



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

DCL ID: GEN-09-10

Subject: Teaching in a high-need field in order to satisfy the TEACH Grant Program Agreement to Serve.

Summary: This letter summarizes a recent legislative change to the TEACH Grant Program requirement that a grant recipient teach in a high-need field to fulfill the TEACH Grant service obligation.

Dear Colleague:

The College Cost Reduction and Access Act (the CCRAA), Pub. L. 110-84, created the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant Program under Subpart 9 of Part A of Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (the HEA). The TEACH Grant Program provides grants to undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, and graduate students who agree to teach for at least four years as full-time “highly-qualified” teachers in high-need fields in public or not-for-profit private elementary or secondary schools that serve students from low-income families. If a student does not meet the teaching service requirement, he or she must repay the grant funds as an unsubsidized loan, with interest charged from the date of each TEACH Grant disbursement. The law identifies the following as high-need fields for purposes of the TEACH Grant Program –

- Bilingual education;
- English language acquisition;
- Foreign language;
- Mathematics;
- Reading specialist;
- Science;
- Special education; or
- Another field documented as high-need by the Federal government, a State government, or a Local Education Agency, and approved by the Secretary. Under the Department’s regulations at 34 CFR 686.2, the high-need field must be listed in the Department’s annual Teacher Shortage Area Nationwide Listing (Nationwide List) that is available at: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oep/pol/tsa.doc>

Under 34 CFR 686.12(d), a TEACH Grant recipient may satisfy his or her service obligation by teaching in a high-need field that is listed in the Nationwide List only if that field is designated by a State as high-need at the time the recipient begins qualifying teaching in that field in that State.

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (the HEOA), Pub. L. 110-315, amended section 420N(d)(1) of the HEA to allow the recipient of an initial TEACH Grant who has acquired an academic degree, or expertise, in a field that was designated as high-need at the time of the recipient's application for the grant (rather than at the time of teaching as provided in the Department's regulations), but is no longer so designated, to fulfill the service obligation associated with the TEACH Grant by teaching in that high-need field. This change is effective on July 1, 2010.

In accordance with the change made by the HEOA, a TEACH Grant recipient who otherwise meets the requirements of 34 CFR 686.12 may satisfy the requirement to teach in a high-need field if the grant recipient:

- Teaches in a field that is designated as high-need by the State in which the grant recipient is teaching at the time the grant recipient begins qualifying teaching service (even if that field subsequently loses its high-need designation for that State); or
- Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, teaches in a field that was designated as high-need by the State in which the grant recipient is teaching for any award year in which the student received a TEACH Grant, even if the high-need field is no longer designated as high-need for that State when the grant recipient begins qualifying teaching service.

For example: An individual is teaching in field X during or after the 2010-2011 school year, and this field is not designated as high-need in the State where he or she is teaching at the time the teaching service is performed. However, field X was designated as high-need for that State during the 2009-2010 award year, and the individual received a TEACH Grant for the 2009-2010 award year. Therefore, the teaching service would qualify for fulfillment of the service obligation.

Because the change made by the HEOA does not become effective until July 1, 2010, any teaching service performed prior to the 2010-2011 school year will count toward satisfying the requirement to teach in a high-need field only if the field is designated as high-need by the State in which the TEACH Grant recipient is teaching at the time he or she begins qualifying teaching service.

The Department will publish regulations reflecting this change in the Final Rules that are developed to carry out the changes made to the TEACH Grant Program by the HEOA.

We hope that TEACH Grant recipients and institutions that participate in the TEACH Grant Program will find this information helpful. If you have questions about the statutory change discussed in this letter, please contact Gail McLarnon at gail.mclarnon@ed.gov or 202-219-7048.

Sincerely,



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Office of Postsecondary Education