



# SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR TEACHER APPRENTICES

A Resource From the Tennessee  
Grow Your Own Center



[growyourown.tennessee.edu](http://growyourown.tennessee.edu)

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## Introduction

Registered teacher apprentices in Tennessee do not pay for any portion of their apprenticeship program. As the sponsor, the Tennessee Department of Education, in partnership with the school districts, are responsible to ensure no cost to the apprentice. To accomplish this goal, the Tennessee Grow Your Own Center (TNGYOC) provides the following guide to support the development of MOUs and LEA - EPP partnerships.

The TNGYOC is committed to helping school districts (LEAs) and educator preparation providers (EPPs) identify and describe learner eligibility for funding so that the candidates who most need the GYO teacher apprenticeship program will have access to it.

## How does it work?

Each LEA - EPP partnership is somewhat unique. TNGYOC staff are ready to facilitate these partnerships according to the unique needs of each LEA. Regardless of the specific needs, every partnership has three elements in common.



1. School districts identify their areas of need (i.e. special education, ESL, post-baccalaureate pathways, bachelor's degree pathways etc.)
2. The TNGYOC helps districts find approved and accessible EPP licensure pathways that meet their district's staffing needs.
3. The LEA and the EPP create, refine, revise, and finalize an MOU outlining the eligibility criteria for apprentices in addition to operational elements. The MOU can:
  - i. define programmatic characteristics. For example, the LEA may choose one EPP for their special education licensure program and a different EPP for their elementary education program.
  - ii. define financial agreements. For example, the EPP may require the LEA to contribute funding for mentors or to budget funding to contribute to a portion of the expense of an apprentice's coursework, if needed.
  - iii. define apprentice eligibility requirements. For example, apprentices may need to be eligible for TN Reconnect if they do not yet have 60 undergraduate credit hours.

All of the funding sources provided in this resource are grants which do not need to be repaid if guidelines are followed. In addition to these funds, the TNGYOC will contribute a defined amount for each apprentice's program of study. Once an LEA identifies a teacher apprentice, that person applies to the LEA's identified college or university, and their financial aid is calculated just as it would be for any other applicant. TNGYOC funds are then applied as last-dollar scholarships to ensure no cost for the apprentice. This process is outlined in the [Aspiring Apprentice Checklist](#) resource.

The descriptions of these funding programs are intended to inform each LEA - EPP partnership so that MOUs can be developed that reflect a commitment to certain participant eligibility criteria. Funding criteria change from time to time, so all information provided in this resource should be confirmed by apprentices and their employers.

## Funding Program Overview

Please check specific funding programs of interest for eligibility details and funding amounts as updates occur regularly. However, in general, the following eligibility criteria need to be met for all programs listed here. The learner is a citizen of the United States, enrolled at least half-time in an eligible program, maintains satisfactory academic progress, is not incarcerated, has not completed a previous degree (some of these programs allow an Associate's degree), and is not in default on a student loan.

### QUICK REFERENCE MATRIX

- Need-based: "Yes" means the funding is calculated based on a variety of need-based factors that can include household income, expected family contribution, number of dependents, program of study, full-time or part-time study, and the learner's income.
- How to Apply: [FAFSA applications](#) usually open on October 1st, should be completed by February 1st for priority funding, and by June 30th as the final deadline. In 2023, the FAFSA is changing so the open date is delayed until December 1st.
- Duration: The period of time that funds may be made eligible.
- Acronyms and additional eligibility details are described in after the matrix.

	<b>Need-based (Y/N) \$ Amount provided</b>	<b>How to Apply</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Federal Pell Grant	Yes - Up to \$7,395/year	FAFSA	Up to 12 semesters of full-time study	See appendix A for sample award situations
<a href="#">Tennessee Student Assistance Award</a>	Yes - Up to \$4,000/year	FAFSA - EFC of \$5,846 or less	Renewable annually dependent on funding availability	
<a href="#">The Tennessee HOPE Scholarship</a>	Yes - Up to \$2,250 or \$2,850	FAFSA - Earn less than \$36k/year on tax forms	Four years of a bachelor's degree	Traditional HOPE may also be available
<a href="#">UT Promise</a>	Yes - covers any gap between TN HOPE and cost	<a href="#">UT Promise Application</a> - Household income under \$75k/year AGI	Four years of a bachelor's degree	Only available at UT schools
<a href="#">TN Reconnect</a>	No - must have fewer than 60 credit hours	<a href="#">Apply with a Reconnect Navigator</a>	Two years or Associates degree completion	
<a href="#">Tennessee Future Teacher Scholarship Act of 2023</a>	No - see note	<a href="#">Future Teacher Application</a>	Junior and Senior years of a teacher's bachelor's degree	Must teach in a <a href="#">distressed or at-risk</a> county or a critical shortage area for 4 years post-completion
<a href="#">TEACH Grant</a>	No - see note. Requires a 4-year service commitment	Enroll through an EPP that has an eligible TEACH grant program	Receive grants for each year of a 4-year degree	Teach <a href="#">low-income students</a> and teach in a <a href="#">high-need field</a>

