

Alabama Teacher Recruitment Incentive Program Scholarship Administrative Policies

Statutory Citation: Act of Alabama 2007-361.

Goal: The goal of the Alabama Teacher Recruitment Incentive Program (ATRIP) is to provide a scholarship/loan program to attract qualified students into the teaching profession in designated critical need areas.

Organization:

Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) It is the responsibility of ACHE to establish policies and procedures for the implementation of the ATRIP. The program will be administered in accordance with the policies and procedures established by ACHE.

Alabama State Board of Education (ASBOE) It is the responsibility of the ASBOE to designate the critical needs areas. These needs may be in the areas of: subject matter, grade level, geographic location, race or gender.

Alabama State Department of Education (ASDE) It is also the responsibility of ASDE to select the recipients of ATRIP awards and to provide written notifications of awards to both the student, institutions and to ACHE.

Definition of Terms:

Eligible Institution: In order to participate in ATRIP, an institution must:

1. Be a public or private nonprofit four-year accredited Alabama postsecondary educational institution which offers teacher education programs approved by the ASBOE;
2. Submit a complete application to the ATRIP for scholarship/loan assistance to its students;
3. Comply with all regulations of ACHE.

Eligible Student: An eligible student is an applicant who completes an annual ATRIP application, and

1. Is a citizen of the United States, or is in the United States for other than a temporary purpose and intends to become a permanent resident of the State of Alabama;
2. Is admitted to an institution of higher education and classified as an undergraduate student or Alternative Class A graduate student;
3. Is continuously enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student or at least a half-time Alternative Class A Certificate program student in a teacher education program approved in the critical need areas at an institution where the teacher education program has been approved by the ASBOE. For the purposes of this program, continuous enrollment is defined as enrollment from the semester of admission until the completion of all degree requirements with no stop-outs. Summer sessions in which there are no program requirements are not included;
4. Maintains the required grade point averages in the area of certification;
5. Enters into an agreement with ACHE to teach in the public schools of Alabama for one year for each year the scholarship is received;
6. Does not owe a refund on a grant previously received through Pell Grant, FSEOG, ASAP, or ASGP;
7. Has not defaulted on a loan made, insured or guaranteed by the government of the United States of America or the State of Alabama or does not owe a refund on a grant issued or awarded by the government of the United States of America or the State of Alabama.

8. The initial distribution of undergraduate awards was targeted toward first-time entering freshmen. However, should these students not fulfill the terms of their agreement, and funds become available for redistribution, prorated awards may be given to students who are juniors or seniors, provided they meet all the criteria stated above.

Eligible Program: The critical need areas are determined by the ASDE (For FY 2007-08, the designated subject matter areas were Mathematics, General Science, Special Education and English/Language Arts).

Application Procedures: The following procedures shall be the method used for making ATRIP awards to eligible students at eligible institutions:

1. Applications may be obtained from eligible institutions;
2. Applications must be completed each academic year by student applicants. Applications are renewable each award year;
3. Each application shall have a preliminary review to determine if application is complete and if the applicant meets the eligibility criteria.

Scholarship Selection Criteria:

Undergraduate Level - The following criteria will be used to select ATRIP recipients at the undergraduate level:

1. Complete Application – Incomplete applications will not be considered.
2. Diploma Tracks:
 - a. Public High Schools – Applicants must demonstrate that they are in a course of study that will lead to a diploma with an Advanced Endorsement or a Local Education Agency (LEA) Honors designation.
 - b. Non-Public High Schools – Applicants must demonstrate that they are completing a college track curriculum.
3. Cumulative High School Grade Point Average (GPA) at the end of the first semester of senior year.
4. American College Test (ACT) or Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) score as submitted to the applicant's institution of choice.
5. Applicants must demonstrate that they have student financial need. The term "need," as used in financial aid, usually refers to the difference between the resources available to the student and the cost of attending the student's selected postsecondary institution.
6. Tie Breaker: The number of Advanced Placement (AP) or Dual Enrollment courses taken by the applicant.
7. The ASDE will use the eight ASBOE districts as a method of distributing scholarships across the state. If the applicant pool does not reach the number of scholarships allocated, additional awards may be granted in either one or all of the other critical need areas within an SBE district.

