

# Nonpublic schoolteachers eligible for scholarships

Teachers in Maryland Catholic and other nonpublic schools are eligible for the first time to receive state scholarships to pursue teaching careers in fields with a critical teacher shortage, thanks to legislation the Maryland Catholic Conference helped pass last year.

The awards will be available for the 2007-2008 academic year. The deadline to apply is June 1. To be considered for the grants based on need, applicants must file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by March 1.

The scholarships are awarded through the Workforce Shortage Student Assistance Grants program to eligible degree-seeking undergraduate and graduate students at Maryland postsecondary institutions. Grant recipients must agree to perform a service obligation by working in a particular workforce shortage area upon completing their studies.

Recipients of the teaching grant must become certified in the critical shortage field for which they received the award and complete their service obligation by teaching in that field in a Maryland public or nonpublic school. Teaching fields with a critical shortage include special education, English for speakers of other languages, and secondary school sciences.

The grants were previously available only to teachers who performed their service in public schools.

“We’ve worked long and hard for the equal treatment of our teachers, and we’ll continue to do so,” said Mary Ellen Russell, associate director for education with the Maryland Catholic Conference. “Our teachers often work for lower salaries and fewer benefits to serve the 142,000 students in Maryland’s nonpublic schools. If the state is providing scholarships, tax credits, or other benefits to teachers, our teachers deserve to be included.”

Sen. Thomas “Mac” Middleton of Southern Maryland, who offered the amendment to include nonpublic school teachers in the grant program, called inclusion a “matter of

fairness.”

He noted that many nonpublic schoolteachers move to the public school system after a few years because they can no longer afford to teach in nonpublic schools.

The awards range from \$1,000 to \$4,000 per year and are renewable for up to five years. To apply, visit <https://www.mhec.state.md.us/financialAid/Applications/2007-2008/07wssag.pdf>.