TENNESSEE Pathways

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH EDUCATION AWARD INITIATIVE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I have to be a US Citizen to receive this education award?
Yes, you must be a US Citizen (or otherwise lawfully present in the United States) AND a resident of Tennessee to receive this education award.

If I have already applied for the Pathways education award and received assistance, do I need to reapply for each semester?
No. Once you have applied, received a confirmation number and received financial assistance, you do not have to reapply. You will continue to submit invoices each semester for review and approval.

How much may I receive?
Recipients are eligible for up to $30,000 maximum in Tuition Assistance over two full-time academic years, not to exceed $15,000 per academic year. Any Tuition Assistance shall be disbursed as a lump sum directly to the Recipient's college or university upon receipt of a tuition invoice.

If I receive other financial assistance, may I still apply?
Yes, this education award is intended to complement any other scholarship or grant funding. Recipients may not receive a Pathways Behavioral Health Education Award from both administrators, Tennessee Association of Alcohol, Drug and other Addiction Services (TAADAS) and Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations (TAMHO).

What information is required to apply?
At minimum –
-A government-issued state ID, U.S. passport or copy of your completed Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA).
-Proof of Tennessee residency (i.e., utility bill, lease, etc.).
-Social Security Number
-Proof of acceptance to an accredited college or university in Tennessee or serving Tennessee students.
-Evidence of enrollment in an eligible behavioral health master's degree program.
-A tuition invoice and class schedule for the semester(s) for which you're requesting the education award.

What master's degree programs are eligible for the education award?
Eligible programs are master's degree programs in behavioral health fields that directly prepare graduates to serve Tennessee's public behavioral health system and may lead toward clinical licensure or certification. Examples include counseling, psychiatric nursing, social work, clinical psychology, and closely related clinical behavioral health programs. Programs that do not prepare graduates for behavioral health practice or clinical licensure are not eligible. Bachelor's, post-graduate degrees, and certificate

programs do not qualify for the education award.

I applied for an education award. What's next?
The education award administrators will review your application. A TAADAS or TAMHO administrator will contact you if additional information is required. Please be informed that official award letters are only provided via email from TAMHO or TAADAS. Submitting an application or follow-up documentation does not guarantee an award. If approved, tuition assistance is paid directly to your college or university.

I received an education award. What's next?
If you're planning to request tuition assistance for more than one term, remember to submit your class enrollment, tuition invoice and class schedule when you register each semester. Ongoing tuition assistance is not automatically disbursed to your school. Funds are allocated based on tuition. An education award administrator will review your submission and notify you of ongoing approval via email. Please allow up to 45 days for processing. Due to this delay, approved applicants may want to consider another payment method for each semester in order to keep your academic account current. You will be reimbursed by your school once they receive the tuition assistance from the Pathways BH Education Award.

How long is the post-graduate employment obligation?
You must commit to a minimum of five (5) years of full-time employment at a State Grant-Contracted Treatment Agency — an agency contracted with TDMHSAS that is also a TAMHO or TAADAS member — located in a Rural Community. This five-year Commitment Period begins after you complete your graduate program or, if applicable, once you become eligible for employment (such as by obtaining licensure).

Internship time does not apply toward the post-graduate employment commitment, and previous employment time cannot be retroactively applied. Work must be completed at a qualifying organization in a rural community post-graduation. Eligible employers are TDMHSAS funded treatment agencies and a TAADAS and/or TAMHO member. A list of approved employers can be found on their respective websites.

What is defined as a "Rural Community" for this Initiative? For purposes of this initiative, every Tennessee county is considered a Rural Community except Madison, Shelby, Knox, Davidson, Hamilton, and Sullivan counties.

Do I have to work for the same employer for the entire 5-year service commitment? No. You may fulfill your five-year service commitment with more than one employer, as long as each employer is an eligible provider located in a rural Tennessee community. An education award administrator must be notified of any change in employment status as soon as possible.

What happens if I cannot finish my school or work requirement? The purpose of the Tennessee Behavioral Health Education Award is to increase the number of highly qualified mental health professionals working in rural Tennessee community organizations. Recipients who do not complete their degree program or employment commitment are required to repay their education award. TDMHSAS, TAMHO and TAADAS reserve the right to collect all payments in full.

Will I have to maintain a certain GPA to receive the award? Continued enrollment in your master's program is sufficient evidence of progress toward your degree and subsequent tuition assistance. Recipients are required to provide evidence of enrollment each semester and the corresponding tuition invoice.

How do I contact the education award administrators? The education award administrators may be reached at ruralhealth@taadas.org or tamho@tamho.org.