

# CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION

## GOLDEN STATE TEACHER GRANT PROGRAM



**Date:** March 25, 2021

**TO:** Golden State Teacher Grant (GSTG) Program Coordinators

**FROM:** California Student Aid Commission, Specialized Programs Branch

**RE:** 2020-21 GSTG Program Application and Award Process

The California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) is pleased to announce the Golden State Teacher Grant Program (GSTG). The funds will become available once the California Department of Education and CSAC finalize the interagency agreement.

CSAC will provide grant funds of up to twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) to teaching candidates who are currently enrolled in a professional preparation program approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) within an accredited California institution of higher education.

Students must commit to teaching special education at a priority school for four years within five years after completing the teacher preparation program. Obligations will begin either after completing the teacher credential program or, if the participant fails to maintain good academic standing or complete the program, as noted below.

The following items are included in this packet to assist you in the application process:

- Coordinator's Guide
- Application

The State of California is committed to increasing the number of teachers in special education at priority schools and has allocated \$15 million in federal funds, available through June 30, 2023 for GSTG awards.

Please distribute the GSTG information to all students who may be interested and eligible. The Golden State Teacher Grant Program application is available on the CSAC website at: <https://gstg.csac.ca.gov>.

If you have any questions, please contact CSAC's Specialized Programs Branch by e-mail at [goldenstateteachers@csac.ca.gov](mailto:goldenstateteachers@csac.ca.gov) or toll free at (888) 224-7268.

Thank you for your assistance in this important endeavor.

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## COORDINATOR'S GUIDE

CSAC will provide GSTG awards of up to \$20,000 to students enrolled in eligible teacher preparation programs approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) within an accredited California institution of higher education who agree to teach in the high need area of special education. The 2020-21 State Budget allocated \$15 million in federal funds for GSTG awards. The awards will be provided on a first-come first-served basis until funds are exhausted.

Participants must complete a 2020-21 GSTG application which is available on the CSAC website at: <https://gstg.csac.ca.gov> and indicate the school and the program in which they are enrolled. CSAC will provide campus applicant rosters to GSTG Coordinators. The school of education will need to verify enrollment in an approved program leading to a credential in special education. The financial aid office will determine an award amount that does not result in a financial aid package that exceeds financial need and/or cost of attendance. In coordination with the Financial Aid Office, the applicant may opt for a smaller award based on individual preference. Once the GSTG Coordinator returns the roster to CSAC, CSAC will continue the awarding process.

CSAC will send eligible GSTG applicants a letter of acknowledgement along with a Teaching Agreement (TA). The TA outlines the requirements of the program and stipulates that CSAC will authorize a one-time grant, with the amount stipulated on the TA, to an eligible applicant who commits to teach in the high-need field of special education at a priority school for four years. A participant has five years, upon completion of the applicant's preparation program, to meet that obligation.

### **Repayment Requirements:**

Failure to meet the four-year teaching obligation requires the grant recipient to repay the State twenty-five percent (25%) of the total amount awarded annually for each year the recipient fails to do one or more of the following;

- Be enrolled in or have successfully completed a teacher preparation program approved by the CTC.
- While enrolled in the teacher preparation program, maintain good academic standing.
- Complete the required teaching service following completion of the teacher preparation program.

CSAC will collect twenty five percent (25%) annually for non-compliance.

California Education Code Section 69617 authorizes CSAC to continue to provide GSTG awards to eligible teaching candidates through June 30, 2023 or until funding is exhausted, whichever comes first.

### *Steps for Implementation and Processing:*

#### **CSAC Has Posted the Application and Program Information**

- CSAC is currently accepting applications for the 2020-21 Academic Year
- Frequently Asked Questions are available on the GSTG website.
- CSAC continues to respond to questions via email and by phone.

