



# GOLDEN STATE TEACHER GRANT (GSTG) PROGRAM

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

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## Eligibility

### **If I received a GSTG award before and did not receive the full \$20,000, can I apply again?**

No, you may only apply for the GSTG once, for the initial year you'd like to receive the grant. Commencing with the 2022-23 academic year, the GSTG can be paid out over multiple academic years if you continue to meet eligibility. The total amount of your GSTG payments cannot exceed \$20,000 for California-based, Commission on Teaching Credentialing (CTC)-approved programs or \$10,000 for California residents enrolled in CTC-approved online programs that meet the criteria established in [California Education Code Section 69617.5](#) (Western Governors University only).

If you receive a GSTG award for less than the maximum available to you, your application will be automatically renewed the next academic year for review by your institution, who will determine if you continue to meet program eligibility requirements to receive up to the remaining funds. Do not submit an additional application.

### **Is my institution/program eligible?**

All students applying for the GSTG Program must be currently enrolled in, or have applied for enrollment in, a professional preparation program approved by the Commission on Teaching Credentialing (CTC) that either:

- Has a main campus location or administrative entity **in California**, including programs operated by California Local Education Agencies.
  - Visit <https://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/reports/data/approved-institutions-and-programs> for a current list of programs meeting this criteria. **Remember, only those located on the map in CA may be eligible.**
  - These students are eligible for up to \$20,000 total.
- Is a private postsecondary institution offering the program to **CA residents exclusively online** (among other criteria established in [California Education Code §69617.5](#)).
  - At this time, **Western Governors University** is the only institution that the CTC has determined meets this criteria.
  - These students are eligible for up to \$10,000 total.

### **Are teacher induction programs eligible?**

No, students enrolled in induction programs are not eligible for the GSTG.

### **Are Designated Subjects Career Technical Education (DS CTE) programs eligible?**

No, DS CTE programs are not eligible for the GSTG. DS CTE programs are not considered “professional preparation programs.”

## Are integrated/blended programs eligible?

Yes, integrated programs (BA, MA, and Education Specialist) meet the CTC-approved criteria for a professional preparation program. If you are enrolled in the integrated program and working towards your degree and preliminary teaching credential or pupil personnel services credential, you are eligible to apply and receive funds at any time you are enrolled in the program (i.e., the credential portion and/or the degree portion).

**Note:** Time spent working prior to completing your program and obtaining your credential does not count towards your 4-year service obligation. Usually, your 8-year timeframe to complete the 4-years of service at an eligible priority school or California preschool program site will begin once you complete both the credential and degree portions of your program.

## If I already hold a credential, but am returning to school to earn a second credential, am I eligible?

There are two levels of teaching credentials issued by CTC – “preliminary” and “clear,” while pupil personnel services (PPS) credentials are only issued as clear. As required by statute, GSTG recipients may only be awarded for one credential program and must be enrolled in a professional preparation program that leads to earning their preliminary teaching credential or PPS credential.

If you have not been previously awarded a GSTG, refer to the below table for additional guidance to see if you may be eligible.

Current Credential	Credential Pursuing	GSTG Eligibility	Reason
None	Teaching	Eligible	Your initial teaching credential will be issued as preliminary.
None	PPS	Eligible	You will be issued a PPS credential.
Preliminary Teaching	Additional Teaching	Eligible	Your additional teaching credential will be issued as preliminary.
PPS	Additional PPS	Eligible	You will be issued an additional PPS credential.
Clear Teaching	Additional Teaching	Ineligible	Your additional teaching credential will be issued as clear.
Clear/ Preliminary Teaching	PPS	Eligible	You will be issued a PPS credential.
PPS	Teaching	Eligible	You will be issued a preliminary teaching credential.

