

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA  
ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH LEGISLATURE  
SECOND SESSION

**LEGISLATIVE BILL 1005**

Introduced by Walz, 15.

Read first time January 05, 2024

Committee:

- 1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to the Excellence in Teaching Act; to amend  
2 sections 85-3103, 85-3105, and 85-3112, Revised Statutes Supplement,  
3 2023; to change provisions relating to the Attracting Excellence to  
4 Teaching Program; to provide a definition; to change provisions  
5 relating to eligible uses for the Excellence in Teaching Cash Fund;  
6 to harmonize provisions; to repeal the original sections; to provide  
7 an operative date; and to declare an emergency.  
8 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. Section 85-3103, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2023, is  
2 amended to read:

3 85-3103 The Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program is created.  
4 For purposes of the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program:

5 (1) Commission means the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary  
6 Education;

7 (2) Eligible institution means a not-for-profit college or  
8 university which (a) is located in Nebraska, (b) is accredited by an  
9 accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of  
10 Education as determined to be acceptable by the State Board of Education,  
11 (c) has a teacher education program, and (d) if a privately funded  
12 college or university, has not opted out of the program pursuant to rules  
13 and regulations;

14 (3) Eligible student means an individual who (a) is a full-time  
15 student, (b) is enrolled in an eligible institution in an undergraduate  
16 or a graduate teacher education program working toward his or her initial  
17 certificate to teach in Nebraska, (c) if enrolled at a state-funded  
18 eligible institution, is a resident student as described in section  
19 85-502 or, if enrolled in a privately funded eligible institution, would  
20 be deemed a resident student if enrolled in a state-funded eligible  
21 institution, and (d) is a student majoring in a shortage area;

22 (4) Full-time student means, in the aggregate, the equivalent of a  
23 student who in a twelve-month period is enrolled in twenty-four semester  
24 credit hours for undergraduate students or eighteen semester credit hours  
25 for graduate students of classroom, laboratory, clinical, practicum, or  
26 independent study course work;

27 (5) Majoring in a shortage area means pursuing a degree which will  
28 allow an individual to be properly endorsed to teach in a shortage area;

29 (6) Shortage area means a secular field of teaching for which there  
30 is a shortage, as determined by the State Department of Education, of  
31 properly endorsed teachers at the time the borrower first receives funds

1 pursuant to the program;~~and~~

2 (7) Student-teaching semester means a semester of full-time  
3 enrollment for clinical practice which provides initial preparation for a  
4 student enrolled in an eligible institution and pursuing a certificate to  
5 teach that includes a culminating supervised experience to demonstrate  
6 competence in the professional teaching role for which such student is  
7 applying; and

8 (8) {7} Teacher education program means a program of study approved  
9 by the State Board of Education pursuant to subdivision (5)(g) of section  
10 79-318.

11 Sec. 2. Section 85-3105, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2023, is  
12 amended to read:

13 85-3105 (1) The commission shall administer the Attracting  
14 Excellence to Teaching Program either directly or by contracting with  
15 public or private entities.

16 (2) To be eligible for the program, an eligible student shall:

17 (a) Graduate in the top quarter of his or her high school class or  
18 have a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 on a four-point  
19 scale in an eligible institution;

20 (b) Agree to complete a teacher education program at an eligible  
21 institution and to complete the major on which the applicant's  
22 eligibility is based; and

23 (c) Commit to teach in an accredited or approved public or private  
24 school in Nebraska upon (i) successful completion of the teacher  
25 education program for which the applicant is applying to the Attracting  
26 Excellence to Teaching Program and (ii) becoming certified pursuant to  
27 sections 79-806 to 79-815.

28 (3) An eligible student ~~Eligible students~~ may apply on an annual  
29 basis for a loan ~~loans~~ in an amount of not more than three thousand  
30 dollars per year, except that an eligible student who is enrolling for a  
31 student-teaching semester may apply for an additional loan of up to three

1 thousand dollars for the student-teaching semester and receive up to a  
2 total of six thousand dollars for the year. Loans awarded to individual  
3 students shall not exceed a cumulative period exceeding five consecutive  
4 years. Loans shall only be awarded through an eligible institution. Loans  
5 shall be funded pursuant to section 85-3112.

6 Sec. 3. Section 85-3112, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2023, is  
7 amended to read:

8 85-3112 (1) The Excellence in Teaching Cash Fund is created. The  
9 fund shall consist of transfers by the Legislature, transfers pursuant to  
10 section 79-3501, and loan repayments, penalties, and interest payments  
11 received in the course of administering the Attracting Excellence to  
12 Teaching Program and the Enhancing Excellence in Teaching Program.

13 (2)(a) For all fiscal years beginning on and after July 1, 2024, the  
14 commission shall allocate on an annual basis up to two hundred fifty  
15 thousand dollars of the funds transferred pursuant to section 79-3501 for  
16 grants to teachers pursuant to the Career-Readiness and Dual-Credit  
17 Education Grant Program.

18 (b) For all fiscal years beginning on and after July 1, 2024, the  
19 commission shall allocate on an annual basis up to five hundred thousand  
20 dollars of the funds transferred pursuant to section 79-3501 exclusively  
21 for loans to any eligible student who is enrolling in a student-teaching  
22 semester during the award year pursuant to the Attracting Excellence to  
23 Teaching Program. The funds shall be distributed to all eligible  
24 institutions according to the distribution formula as determined by rule  
25 and regulation. The eligible institutions shall act as agents of the  
26 commission in the distribution of the funds to any eligible student for a  
27 student-teaching semester ~~for grants and loans to students enrolled in a~~  
28 ~~teacher education program for student-teaching semesters.~~

29 (c) Of the funds remaining in the Excellence in Teaching Cash Fund  
30 after the distributions pursuant to subdivisions (a) and (b) of this  
31 subsection, for all fiscal years, the commission shall allocate on an

1 annual basis up to four hundred thousand dollars in the aggregate of the  
2 funds to be distributed for the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program  
3 to all eligible institutions according to the distribution formula as  
4 determined by rule and regulation. The eligible institutions shall act as  
5 agents of the commission in the distribution of the funds for the  
6 Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program to eligible students. The  
7 commission shall allocate on an annual basis up to eight hundred thousand  
8 dollars of the remaining available funds to be distributed to eligible  
9 students for the Enhancing Excellence in Teaching Program. Funding  
10 amounts granted in excess of one million two hundred thousand dollars  
11 shall be evenly divided for distribution between the two programs.

12 (3) Any money in the Excellence in Teaching Cash Fund available for  
13 investment shall be invested by the state investment officer pursuant to  
14 the Nebraska Capital Expansion Act and the Nebraska State Funds  
15 Investment Act.

16 Sec. 4. This act becomes operative on July 1, 2024.

17 Sec. 5. Original sections 85-3103, 85-3105, and 85-3112, Revised  
18 Statutes Supplement, 2023, are repealed.

19 Sec. 6. Since an emergency exists, this act takes effect when  
20 passed and approved according to law.