GYO Scholarship	Yes - \$5,000/year undergrad, \$2,500/year post-bac.	Enroll through an EPP that has been allocated GYO scholarships.	Annually renewable for 4 years. Teacher apprentices eligible after completing 60 or more college credit hours. 1-year renewable to 2 years for undergrad.	Aspiring apprentices and LEAs should follow the <a href="#">AA checklist process</a> .
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## DESCRIPTIONS OF EACH AWARD

### Federal Pell Grant

- The Pell Grant is need-based, federal financial aid that does not have to be repaid.
- The grant amount is determined by the size of the learner’s household, their status as a dependent or independent, their income if employed, the income of their spouse if married, and their number of children, if any. These criteria are all captured in the learner’s FAFSA application (due by June 30th each year) and used to determine their level of available funds.
- An Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is calculated and used to determine amounts.
- Grant amounts vary from \$0-\$7,395/year.
- The cost of attendance at the chosen educational institution (whether full-time or part-time) also impacts the amount of aid provided.
- Recipients can use the grant to cover various educational expenses, including tuition, fees, books, supplies, and in some cases, living expenses.
- See Appendix A for a calculator and sample awards
- Apply by completing the FAFSA.

### Tennessee Student Assistance Award

- The Tennessee Student Assistance Award (TSAA) is a need-based, state-funded financial aid program that does not have to be repaid.
- To be eligible, a learner needs to be pursuing their first bachelor’s degree, complete a FAFSA before February 1st, and have an Expected Family Contribution of \$5,846 or less, be a Tennessee resident, enroll at least half time, not be in default on a loan, and maintain institutional satisfactory academic progress.
- The TSAA grant can be used to cover various education-related expenses, including tuition, fees, books, and other educational supplies.
- This award is renewable all four years if funds are available.
- Apply by completing the FAFSA.

### The Tennessee HOPE Scholarship - *Nontraditional or Traditional*

- A need-based, state-funded program available for all four years of a bachelor’s degree, HOPE provides \$2,250 for the first two years and \$2,850 for juniors and seniors. Fifth year HOPE will be available starting in the fall of 2024.
- Eligibility: Working adult learners need to be independent students as determined by the FAFSA and earn less than \$36,000/year adjusted gross income on the IRS tax form.
- Other requirements include being a Tennessee resident, having a high school diploma or equivalent, maintaining a minimum GPA of 2.75 after 12 credit hours, and being accepted into an eligible Tennessee college or university to pursue a bachelor’s degree.

- [Award Amount](#): Provides financial assistance for tuition and mandatory fees at eligible Tennessee institutions. The award amount varies based on the type of institution and enrollment status.
- Apply by completing the FAFSA by February 1st.

### The UT Promise Scholarship - *UT schools only*

- A need-based, institutionally funded program available for all four years of a bachelor's degree. It is available to family-supported and independent learners.
- For the 2024-2025 school year, household must earn less than \$75,000/year adjusted gross income (AGI) on the IRS tax form.
- Eligible for TN Hope.
- Other requirements include being a Tennessee resident, having a high school diploma or equivalent, maintaining a minimum GPA of 2.75 after 12 credit hours, and being accepted into an eligible Tennessee college or university to pursue a bachelor's degree.
- [Award Amount](#): Provides financial assistance for tuition and mandatory fees at eligible Tennessee institutions. The award amount varies based on the type of institution and enrollment status.
- Apply through the [UT Promise application](#) and by completing the FAFSA by February 1st.

## NON NEED-BASED AWARDS

### TN Reconnect

- For aspiring educators beginning their journey to licensure with fewer than 60 credit hours, TN Reconnect is a funding source that provides tuition-free education for adults seeking an associate degree.
- Any Tennessee resident and US citizen or permanent resident who is qualified as independent on the FAFSA and has not previously earned any undergraduate degree is eligible for this award.
- The applicant must not be in default on a student loan, not owe an outstanding balance and be admitted at least part-time in a program leading to an associate degree or a certificate.
- [Award Amount](#): TN Reconnect covers tuition costs not already covered by other state and federal financial aid programs. The exact award amount will vary based on the chosen educational program and the availability of other funding sources.
- [Application Process](#): To apply for TN Reconnect, connect with a [Reconnect Navigator](#).

### Tennessee Future Teacher Scholarship Act of 2023

For any EPP/LEA considering the use of the Future Teacher Scholarship act to cover the cost of related instruction for a teacher apprentice, it should be well documented in an MOU between the learner and their LEA that they understand the specific requirements and commitment involved, as well as the potential consequences of not fulfilling the service obligation.

This scholarship is aimed at supporting students in distressed counties by providing additional financial aid opportunities. Here's how the Tennessee Future Teacher Scholarship Act of 2023 can benefit aspiring teachers in at-risk and distressed counties:

1. [Enhanced Financial Aid](#): Eligible working adult learners, including registered teacher apprentices, may have access to increased scholarships and grants specifically tailored to their needs.
2. [Targeted Support](#): Applicants must agree to teach in a Tennessee public school for at least four (4) consecutive years in a targeted setting (a targeted setting is either: 1) a Tennessee public school located in a distressed or at-risk county, as determined by the department of education, or 2) a subject area for which there is a critical shortage, as determined by the department of education).