### **Are undocumented and DACA students eligible?**

Yes, both undocumented and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students are all eligible for the GSTG Program. However, you must also be AB540 eligible to receive state aid, obtain an ITIN to receive your credential from CTC, and have valid work authorization to complete your service requirement. Not receiving your credential and/or not completing your service requirement will result in failure to meet program terms and require the repayment of any GSTG funds disbursed to you.

### **Are AB540 students eligible?**

Yes, AB540 status students are eligible for the GSTG Program. However, you must obtain an ITIN to receive your credential from CTC and have valid work authorization to complete your service requirement. Not receiving your credential and/or not completing your service requirement will result in failure to meet program terms and require the repayment of any GSTG funds disbursed to you.

### **Are international students eligible?**

No, international students do not qualify for federal or state financial aid, including the GSTG.

Non-immigrants granted one of the following visas do not qualify for AB 540 status, unless they hold a TPS or U Visa, to be granted a California nonresident exemption and receive state aid: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, TN, TD, V, TROV, and NATO.

### **Do students enrolled in pupil personnel services (PPS) preparation programs have to earn their credential?**

Yes, all GSTG recipients must complete their professional preparation program and obtain their credential within 6 years of the date we mail their initial GSTG payment to their institution.

## Application

### **Is the FAFSA/CADAA required?**

Yes, the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) or [California Dream Act Application \(CADAA\)](#) (if applicable) is required for all GSTG applicants, including those attending Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Cal Grant ineligible schools.

### **What do I do if my institution is not listed on the FAFSA/CADAA?**

Please reach out to your institution's GSTG Coordinator for school selection. Once complete, download your Student Aid Report (SAR) (FAFSA) or California Student Aid Report (Cal SAR) (CADAA) and provide it to your institution so that the necessary information can be obtained and your GSTG application can be processed.

For a list of GSTG Coordinators by institution, please visit the [GSTG Program website](#).

### **I am trying to register, but I am receiving an error saying my SSN/birthdate don't match the information in the system. What do I do?**

This error message means the system recognizes that you have created a WebGrants account before. This was likely back in high school when you initially applied for financial aid for college. You need to retrieve and use your original account information as the system does not allow you to register a second time. Select "returning user" and log in.

Please note, you are a returning user if you have done any of the following:

- Previously created a WebGrants account
- Registered for other financial aid with California Student Aid Commission (CSAC)
- Have a CSAC ID or California Dream Act (CADA) ID
- Previously registered for a Golden State Teacher Grant (GSTG) award

You can also check out this video for a helpful tutorial on how to access your account and recover your login details:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38HxIaP5X68>. Please allow up to 24 hours to receive the recovery email and check your junk/spam folders often.

If you have waited the 24 hours and still have not received a recovery email, please contact Student Support at 1-888-224-7268 Monday through Thursday from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm or Friday from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm, or e-mail [studentsupport@csac.ca.gov](mailto:studentsupport@csac.ca.gov) to request assistance with recovering your WebGrants log in information.

## **How can I check my application status?**

You can check your application status at any time through your [GSTG student portal](#). Select “View Application Status” under the “Student” menu.

## **Can I make changes to my application?**

Yes, you can update most information on your GSTG application on your own. To make changes, log into your [GSTG student portal](#). Once logged in, select “New/Update Application” located under the “Student” menu.

If you need to make changes to your social security number, date of birth, and/or email address, please contact us at [goldenstateteachers@csac.ca.gov](mailto:goldenstateteachers@csac.ca.gov).

If you need to change your name, provide two copies of identification and email them encrypted to [goldenstateteachers@csac.ca.gov](mailto:goldenstateteachers@csac.ca.gov).

## **What does it mean if my application status is “Pending Review?”**

“Pending Review” status means your application is waiting to be reviewed by your institution. Your institution will verify your eligibility for the GSTG Program and determine your award amount.

Contact your institution’s GSTG Coordinator for a status on their end. For a list of GSTG Coordinators by institution, please visit the [GSTG Program website](#).