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### **Application Processing**

- CSAC will create a GSTG Roster for each participating campus which will include applicant information. Campus representatives will securely sign in through Microsoft One Drive and will update the GSTG Roster to verify enrollment and grant eligibility for each applicant as well as other pertinent applicant information. CSAC will send the Teaching Agreement (TA) to awarded recipients and will update the GSTG Roster with the date the TA was sent and the date the signed copy is received.
- The recipients must sign and return the TA within 30 days to the Commission to be certified as a participant in the GSTG program. Participant who do not return the TA will not be eligible to participate.

### **Segment and Campus Processes**

- Segment representatives announce the availability of the GSTG program.
- Institutions provide CSAC the names of the GSTG Coordinators.

CSAC will send the GSTG Student Roster to the GSTG coordinators. GSTG Coordinators verify a student's eligibility by confirming enrollment in the teacher preparation program and complete the GSTG Student Roster in Microsoft One Drive.

### **Verification of Eligibility and Maximum Grant for Each Student**

The GSTG Coordinator confirms student enrollment in a teacher preparation program and determines, through their financial aid office, how much, up to \$20,000, the student is eligible to be awarded.

- Program participants must remain enrolled and maintain good academic standing.
- Program participants that are enrolled in teaching preparation coursework concurrently with a teaching intern program are eligible.
- The GSTG Coordinator completes the GSTG Student Roster and indicates a student's eligibility and the amount of funding they are eligible to receive.
- Upon receipt of the GSTG Student Roster in One Drive, CSAC sends the electronic GSTG Teaching Agreement (TA) to the student. The TA outlines the terms and conditions of receiving the grant.
- The student returns (emails) the signed TA to CSAC within thirty (30) days.
- CSAC updates the GSTG Student Roster with the date the student returned the TA.
- CSAC processes a payment to the student.
- A warrant in the student's name, in care of their institution, is created.
- CSAC updates the GSTG Student Roster with the warrant number and the date the warrant is mailed to the institution.
- Campus updates the GSTG Student Roster with the date the check is released to the student.

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### Award Packaging Guidelines

- The Student Aid Commission shall provide one-time grant funds of up to twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) to each student enrolled on or after January 1, 2020 in a professional preparation program within an accredited California institution of higher education, leading to a preliminary teaching credential, approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. [*California Education Code 69617 (a)(1)*]
- Grant funds shall be used to supplement and not supplant other sources of grant financial aid. [*California Education Code 69617 (3)*]
- The GSTG may be used to replace subsidized loans and unsubsidized loans in accordance to the Institutional financial aid packaging rules.
- The GSTG may replace the EFC portion of the student's award package in accordance to the Institutional financial aid packaging rules.
- The GSTG plus any other estimated financial aid shall not exceed the cost of attendance. Please adhere to the award packaging and over award rules in accordance to the institution's financial aid policies.
- The GSTG award offer through CSAC is for the academic year in which the student applied. Institutions should apply the same academic year definition used for financial aid awards for students in enrolled in the teacher preparation program.
- Disbursement of GSTG funds shall be divided in equal disbursements dependent on the term type of the participating institution.
- GSTG disbursements may be used to pay other institutional charges in accordance to the institution's financial aid disbursement policy.
- GSTG is not subject to any refund or return of aid policies should the student withdraw from the term or program. Any GSTG disbursements received by the student is inclusive of the commitment and obligation of the program. The grant recipient is subject to the repayment obligations as defined in the Education Code.

**Note:** As outlined this is currently a Manual Process. The GSTG program was provided one-time funding which will be available until funding is exhausted or until June 30, 2023, whichever comes first.

CSAC is developing an automated electronic process for this program which will follow as soon as possible and will be used to track compliance with the Teaching Agreement and repayment as necessary. The process outlined is the same as that for similarly funded programs.

**If you have any questions that are not clarified in this packet, please contact CSAC's Program Analyst at: [www.goldenstateteachers@csac.ca.gov](mailto:www.goldenstateteachers@csac.ca.gov).**