Alternative Class A Certificate Program - The following criteria will be used to select ATRIP recipients at the Alternative Class A level:

1. Complete Application – Incomplete applications will not be considered.
2. Earned at least a baccalaureate undergraduate degree from a regionally accredited U. S. college or university in an area leading to Alternative Class A Certification in one of the four critical need areas.
3. Unconditional admission to an Alternative Class A Certificate Program.
4. Undergraduate Overall Grade Point Average (GPA).
5. For mathematics, general science, or English language arts applicants, the GPA in a major in the chosen field or in coursework in the chosen field of study. For special education applicants, the GPA will be computed on the courses used to meet the "4X12" requirement for program admission. (It is unlikely that a special education applicant would have taken a course in special education.)

6. Applicants must demonstrate that they have student financial need. The term “need,” as used in financial aid, usually refers to the difference between the resources available to the student and the cost of attending the student’s selected postsecondary institution.
7. At-large scholarships will be awarded to Alternative A candidates. The State Department of Education shall determine the number directed toward each of the critical need areas. If the applicant pool does not reach the number of scholarships allocated, additional awards may be granted in either one or all of the other critical need areas.

Awarding Procedures: ACHE will send a lump sum payment of funds for eligible students each semester. All awards made by ACHE shall be made payable to eligible institutions on behalf of eligible students. The lump sum disbursement will be sent to the Financial Aid Office of the eligible recipients.

1. Each eligible undergraduate student will be awarded \$20,000 to be disbursed over four years with a maximum award amount of \$5,000 per academic year. Each eligible scholarship recipient award shall be \$2,500 per semester. Undergraduate eligible recipients may use funds for tuition, fees, books, supplies, room and board.
2. Each eligible Class A student will be awarded \$6,000 disbursed over three years with a maximum award amount of \$2,000 per academic year. Each eligible scholarship recipient award amount shall be \$1,000 per semester. Alternative Class A eligible recipients may use funds for tuition, fees, books and supplies.
3. Institutions must request payment by invoice each semester of all eligible students.
4. A verification roster must be submitted of all eligible students each semester.

Refund Procedures: Funds are considered received by a student when the ATRIP check is received by the institution and credited to the student’s account. If the student is not enrolled in the designated critical need area, drops below half-time status at the time of verification, or does not meet minimum grade point requirements, funds must be returned to ACHE.

Notifications: Recipients must remain in contact with ACHE until such time as they have fulfilled their obligations by either (a) teaching in an Alabama public school system, or (b) repaying the scholarship amount, plus interest. Thus, recipients are required to notify ACHE:

1. within 10 days of any change of address until all of their obligations are fulfilled;
2. within 10 days if they withdraw from a course or courses of study;
3. if they enroll in an institution of higher education, in-state, other than the institution stated on the original application;
4. in the event that they are no longer enrolled as a full-time or part-time student at an approved postsecondary institution during their scholarship term;
5. of the date of their graduation from an approved postsecondary institution;
6. when they secure employment as a teacher (documented verification of initial employment is required);
7. of continued employment (annual documented verification of employment is required);
8. of any change in their employment status as a teacher.

Repayment of Loan Provisions: Any breach of contract on the part of the student shall cause the scholarship to be converted to a loan and makes him/her liable for the unpaid balance of the loan.

Interest: Any recipient who fails to complete a program of study or who fails to teach in a public school in Alabama shall repay to ACHE, in full, the scholarship amount received with 8% interest. Interest will be applied only once to the outstanding amount owed by the student.