## **What does it mean if my application status is “Waiting SA?”**

“Waiting SA” status means we are waiting for you to accept your Service Agreement (SA). To accept your SA, log into your [GSTG student portal](#). Once logged in, select the “Service Agreement” link located under the Student menu and then the appropriate academic year from the drop-down menu.

## **What does it mean if my application status is “Signed SA?”**

“Signed SA” status means we received your accepted Service Agreement (SA). At this stage, there is nothing additional required from you. Your application status will remain as “Signed SA” until payments processed are equal to your award amount.

Unless otherwise requested by your institution, your grant will be evenly disbursed among all terms you are enrolled in during the academic year. Institutions may begin requesting payments for each term according to the following timeline:

- Fall – August 1
- Winter – November 1
- Spring – January 1
- Summer – April 1

Please allow approximately 6-8 weeks from the date your institution requests payment for your check to arrive at your school.

## What does it mean is my application status is “Paid in Full?”

“Paid in Full” status means that we have processed payments equal to the award amount determined by your institution. This does not necessarily mean that all payments have been mailed, just that they are processed/in processing.

Please allow 6-8 weeks for the final check(s) to arrive at your institution from the Paid in Full status date.

## After I submit my application, what happens?

After you submit your application, your institution will verify your GSTG Program eligibility and determine your award amount. **Note:** Although the GSTG application opens in September of the academic year prior, most institutions wait to begin reviewing applications until closer to the start of the academic year (Fall term) you’re applying for.

Once your institution determines your eligibility, you will receive a system-generated notification from [goldenstateteachers@csac.ca.gov](mailto:goldenstateteachers@csac.ca.gov). If your institution confirms you’re eligible, the email will ask you to log into your GSTG student portal (<https://gstg.csac.ca.gov>) to review and accept the Service Agreement (SA). Your award amount is listed in the Award Details section of the SA within the “requested award amount” field. Please check your junk/spam folder frequently, as the notification may end up in there. Your application must be in “Waiting SA” status to accept the SA.

Your institution cannot request your payment(s) until you accept your SA. Unless otherwise requested by your institution, your grant will be evenly disbursed among all terms you are enrolled in during the academic year.

Institutions may begin requesting payments for each term according to the following timeline:

- Fall – August 1
- Winter – November 1
- Spring – January 1
- Summer – April 1

Please allow approximately 6-8 weeks from the date your institution requests payment for your check to arrive at your school.



## Payment

### How will I know my award amount?

Your GSTG Program award amount for the academic year is listed on your Service Agreement (SA). To view your SA:

1. Log into your [GSTG student portal](#).
2. Select “Service Agreement” located under the Student menu.
3. Select the academic year you accepted the grant for in the “Acad Year” drop-down menu and select search.
4. Scroll to the bottom of the SA to view the “Award Details” section. The “requested award amount” (red box) is your award amount for the academic year. The “total paid in previous years” (purple box) is the total GSTG funds you have been awarded prior to the academic year (see example below):

AWARD DETAILS	
CSAC ID: [REDACTED]	Institution: [REDACTED]
Academic Year: [REDACTED]	Application Status: [REDACTED]
Eligible: [REDACTED]	Terms Enrolled: [REDACTED]
Total Paid in previous years: \$ [REDACTED]	Award Amount: \$ [REDACTED]

### When will I receive my award?

Your institution can request your payment(s) after you accept your SA. Unless otherwise requested by your institution, your grant will be evenly disbursed among all terms you are enrolled in during the academic year.

Institutions may begin requesting payments for each term according to the following timeline:

- Fall – August 1
- Winter – November 1
- Spring – January 1
- Summer – April 1

Please allow approximately 6-8 weeks from the date your institution requests payment for your check to arrive at your school.

### What can I use my GSTG award for?

GSTG funds can be used on any academic-related expense, including the cost of living. Please contact your institution’s GSTG Coordinator for more information regarding their disbursement policies.

For a list of GSTG Coordinators by institution, please visit the [GSTG Program website](#).

