



## **Become A Special Educator in Tennessee (BASE-TN) Teaching Program**

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

***Become A Special Educator in Tennessee Teaching Program is a program that provides financial support for persons who meet the eligibility criteria and desire to earn an initial Tennessee teaching license in special education or an endorsement in special education. This support involves a commitment to teach in a Tennessee public school two years for each academic year of financial support received, serving students with disabilities ages birth through twenty-one.***



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## OVERVIEW

In an effort to recruit professional personnel to the field of special education who are interested in teaching in the Tennessee public schools and serving students with disabilities, the Division of Special Education within the Tennessee Department of Education is offering financial assistance to post-baccalaureate and undergraduate students who meet the eligibility criteria presented in Section IV of this document. This financial assistance is in keeping with the provisions of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 635(a) (8) and T.C.A., Title 49-10-110, hereinafter referred to as the **BASE-TN Teaching Program** or The Program.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

(1) **The BASE- TN Teaching Program** provides financial assistance in the form of tuition remission and books for either part-time or full-time study to professional personnel who desire to work in programs for the education of children with disabilities. The **purpose** of the program is to help professional personnel meet licensure requirements in the area of Special Education. Participation in the program is limited to (a) post-baccalaureate candidates admitted to teacher education programs (or eligible to be admitted and/or have provided written intent to seek admission) in approved Tennessee colleges and universities, and (b) educational assistants with at least two years of transferable college credit who are currently employed by a Tennessee public school and serve students with disabilities ages birth through twenty-one. These candidates must seek Tennessee initial licensure in Special Education or an endorsement in Special Education. The award entails a commitment to full-time teaching two years in a Tennessee public school for each year the award is received. The **goal** of the BASE-TN Teaching Program is to help increase the number of properly licensed Tennessee teachers serving students with disabilities in Tennessee public schools.

(2) **The following Tennessee colleges and universities have approved teacher education programs**, including special education, and will participate in the BASE-TN Teaching Program under these guidelines and criteria developed jointly by the Tennessee Department of Education, Division of Special Education, and the Tennessee Interagency Professional Educators Consortium (TIPEC):

Cumberland University	Lebanon
Fisk University	Nashville
LeMoyne Owen College	Memphis
Middle TN State University	Murfreesboro
Tennessee Technological University	Cookeville
University of Memphis	Memphis
University of Tennessee - Chattanooga	Chattanooga
University of Tennessee - Knoxville	Knoxville

All participating universities and colleges will, at the end of each semester, provide the Department of Education, Division of Special Education, with rosters

of program participants, including students completing the special education programs, type Tennessee special education license the participants have applied for and received, efforts made to find employment in a Tennessee school, and/or where employed. The Department of Education shall use these rosters in assisting with job placements in special education in Tennessee schools. All program participants will be advised to search for Tennessee teaching positions as well as post their resumes on the Tennessee Department of Education's online recruitment service, *Teach in Tennessee* (<https://www.k-12.state.tn.us/teachtn>), during the last semester of their programs. Tennessee schools will be encouraged to use *Teach in Tennessee* to post job announcements and to view resumes of potential teacher candidates who have participated in this program.

See Appendix A for a list of the college and university representatives and relevant contact information.

- (3) The **effective beginning date** of the BASE-TN Teaching Program is the fall semester of the 2004 -2005 academic school year at the participating Tennessee universities and colleges. Candidates interested in applying for BASE-TN Teaching Program assistantships or fellowships are encouraged to submit applications to one of the participating colleges or universities in keeping with the deadlines and other requirements and as set forth by that institution. See Appendix A for a list of the participating institutions, the representatives, and other contact information. See also Section IX: How to Apply for BASE-TN Assistantships and Fellowships.

*Authority: IDEA, Section (a)(8) and T.C.A. §§49-10-110*

## **II. GENERAL: Definitions as Used in the BASE-TN Teaching Program**

- (1) **“Plan of study”** is a plan of enrollment in specific coursework not to exceed three academic years within which the applicant will complete all course work and other requirements for initial Tennessee teaching license in special education or an endorsement in Special Education.
- (2) **“Grace period”** is a period of SIX months that shall begin on the date the student completes his/her Plan of Study in which repayment is not required. If the recipient does not fulfill his/her obligation to teach special education in accordance with the written agreement, the traineeship or fellowship grant will be treated as a loan, with interest accruing from the date of original award.
- (3) **“Repayment period”** is a period of not more than five years in which the award will be repaid and shall begin at the end of the grace period or whenever the awarding Tennessee university or college determines that the recipient has not complied with the requirements of The Program.