Payment Schedules:

1. If in violation of the said agreement, the terms of repayment may provide for equal installment repayments.
2. Repayment in full on all scholarship loan funds must be completed within ten years.
3. An ATRIP recipient may make a prepayment of the whole or any part of an ATRIP scholarship/loan repayment due at any time without penalty.

Grace Period: Payment shall begin six months after the withdrawal or removal from the institution. All applicable collection fees will be added to the recipient's account.

Loan Default: Failure to concur with the repayment agreement will result in deferral to a collection agency. All applicable collection fees or attorney fees will be added to the recipient's account.

Deferments: Deferment of ATRIP repayment is authorized during periods when an ATRIP recipient is engaged in one of the following activities:

1. Disability: not in excess of three years during which the ATRIP recipient is temporarily totally disabled as established by a sworn affidavit of a qualified physician.
2. Military Service: not in excess of three years during which the ATRIP recipient is serving on active duty as a member of the armed services of the United States.
3. Economic Hardship: not in excess of 36 months. The recipient must reapply every 12 months. All recipients must demonstrate that they are registered on the TeachInAlabama website found at <http://www.alsde.edu/TeachInAlabama/>.

In order to qualify for an Economic Hardship Deferment, you must meet one of the conditions listed below and provide the required documentation for only that condition.

- A. You have been granted an Economic Hardship Deferment on a loan made under the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) or the Federal Perkins Loan Program for the period of time for which you are now requesting an Economic Hardship Deferment for your ATRIP Loan.
- B. You are receiving payment under a federal or state public assistance program, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Food Stamps, or state general public assistance. Evidence of federal or state public assistance program payments must be provided.
- C. You are working full-time or part-time and your total monthly gross income from employment must be less than or equal to the larger of (A) the monthly minimum wage rate or (B) 150% of the Poverty Guideline amount for your family size and state, as shown on the charts appearing on the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Economic Hardship Deferment web page found at www.dl.ed.gov. Once there click on "Forms" and then "Economic Hardship Deferments." Evidence of your income must be provided. If you are reporting monthly income from employment and other sources, you must provide documentation such as pay stubs. If you are reporting one-twelfth of your adjusted gross income, you must provide a copy of your most recently filed Federal Income Tax Return.
- D. You are unemployed. After the initial 12 month deferral, documentation that you have made 12 diligent attempts to find full-time employment within the last 12 months must be provided before additional time is granted.

Cancellations: Cancellation of any ATRIP repayment obligation, including principal and interest, shall be given if an ATRIP recipient dies or becomes permanently and totally disabled.

Record Withholding: The Executive Director of ACHE shall require Alabama institutions of higher education to withhold the release of any records of a recipient who fails to satisfy his/her agreement with ACHE.

Privacy Act Notice: The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a) requires that an agency provide the following notice to each individual whom it asks to supply information:

1. The authority for collecting the requested information is Act 2007-361 of the 2007 Alabama Legislature. Applicants are advised that participating in the Alabama Teacher Recruitment Incentive Program (ATRIP) is voluntary, but the requested information is necessary for participating in the program.
2. The principal purposes of this information are as follows: to verify the identity of the scholarship loan applicant; to determine program eligibility and benefits; to permit servicing of the scholarship loan; and, in the event it is necessary, to locate the scholarship loan recipient and to collect on a delinquent or defaulted loan.
3. Applicants must provide all of the information requested in order to have their application processed.

Section 7(b) of the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a) requires that when any Federal, State or local government agency requests an individual to disclose his or her Social Security Number (SSN), that the individual must also be advised whether that disclosure is mandatory or voluntary, by what statutory or other authority the SSN is solicited, and what uses will be made of it. The SSN will be used to verify the identity of the scholarship loan applicant and as an account number through the life of the scholarship loan to record necessary data accurately. As an identifier, the SSN is used in such program activities as determining program eligibility, certifying school attendance and student status, determining eligibility for deferment of repayments, determining eligibility for disability or death claims, and for tracing and collecting in cases of delinquent or defaulted loans.

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