



Sponsor Handbook



6660 Doubletree Ave. Suite 11
Columbus, OH 43229
Toll Free: 1-877-547-6978

Website: www.occrra.org

Email: teach@occrra.org

Dear Scholarship Sponsor,

Thank you for sponsoring a T.E.A.C.H. OHIO Scholarship! You should be proud of your commitment to increasing the knowledge and skills of your employees, which in turn improves the quality of care the children in your program receive.

Please carefully read this handbook so you will have a clear understanding of T.E.A.C.H. and what is expected of you as a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship sponsor. Please sign and return the Sponsor Handbook Form at the end of this handbook so we will know you have read and understand the policies of your scholarship agreement. We have divided the handbook into specific sections to provide you with information on how the program works.

We have included a staff directory on **page 10** of the handbook. Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have. We are here to serve you and advocate for you.

Sincerely,

Greg Yorker

Greg Yorker
Director
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® OHIO

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Welcome to the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® OHIO Scholarship Project!

Since you are a sponsoring employer for T.E.A.C.H. OHIO scholarship recipient(s), you are receiving this Handbook. Included is information about the processes to follow during the scholarship and general information we have also given to the recipient. PLEASE read through the Handbook carefully. Call the T.E.A.C.H. OHIO office with any questions right away. Also we require you sign and send back the last page, attesting to the fact you have read and understand the policies and procedures contained in this Handbook. The page must be returned before the contract is considered in affect.

Privacy

OCCRRA agrees to respect and maintain confidentiality of all personally identifiable information from you (i.e.: wages, ID numbers, educational and professional data, etc). We will keep all confidential information in a secure manner. OCCRRA will not sell your personally identifiable information to anyone. Personally identifiable information may be shared with funders of your scholarship for the purposes of producing aggregate data for reporting, and will be used for determination of eligibility. Communications (email, phone, fax, blog comments, etc...) between scholars, sponsors and OCCRRA may also be shared with funders of the scholarships and will be used to determine continuing scholarship eligibility. Email addresses of scholars and sponsors will be used to communicate scholarship related information, as well as opportunities to advocate for the early childhood workforce and OCCRRA. Participant names and contact information will also be shared with our member Resource and Referral agencies in your geographic area so they can contact you and offer further professional development assistance, or for recognition of your achievements related to participation with T.E.A.C.H.

Signing the Contract (Form A)

- The recipient(s) you are sponsoring will receive an Acceptance package mailed directly to their home address. In it, he/she will find three signed copies of the contract (Form A). As the sponsoring employer, you and the recipient(s) are to sign each copy also.
- Read your contract carefully. You are signing a contract and accepting all terms as described in the contract.
- SEND one copy to our office. You keep a signed copy for your files as does the recipient.
- *Recipient(s) are not officially on the T.E.A.C.H. OHIO scholarship until we receive your signed contract.*

It is essential that you read *the contract (Form A)* very carefully. If you have questions, call the T.E.A.C.H. OHIO office before you sign and send the contract. (To contact the T.E.A.C.H OHIO office, please call 877-547-6978)

Once a contract is signed, the recipient(s) account will be set up to record all charges and amounts due. We will also set up an account for you as the sponsoring employer. This account will record the release time payments we owe to you, and the tuition payments you owe to us. Your responsibilities are defined in the contract and include the following:

Program responsibilities – You (as the sponsoring employer), the T.E.A.C.H. OHIO Scholarship program, and the scholarship recipient have all agreed to pay a percentage of the tuition each term the recipient(s) attend classes.

- As the sponsoring employer, **your responsibilities include:**
 - **paying 10% of tuition**
 - **providing release time paid at your employees normal wage**
 - **providing a 2% raise or \$300 bonus each year the scholar completes the minimum required college credits OR paying an additional 30% of tuition in lieu of the raise or bonus.**

If your center is having trouble meeting the requirements of the contract, contact your T.E.A.C.H. OHIO Counselor immediately.

Please note, if you do not fulfill the terms of the contract, the contract may be terminated immediately, or may not be renewed for the next year.