## Will I have to claim the GSTG on my taxes?

The GSTG award amount should be included on your annual 1098-T form if the grant was directly applied to your tuition and fees by your institution. It is recommended that you speak with a tax professional for any tax inquiries beyond this information.

## Service Obligation

### Is there a service obligation in exchange for the GSTG funds?

Yes, the commitment is documented in the [Service Agreement \(SA\)](#) and no funds are awarded until the SA is accepted by the participant.

All GSTG recipients commit to work at an eligible priority school or California preschool program for 4 years within 8 years of the date they complete their professional preparation program. Any time working prior to completing your program and obtaining your credential is not counted towards the 4-year service requirement.

A “priority school” is a CA public school that provides instruction in any grade K-12 with more than 55 percent of pupils who are classified as an English learner, eligible for a free or reduced-price meal, or current foster youth. Priority schools are not the same as Title I schools. The priority school list is compiled by April 15 annually using data submitted via CALPADS to the California Department of Education (CDE) by each public California school. The lists of priority schools are available on the [GSTG Program](#) website.

When determining which list to refer to, you may use either the priority school list published for the year you initially received the GSTG or the list published for the school year you are seeking new employment for after completing your professional preparation program.

Beginning with the 2023-24 school year, GSTG recipients can also earn service for each year they work at a California preschool program. A California preschool program is a state-funded or federally funded preschool program in California, including tribal and Head Start programs. For your convenience, eligible preschool programs have been added to the GSTG Priority School Lists beginning with the 2023-24 year.

### What is the Service Agreement (SA)?

The [SA](#) outlines your obligations, including repayment requirements, under the provisions of the grant. The SA is for you to review and accept immediately after your institution confirms your GSTG eligibility and determines your award amount. The SA must be accepted within 30 days.

To accept your SA, log into your [GSTG student portal](#). Once logged in, select “Service Agreement” located under the “Student” menu and the appropriate academic year from the drop-down menu.

## What is a priority school?

A “priority school” is a CA public school that provides instruction in any grade K-12 with more than 55 percent of pupils who are classified as an English learner, eligible for a free or reduced-price meal, or current foster youth. Priority schools are not the same as Title I schools.

The priority school list is compiled by April 15 annually using data submitted via CALPADS to the California Department of Education (CDE) by each public California school. The lists of priority schools are available on the [GSTG website](#). Nonpublic schools are not eligible as they do not report data to CDE.

When determining which list to refer to, you may use either the priority school list published for the year you initially received the GSTG or the list published for the school year you are seeking new employment for after completing your professional preparation program.

## Can my school be added to the priority school list?

The priority school list is compiled annually using data submitted via CALPADS to the California Department of Education (CDE) by each public California school. Nonpublic schools are not eligible as Education Code 44395(a) limits high-priority schools to school districts [further defined in Education Code 44395(e)(1)] or charter schools.

Commencing with the 2023-24 school year, you may also choose to fulfill your service obligation by working at an eligible California preschool program. An eligible preschool program is a state-funded or federally funded preschool program in California, including tribal and Head Start programs. Private preschool programs are not eligible. For your convenience, eligible preschool programs have been added to the GSTG Priority School Lists beginning with the 2023-24 year.

If the school in question is not on the list, it did not meet the parameters of a priority school for the school year. If the data for the school changes to meet eligibility, it will be added at the next annual publishing.

## What is a California preschool program?

A California preschool program is a state-funded or federally funded preschool program in California, including tribal and Head Start programs. Private preschool programs are not eligible.

For your convenience, eligible preschool programs have been added to the GSTG Priority School Lists beginning with the 2023-24 year. When determining which list to refer to, you may use either the priority school list published for the year you initially received the GSTG or the list published for the school year you are seeking new employment for after completing your professional preparation program.

## **Will the time I spent working at a priority school prior to completion of my program count towards my service obligation?**

The 4-year service obligation begins after you complete your professional preparation program. Any time spent working prior to completing your program and obtaining your credential is not counted towards the obligation.

