years in a school division (i) in one of the critical teacher shortage disciplines as established by the Board of Education; or (ii) in a Virginia public school with 50 percent or more of the students eligible for free or reduced price lunch; or (iii) in a school division designated critical shortage subject area, as defined in the Board of Education's Regulations Governing the Determination of Critical Teacher Shortage Areas. Scholarship recipients who only complete one year of the teaching obligation shall be forgiven for one-half of the scholarship loan amount.** Students are expected to notify the Office of Teacher Education, Virginia Department of Education, in writing of any change in enrollment status and any change of address, date of program completion, military service, and the name of the schools in which teaching service is rendered until the total obligation is satisfied.

Thank you for supporting this important educator recruitment initiative. If you need additional information or have questions regarding the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program, please contact Ms. Johnelle M. Torbert, Special Education Human Resources Development Specialist, at (804) 371-0471 or Johnelle.Torbert@doe.virginia.gov.

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Enclosures

c: Financial Aid Contacts