Contracts - By signing the contract, you are agreeing to support the recipient(s) in completing 9-15 college credit hours over three consecutive semester terms (or 12-18 credits over 4 terms at a quarter based school). The recipient(s) must continue to work at least 30 hours a week during the contract period. Failing to follow through on these agreements will be a violation of the terms of the contract that may lead to termination of the contract. *Form A is a contract. Do not sign it unless you intend to honor the contract in full with the recipient(s).*

Paid Release Time – Paid release time is time an employee is paid for at their normal rate of pay to attend class, study, or attend to personal needs. Paid release time is paid by the sponsoring center to the employee in their regular pay check. If an employee is normally paid \$10 per hour for 30 hours per week, this does not change when using paid release time. What changes, is instead of being paid for 30 hours in the center classroom teaching children, the scholar teaches children for 27 hours in the classroom, and then takes 3 hours off to attend class, study or attend to personal needs. In this example, the pay check from the center to the scholar who received release time should look like this:

30 hours worked (27 in center classroom, 3 hours release time) x \$10 per hour = \$300 (less payroll taxes and benefit deductions)

Giving a scholar 3 hours off without pay is not paid release time, and will not be reimbursed by OCCRRRA. Scholars must be paid their full wage for their release time, and it must be paid prior

to completing a claim to OCCRRA for reimbursement. Paying a scholar less than their full wage (i.e. \$8 per hour instead of \$10 per hour) is not paid release time and will not be reimbursed by OCCRRA. If a scholar's pay rate is \$10 per hour, then they must be paid \$10 per hour during their release time.

Paid release time can only be taken when there are children at the center. If the center is closed on the weekend, release time can not be claimed on the weekend. If the center starts serving children at 9 a.m., release time can not be claimed at 7 a.m. The theory behind release time is that a teacher required to maintain the minimum ratio is "released" to attend class, study, or attend to personal needs. When the teacher is released, another (substitute) teacher is required to take her place to maintain ratio. OCCRRA will reimburse the center \$8 per hour to cover the cost of that substitute teacher. The substitute teacher's wage, is the added cost the center incurs for providing release time. If a substitute is not required (i.e. during nap times) then there is not an additional cost for a center to provide release time. Even if a substitute is not required (while maintaining the proper ratio), OCCRRA will still reimburse the center \$8 an hour for paid release time provided, as long as children are in care at the center during the paid release time hours claimed.

Also the school term must be in session, or an assignment due, during times when paid release time is provided. Release time can not be provided during summer break, if the student is not taking classes in the summer.

Depending on the scholarship model, by signing the contract, the sponsoring employer is agreeing to support the recipient by providing 1 to 6 hours per week of paid release time. Paid release time requirements vary by funder, so please refer to your contract, for example ODJFS funded scholarships require 1 to 3 hours per week. Higher amounts of paid release time can be granted for condensed classes, such as some summer classes. Remember all scholars must use, and all sponsors must grant the full amount of paid release time required by your contracts every term. Scholars using paid release time, on average, perform better (more credits per term, and better G.P.A.) than scholars who do not use paid release time.

Reimbursements to sponsors are currently \$8.00 per hour for paid release time. Sponsors, if you are not providing paid release time please contact your T.E.A.C.H. Counselor to discuss ways that may work for you. See the Release Time Q&A section below for ideas for providing paid release time. The requirement may be waived or reduced in very limited circumstances, so please contact your Counselor for details. If the full amount of paid release time is not provided every term, this will be considered when contracts are reviewed annually for renewal, and also may result in contract termination.

Release Time Q&A

Release time can be somewhat confusing. Please carefully read the section below, it may answer questions you have about Release Time.

What is release time? Release time is time during the normal work week that the recipient(s) takes off to study, go to class, or attend to personal needs.

How do I assign release time? Create a schedule with the recipient(s) as to when he/she can study each week. The teacher can stay at the child care facility but is not directly working with children during release time. It is time to study, read, write or prepare for class. The recipient(s) receive their regular rate of pay during release time. Release time is intended to help the recipient(s) be successful in class while not being a hardship on the facility.