3. [Application Process](#): Students must complete the scholarship application and email the completed application to [cindy.runnels@tn.gov](mailto:cindy.runnels@tn.gov) by September 1st for consideration. In addition, recipients must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for each academic year.

### Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant

- For any EPP/LEA considering the use of the TEACH Grant to cover the cost of related instruction for a teacher apprentice, it should be well documented in an MOU between the learner and their LEA that they understand the specific requirements and commitment involved, as well as the potential consequences of not fulfilling the service obligation. While the TEACH Grant can provide valuable financial support for aspiring teachers, careful planning and consideration of the teaching commitment are essential to make the most of this opportunity.
- There is a federal financial aid program in the United States that aims to encourage and support students who are pursuing a career in teaching in high-need fields and underserved communities. Administered by the U.S. Department of Education, the TEACH Grant provides financial assistance to eligible students who commit to teaching in specified subjects and locations after completing their education.
- The TEACH Grant offers a maximum annual award amount that is determined by Congress, and it is available to both undergraduate and graduate students who are enrolled in an eligible institution and are pursuing a program that leads to a teaching credential or certification. To be eligible for the grant, students must agree to teach in a high-need field, which typically includes subjects such as mathematics, science, special education, bilingual education, and English language acquisition.
- In addition to teaching in a high-need field, TEACH Grant recipients are required to teach in a low-income school or educational service agency for a certain number of years, usually four years within an eight-year period after completing their program. If recipients fail to fulfill this service obligation, the grant converts into an unsubsidized Direct Loan, which must be repaid with interest.

### The Minority Teaching Fellowship Program

Tennessee offers the Minority Teaching Fellowship Program. This program is specifically designed to provide additional support and financial aid to working adult learners from minority backgrounds pursuing a teaching career. Here's how the program can benefit aspiring teachers:

1. [Eligibility](#): The Minority Teaching Fellowship Program is open to working adult learners from minority backgrounds who meet specific criteria. These criteria may include residency, academic achievement, and a commitment to teaching in underserved communities.
2. **Financial Support**: The Minority Teaching Fellowship Program offers additional scholarships and financial aid to qualified students. The program aims to alleviate the financial burden of pursuing a teaching degree and supports students in achieving their educational and career goals.
3. **Community and Mentorship**: As part of the Minority Teaching Fellowship Program, students will have access to a supportive community of peers and mentors. This network provides valuable guidance, resources, and opportunities for professional growth.

## Other Support Services

### WORKFORCE INNOVATION OPPORTUNITY ACT

- Registered Teacher Apprentices participating in Tennessee's GYO program may qualify for support services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). These services could encompass financial aid and other support services. To determine eligibility and access these services, apprentices can connect with their local [American Job Center](#). This collaboration aims to provide essential resources for a successful apprenticeship journey and teaching career advancement.

## **CONNECTING DISTRICTS TO APPRENTICESHIP FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**


- Participating school districts seeking apprenticeship funding can connect with their GYO Regional Manager. These managers can facilitate communication with representatives from Local Workforce Development Boards. This collaboration aims to explore and access potential funding opportunities available through Tennessee's Office of Apprenticeship.

## **Conclusion**

The TN Grow Your Own Center is dedicated to supporting registered teacher apprentices in Tennessee. Through the utilization of the Tennessee HOPE Scholarship, the UT Promise program, the Tennessee Future Teacher Scholarship Act of 2023, additional funding sources, and allocations from the state budget, multiple funding streams are combined to provide comprehensive financial assistance for registered teacher apprentices, ensuring their successful pursuit of a teaching career.



## Appendix A: Pell Examples

How much Federal Pell Grant money will these students receive?		
		
<b>ASHLEY</b>	<b>JONATHAN</b>	<b>TAMARA</b>
Freshman in Maryland	Junior in Texas	Sophomore in California
<b>PELL GRANT AWARD</b> <b>\$7,395</b>	<b>PELL GRANT AWARD</b> <b>\$4,645</b>	<b>PELL GRANT AWARD</b> <b>\$7,145</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not married, no dependents</li> <li>Household of two, divorced parents</li> <li>Dad has an <b>annual income of \$20,000</b> and \$10,000 in assets</li> <li>Ashley is the only member of the household attending college</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not married, no dependents</li> <li>Household of four</li> <li>Parents have an <b>annual income of \$40,000</b> and \$100,000 in assets</li> <li>Jonathan is the only member of the household attending college</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Married, three dependents</li> <li>Household of five</li> <li>Tamara and spouse have an <b>annual income of \$60,000</b> and \$20,000 in assets</li> <li>Tamara's daughter will also be attending college</li> </ul>

### DON'T MISS OUT ON PELL GRANTS

- Students can also use [this calculator](#) to pre-determine their eligibility in 5-10 minutes.