



West Virginia
Higher Education
Policy Commission

• **UNDERWOOD-SMITH**
• **TEACHER**
• **SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**
• **APPLICATION INFORMATION**

APPLICATION DEADLINE: MARCH 1, 2012

The Underwood-Smith Teacher Scholarship Program is a state funded program designed to enable and encourage outstanding students who demonstrate an interest in teaching to pursue teaching careers at the pre-school, elementary, middle or secondary school level. Scholarships, not to exceed \$5,000 per academic year, are awarded on the basis of academic qualifications, program of study and interest in teaching. The program purpose is to enable the recipient to obtain a teaching certificate and commit that individual to the pursuit of a teaching career in West Virginia.

To qualify for the program, a student must meet the following basic selection criteria:

(1) Be a legal West Virginia resident:

(2) **UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL**

a) Have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.25 after successfully completing two years of course work at an approved institution of higher education;

GRADUATE LEVEL

a) Have or will be graduating in the top ten percent of his/her college/university undergraduate program;
b) Have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 from the undergraduate institution;

(3) Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment at a West Virginia institution of higher education as a full-time student in a course of study leading to certification as a teacher at the pre-school, elementary or secondary level.

(4) Be willing to teach in West Virginia's public pre-school, elementary, middle or secondary level schools for two years for each year of assistance received.

(5) Be willing to repay the scholarship on a pro rata basis according to the fraction of the teaching obligation not completed, as well as accrued interest and any required collection fees, if he/she fails to fulfill the teaching obligation. (The interest charge is adjusted annually from the time interest begins to accrue to the time the repayment period begins, and is set at a rate established by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.)

These scholarships become loans if the recipient fails to fulfill the teaching obligation. The scholarships must be repaid (monthly payments) on a pro rata basis, as well as accrued interest and any required collection fees. This teaching and/or repayment obligation must be fulfilled within ten years. Interest will accrue from the first date of disbursement if the scholar fails to complete a degree in education or does not fulfill the teaching obligation.

When the number of qualified applicants exceeds available funding, additional consideration may be given to such factors as grade point average, statement on interest in teaching, and program of study.

Contingent upon available funding, the Underwood-Smith Teacher Scholarship may be renewed up to a maximum of two (2) academic years for undergraduate study and two (2) years for graduate study. To remain eligible for the Underwood-Smith, recipients must continue to meet all the requirements outlined for renewal by the Scholarship Selection Panel.

The application packet consists of this instruction/summary sheet describing the program and the following items.

(1) **Application** - To be completed by the student and the college/university financial aid administrator.

(2) **Statement of Purpose** - A typed statement of the student's intention and interest in being a certified pre-school, elementary, middle or secondary level teacher.

The completed application with the statement of purpose should be returned to the Higher Education Policy Commission by March 1, 2012.