Can the recipient(s) go to class during release time? That is a decision you as the sponsor can make. Day time classes are a luxury. Most scholarship recipients attend classes at night, on the weekends or online. It is not required that release time be used to attend day time classes. Some facilities can accommodate day classes but this is not the norm. It is a decision between the sponsor and the recipient(s).

What does the child care program gain? The sponsoring employer receives \$8.00 an hour for each hour of release time the recipient(s) take. This may cover the cost of a substitute to cover for that time. If a substitute is not needed, the facility still claims the time and uses the monies to the benefit of the facility. ***The \$8.00 is not to be paid to the recipient(s). He/she is to receive the regular rate of pay during release time.***

What does Release Time cost our child care program? Since you would be paying your scholar their normal wage, whether or not they are taking release time, it does not cost your program any money (directly) to give your scholar release time. The cost of release time is the cost of the substitute necessary to maintain the proper child to staff ratio in your classroom. In many cases our \$8.00 per hour reimbursement to the program, for providing paid release time, will cover the entire cost of the substitute (if one is necessary). If the cost of the substitute is more than \$8.00 per hour, then providing paid release time will cost your program money (the difference in rate of pay). If the cost of the substitute is less than \$8.00 per hour, or a substitute is not necessary, then your program will **gain** money providing paid release time. If this concept is not clear to you, please contact your T.E.A.C.H. OHIO Counselor and they will go over it with you.

What form do I use? You were sent a Form C (think of it as 'C' for cash) with an acceptance letter when the recipient(s) were awarded a contract. Make as many copies as you need and keep track of the release time on them. Before sending them in, make sure you and the recipient signs the form. You can send in Form C's as often as you wish, however, we only process checks once per week. If we do not receive Form C's during a term (by mid-term), our Counselors will be contacting you to see if there is a problem.

Must I give release time? YES. YES. YES. This is a part of the scholarship you agreed to in signing the contract with the recipient(s). Work with the recipient(s) to find a suitable schedule for release time. Remember, the final say in scheduling is with the sponsoring employer. Release time is to add to the success of the recipient(s) without being detrimental to the program. We ask the recipient(s) to be as flexible as possible in using release time so it causes the least amount of disruption for the sponsor and the children in the classroom.

What are other benefits of release time for the sponsor? Providing release time to the recipient(s) not only gives them needed time to keep up with school obligations but also makes them feel supported in their goal of gaining higher education. When you give the recipient(s) the advantage of having release time, you are investing in the quality of your facility through more educated staff and lower turnover. Through release time, recipients are better able to maintain good grades and job satisfaction and are less likely to burn out.

What if I am having trouble providing release time? Contact the Scholarship Counselor to brainstorm ways to make release time work. Some creative options might be to:

- Allow the recipient to come in late or leave early
- Pay them for lunch breaks
- Pay for hours off days normally taken off
- Give them small increments of time throughout the week rather than large chunks
- When in ratio, schedule your other staff to cover the time that the recipient is out of the classroom instead of hiring a sub
- Add time to their personal leave
- Paid release time may be banked, and used to extend vacation or personal time off, however this must be used before your college term is over, for example it cannot be used over Holidays, or during a summer off.

Employment Changes - Your center is also obligated to report any employment changes to the T.E.A.C.H. OHIO office. If you are considering moving the employee from one age group to another or reducing their hours, please contact your T.E.A.C.H. OHIO Counselor right away. If the employee is terminated or quits, please contact us immediately. The recipient(s) are committing to remain employed at your facility for one year following the contract depending on his/her scholarship. *However, decisions of job termination remain yours to make. Your facility is in no way obligated to keep an employee that is not working up to standards or within the rules of the facility.*

Please note, as an employer, you may have the right to withhold the percentage of tuition you paid for the recipient(s) from a final paycheck if he/she terminates the scholarship contract prematurely. We suggest you consult a lawyer before withholding any funds.

Commitments – After the recipient(s) complete the required college credits, he/she agrees to remain at your child care program for one year.

Raise and Bonuses

Each scholarship recipient who successfully completes a contract is eligible to receive a \$300 bonus from T.E.A.C.H. OHIO. If a recipient is currently inactive (not in school) the T.E.A.C.H. Counselor will contact the Program Director before the bonus is paid to verify the scholar is still employed and fulfilling their commitment. Sponsors also are responsible for paying either a \$300 bonus or 2% raise (or additional 30% of tuition), due at the time each contract is successfully completed.