## **I am employed by a community-based organization and/or work at multiple school sites. Will my service count towards my 4-year obligation?**

Working at multiple school sites during the school year is not an issue. As stated in Section IV of the [Service Agreement \(SA\)](#), one year of service will be counted if:

- You complete eligible service for at least one-half of the school year.
- Your priority school/CA preschool program official deems you to have fulfilled your contractual requirements for the school year for the purposes of salary increases, probationary or permanent status, and retirement.

So, if you are working for time equivalent to one-half the school year at one eligible school site, you will receive one year of service credit. If your time does not equal at least one-half the school year, you can still receive one year of service credit if your school site official certifies on your Service Obligation Form that you have fulfilled your contractual obligations at the eligible school site.

## **How will I report my service towards my obligation?**

We will send an annual Service Obligation Form to the email address listed on your application. If you need to update your email address, please contact [goldenstateteachers@csac.ca.gov](mailto:goldenstateteachers@csac.ca.gov).

You will receive your first form in May the year after you received your initial GSTG payment. For example, if you received your initial payment for the 2022-23 academic year (AY), you will receive your first form in May 2024 to capture any service you may have completed during the 2023-24 AY.

## **Do I need to fill out the Service Obligation Form if I'm still enrolled in my program or have not completed any service yet?**

Yes, all GSTG recipients must complete the Service Obligation Form annually regardless of employment or program status during the past school year.

## Repayment

### **Do I have to repay the entire award if I work at a priority school for less than 4 years?**

The Service Agreement (SA) outlines your obligations under the provisions of the grant. You have 6 years to complete your program and be issued your preliminary teaching or pupil personnel services credential by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) from the date we mail your initial GSTG payment to your institution. Failure to meet this requirement will result in immediate placement on a 4-year Repayment Schedule for 100% of the grant funds disbursed to you.

The 8-year timeframe to complete your 4-year service obligation will begin on the date you complete your program. At the end of the 8-year timeframe, they will be required to repay 25% of their total awarded amount for each year their service obligation is not met. For those years your obligation is met, no repayment will be necessary. The repayment is for funds awarded only, no interest. So, if your obligation is met for:

- 1 year = Repay 75% of the awarded amount
- 2 years = Repay 50% of the awarded amount
- 3 years = Repay 25% of the awarded amount
- 4 years = No Repayment, obligation complete

The 4-year service does not need to be completed consecutively as you have the full 8 years to complete your obligation. Also, you may change schools during your service obligation period as long as you are working at eligible priority schools or California state preschool programs.

The lists of eligible school sites are available on the [GSTG Program](#) website in the Service Obligation section. Please note, you may use either the priority school list published for the year you initially received the GSTG or the list published for the academic year you are seeking new employment for after completing your professional preparation program.

### **Do I have to pay interest?**

No, you will not be charged interest. If you fail to meet your obligations and are placed on a repayment plan, you will be required to repay only the funds awarded.

### **Do I have to repay or find a new job if my school is removed from the priority list?**

We will verify your employment using either the priority school list published for the year you initially received the GSTG or the list published for the school year you are hired for after completing your program. If your eligible school falls off the next year's priority list after you are hired, you will be grandfathered eligibility as long as you remain employed there.

**If I know I will not be able to fulfill GSTG Program requirements and want to repay my award now, what do I do?**

If you still have the original check and would like to return it to us, please:

1. Do not write anything on the check.
2. Write a note that includes your:
  - a. Full name
  - b. CSAC ID
  - c. Explanation about why you are returning the GSTG funds
3. Mail the check and note together to:  
Program Administration and Services  
P.O. Box 419027  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9027

If you have deposited the original check, but would like to repay the funds in a lump sum or enter into a 4-year repayment plan, please email [goldenstateteachers@csac.ca.gov](mailto:goldenstateteachers@csac.ca.gov).