

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Information: Stipend Program for Vision/Hearing Specialists 2026-27

Eligibility Criteria for Applying for a Stipend

Applicants must meet all of the following criteria to qualify for a stipend:

1. Have completed one of the following programs of study: (1) Teachers of Students with Visual Impairment Certification Preparation Program (VICPP) at Texas Tech University; (2) Deaf and Hard of Hearing Certification Program (DHHCP) at Texas Tech University; (3) Training Program for Professionals in Visual Impairment (T Pro VI) at Stephen F. Austin State University; or (4) Master of Science in Education of the Deaf at Texas Woman's University. All coursework must be completed with a grade of "B" or better.
2. Be licensed as a Special Education - Visual Specialist (K-12) or Special Education - Hearing Specialist (K-12) by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.
3. Complete one full school year working directly with students with either visual impairment or who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing as an employee of an Arkansas public school district or education service cooperative. The educator must have been employed with the Arkansas public school district or education service cooperative as of the first day of school. The division will take into consideration any exigent circumstances if the employee did not obtain their visual or hearing specialist licensure by the first day of school.

After the initial stipend award, if an applicant continues to work in an Arkansas public school district or education service cooperative working directly with students with visual impairments or who are Deaf/Hard of hearing, the applicant may apply for an additional stipend for each additional full school year worked, up to two additional years. The total number of stipends an applicant can receive is three. The applicant must submit a new stipend application for each year and provide all documentation required under the following section for each stipend application.

Educators who have previously received reimbursement or stipend funds from the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, previously the Arkansas Department of Education, for any Vision or Hearing specialist coursework or program of study are not eligible for participation in this program.

Documentation Requirements

Applicants must submit a Notice of Intent to Participate form to the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Office of Special Education (5) six months prior to submitting a Request for Stipend.

Subsequent to the completion of the program, each applicant must submit a Statement of Assurance form to the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Office of Special Education and the following documentation:

1. Official copy of final transcript from either Texas Tech University (TTU), Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) or Texas Woman's University (TWU) reflecting satisfactory completion of one

of the following: (1) Visual Impairment Certification Preparation Program (VICPP), (2) Deaf and Hard of Hearing Certification Program (DHHCP), (3) Training Program for Professionals in Visual Impairment (T Pro VI), or (4) Master of Science in Education of the Deaf (DHHCP). All coursework must be completed with a grade of “B” or better.

2. Proof of licensure for either Visual or Hearing Specialist by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.
3. Proof of having been satisfactorily employed by an Arkansas public school district or education service cooperative working directly with students with either visual impairment or who are Deaf/Hard of hearing as verified in writing by District superintendent or Education Service Cooperative director, for one full year immediately prior to application for stipend. Time employed under a provisional license, temporary teaching license, or ALP designation is not eligible.
4. Completed IRS Form W-9

All documentation must be received by the Division by July 31 each year. Applicants found eligible to receive stipends will be notified within 30 days of submission of all required documents.

Award Amounts and Schedules

Stipends are contingent upon available funds. There is no guarantee that the stipend program will be funded each year or that applicants will receive a stipend.

The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education will announce, by Commissioner’s Memo, the stipend amount for the year in January of each year. The stipend amount may change year to year.