Contact with the T.E.A.C.H. OHIO Program

There are times when you should contact the T.E.A.C.H. OHIO program. These include:

- ✓ When you have asked your T.E.A.C.H. OHIO scholarship recipient to leave their position or when the recipient resigns
- ✓ When the recipient moves from one classroom (age group) to another or reduces their hours
- ✓ When you are having trouble scheduling release time for your T.E.A.C.H. OHIO scholarship recipient
- ✓ When you get any correspondence from the T.E.A.C.H. OHIO program that you do not fully understand
- ✓ Any time you have questions about T.E.A.C.H. OHIO, our policies, or a specific situation with a recipient or applicant

Our T.E.A.C.H. OHIO Counselors are here to help you navigate your way through the scholarship experience.

Additional paperwork – At times, the program collects information for its funders, advisory committee, or host agency. Supplying this information is generally optional.

Surveys - Periodically, you may be asked to fill out a survey regarding the program. This information is used for program improvement purposes.

Advocacy - There may also be times when the program is seeking funding and you as a sponsor may be asked to share your experiences. Opportunities may arise for you to write letters of support to funders testify before a legislative committee or contact your legislator. Again, this level of participation is optional but much appreciated.

Scholarship Counseling

T.E.A.C.H. OHIO provides scholarship counseling to all recipients and sponsors. At any time during the regular work day, you can call the Scholarship Counselor or the Project Director for assistance. Whether it is about the scholarship, college, resources across the state, or just to vent, we are here for you. We want to be an active part of the professional development process in early childhood education. We especially want to hear from sponsors:

1. When recipient(s) have been asked to leave a position.
2. When any correspondence is received from the college or from T.E.A.C.H. OHIO that is not fully understood.
3. When you have questions about how many scholars you can support at one time.

T.E.A.C.H. may contact sponsors to:

1. Follow-up on Release Time and verify it is being granted.
2. Verify that a Bonus or Raise has been granted.
3. Verify that a center license has been renewed.
4. Follow-up when gathering updated information about your program.

Renewing a Contract

Please note that contract renewals are always based on the funding available at the time. Other considerations include whether Release Time is being granted, and if centers are paying their invoices.

T.E.A.C.H. OHIO - Frequently Asked Questions

Who is a Scholarship Counselor?

T.E.A.C.H. OHIO has specific individuals who are assigned to work with recipients and sponsors during their contracts. When you call the scholarship office, you will be speaking to a Scholarship Counselor who can answer your questions.

What is a contract year?

A contract year is three consecutive semesters (or 4 consecutive quarter terms) over which scholar attends 9 to 15 (or 12 to 18 at a quarter school) college classes. The contract begins the term the recipient and sponsor sign the contract.

What is commitment time?

One goal of the scholarship is to reduce turnover in our field. Since T.E.A.C.H. OHIO, the sponsoring employer and the recipient(s) partner to pay for the education, the recipient(s) commit to an amount of time he/she will remain at the child care facility. This time one year after the contract year of education.

How often should a sponsor or recipient contact T.E.A.C.H. OHIO?

We encourage sponsors and recipients to call or email the office at least once a term to check on paperwork and next steps. This will also assist in the renewal process if a recipient applies for another scholarship contract.

If the recipient(s) quits, or is terminated (fired with cause), from their job before the end of the contract and commitment period, what may happen (even if they move to another child care program)?

The scholar will *never* be able to apply for another T.E.A.C.H. scholarship (the only exception to this policy is if the sponsoring program releases the scholar from the contract, or the scholar suffers a serious Life Issue, for example a serious illness). They will also forfeit the right to any bonus they may otherwise have been due from T.E.A.C.H. The sponsoring employer also may have the right to deduct the percentage paid for tuition, and the raise or bonus (if related to the contract being broken) from the recipient's final pay check. Please consult an employment lawyer before exploring this option.

What if there is a balance due when the recipient applies for a new contract?