- (4) **“A full year of teaching service”** shall be the ten-month contract period or its equivalent (two complete semesters) of full-time teaching service in an approved Tennessee public school.
- (5) **“Satisfactory progress”** is a standard of progress toward completion of the pursued approved Plan of Study during which time the student maintains the standards set by the participating university's teacher education program. ("Student Progress Forms" will be provided by the involved college or university, and these forms must be completed at the end of each semester by the BASE-TN supported students. Copies will be forwarded to the TN Department of Education, BASE-TN Office.)
- (6) **“Full-time teaching”** will be defined as instruction (teaching) wherein a minimum of 80% of the recipient's weekly workload is devoted to teaching students with disabilities who are enrolled in an approved Tennessee public school, exclusive of administrative, counseling or other assigned duties.
- (7) **“The BASE-TN Teaching Program”** is the Become A Special Educator in Tennessee Program, sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Education, Division of Special Education, in keeping with the mandates of IDEA, Section (a)(8) and T.C.A. §49-10-110 designed to help increase the number of properly licensed Tennessee teachers who serve students with disabilities ages birth through twenty-one.
- (8) **“Eligible schools”** are those state-approved Tennessee public schools including the four State Special Schools in which recipients may teach for credit toward their service obligations, serving children with disabilities ages birth through 21.
- (9) **“A statement of intent”** is a signed statement from a candidate certifying his or her intent (a) to become a special education teacher or related services provider (e.g., speech-language pathologist, etc.) in a public state-approved Tennessee school system serving children with disabilities ages birth through 21; and (b) to comply with the requirements of the BASE-TN Teaching Program as set forth in these Guidelines.
- (10) **“A letter of recommendation”** is a letter attesting to (a) the student's perceived potential to successfully complete the coursework and other requirements leading to Tennessee licensure in special education or to an endorsement in special education; (b) the student's perceived / stated commitment to teaching in an area of special education in a Tennessee public school following the completion of the program, and (c) the student's perceived or demonstrated potential for success as a teacher or related services provider in a Tennessee public school.
- (11) **“Academic year of BASE TN financial support”** consists of 30 semester hours of support - typically eight or nine months, composed of two

semesters, three quarters, or two trimesters of instruction. However, the 30 semester hours may be completed during 12 months, 18 months, etc. in keeping with the student's approved Plan of Study or Individualized Licensure Plan.

- (12) **"Areas of Special Education"** include Preschool/ Early Childhood PreK-1; Hearing PreK-12; Vision PreK-12; Speech/Language PreK-12; Modified K-12; and Comprehensive K-12.
- (13) **"Full time student"** is a student admitted to (or has provided written intent to seek admission) the teacher education program of one of the approved participating Tennessee colleges or universities and is enrolled in and making satisfactory progress in a minimum of 12 semester hours.

*Authority: IDEA, Section (a)(8) and T.C.A. §§49-10-110*

### **III. GENERAL - Terms of the Traineeships, Fellowship Grants and Application Submittal**

- (1) To be eligible for an award, all participating students must attend one of the Tennessee colleges or universities listed in I (2) above and make satisfactory progress in keeping with the student's approved Plan of Study or Licensure Plan as determined by the institution's written policies.
- (2) Funds received from this program are considered financial assistance for purposes of determining student aid eligibility under programs authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.
- (3) All such grants or awards shall be evidenced by signed and notarized Student Service Agreements maintained by the teacher education program of the Tennessee college or university where the recipient is enrolled with a roster of the students forwarded to the Tennessee Department of Education, Division of Special Education, at the end of each semester (fall, spring and summer), indicating if students are making satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress in their respective approved Plans of Study (i.e., satisfactory grades in the various courses leading to initial Tennessee teaching license or an endorsement in an area of special education).

(The Student Service Agreement will be provided by the participating college or university and will be provided by the institution as part of the applicants' admission process.)

- (4) All applications received and approved shall be subject to the availability of funds.
- (5) Applications must be submitted to the college and university representatives by the designated deadlines as determined by the participating colleges and universities. See Appendix B for a copy of the BASE-TN Teaching Program Application.