If the center is unable to make payments, contact your Scholarship Counselor immediately. Contracts may not be renewed, unless arrangements are made with T.E.A.C.H. for payment.

Does T.E.A.C.H. OHIO really use the surveys we fill out?

It is very important to fill out and return the surveys we send at the end of each contract year. We use your feedback to influence potential funders and to demonstrate that we are meeting the mandates of our contracts. Please complete each survey and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope.

What if the recipient wishes to drop a class?

Depending on when they drop the class (e.g. during the first week or during the 8th week), the school may keep all or a portion of the tuition that T.E.A.C.H. OHIO paid on the recipient's behalf. The recipient and sponsor will be responsible for their portion of tuition that T.E.A.C.H. OHIO does not get back from the school.

The recipient should check with their Scholarship Counselor, the office of the registrar and the financial aid office to learn of any financial repercussions before dropping a class.

What if I want to move the recipient from age group to another or to reduce her/his hours?

Such a change may make the recipient ineligible for a T.E.A.C.H. OHIO scholarship and may hold important consequences according to the terms of the contract (including the scholarship being

rescinded). Please contact the Scholarship Counselor to discuss the situation before making the change.

What if the recipient is laid off?

If a recipient is laid off, they will not be considered to have violated the terms of the scholarship. T.E.A.C.H. needs to be notified when this occurs.

**** To download copies of Forms B & C, go to <http://teach.occrra.org> and scroll to the bottom. You can make copies of the instruction sheets and both forms from the site.**

***** We strongly encourage you to review the *Participant Handbook* found on-line at:**

<http://teach.occrra.org>

By reading this document, you will better understand the expectations and paperwork required from all T.E.A.C.H. OHIO recipients.

T.E.A.C.H. Staff Directory

If you reach the automated voicemail system, you can dial the person's extension to be directly connected.

Todd Barnhouse, Executive Director of OCCRRRA

Email: tbarnhouse@occrra.org, phone ext. 308

Greg Yorker, Director of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® OHIO

Email: gyorker@occrra.org, phone ext. 304

Tonya Ward, Counselor: CDA scholarships, University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati State Community College

Email: tward@occrra.org, phone ext. 307 ; direct fax 614-396-5963

Cathy Ryan, Senior Counselor, CDA scholarships and all other schools not handled above by Tonya.

Email: cryan@occrra.org, phone ext. 303 ; direct fax 614-396-5966

General Contact Information

Ohio Child Care Resource & Referral Association

6660 Doubletree Ave. Suite 11

Columbus, OH 43229

Phone: (614) 396-5959

Toll Free: (877) 547-6978

Fax: (614) 396-5960

Email: teach@occrra.org

See our website at <http://teach.occrra.org> for more information, paperwork, and forms.

Revision History

Rev 12.09: New

Rev 06.10: Added counselor check off to form, updated web address.

Rev 02.11: Revised T.E.A.C.H. Bonus payment description removing split payments. Revised language related to terminations. Terminations with cause will be considered Turnover, and the same as quitting a program. Added Privacy statement.

Rev 06.11: Updated Release time change for ODJFS, max 3 hours.

Rev 08.11: Updated directory

Rev 09.11: Added Release Time clarifications

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® OHIO

Sponsor Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I have read and understand the policies and procedures presented in the T.E.A.C.H. OHIO Sponsor Handbook. I will contact my T.E.A.C.H. Counselor with any questions. I realize my contract with T.E.A.C.H. is voluntary and will not be in effect until I return this signed form, as well as any other required paperwork.

I understand that the T.E.A.C.H. Sponsor Handbook could change at any time. It is my responsibility to check the website periodically at <http://teach.occrra.org> for updates.

Name [Print and Sign] _____ Date _____

Return this form to your T.E.A.C.H. Counselor. Email and direct fax below.

Or mail: ***T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® OHIO***

6660 Doubletree Ave. Suite 11

Columbus, OH 43229

Who is the T.E.A.C.H. Counselor you are working with? Please mark next to their name below:

- Tonya Ward: email tward@occrra.org ; direct fax 614-396-5963
- Cathy Ryan: email cryan@occrra.org ; direct fax 614-396-5966
- Don't know