



OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
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REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
SUMMER ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT PROGRAM
2025 Laws of Minnesota, 136A.091
February 8, 2026

DEADLINES:

Sponsor Application Submission– February 27, 2026, 4:30 p.m.
Early submissions are encouraged, especially if new to the online portal.

PROJECT PERIOD:

Summer 2026 and 2027 Programs

Alternative Format:

Upon request, the Summer Academic Enrichment Program Request for Application can be made available in an alternative format by contacting Nichole Andersen, Office of Higher Education, 1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350, St. Paul, MN 55108, Email Nichole.Andersen@state.mn.us.

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I. Grant Overview

The Summer Academic Enrichment Program (SAEP) provides stipends for low-income students completing grades 3 to 11 to attend approved summer academic enrichment programs offered by postsecondary educational institutions and nonprofits located in Minnesota. To participate, students in grades 7-11 need at least an overall “C” average or its equivalent for the most recently recorded academic term in the subject area applicable for the summer program of interest.

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) is responsible for administering the Summer Academic Enrichment Program (SAEP). Minnesota statutes [136A.091 Subdivision 1](#) states, “The summer academic enrichment program is established to enable elementary and secondary students to attend academic summer programs sponsored by postsecondary institutions and nonprofit organizations.”

Clarification of statutory language:

Eligible Program Sponsor – this is the postsecondary institution or the nonprofit educational organization that offers summer programs.

Eligible Programs – this refers to the summer camps that meet SAEP requirements that Program Sponsors offer.

II. Funding Availability

OHE has a state appropriation of \$242,500 available for summer 2026 and an additional \$242,500 available for summer 2027 to support student stipends to attend approved eligible summer academic enrichment programs. Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 is the first year in the state biennium. This application request is for the two-year biennium, which includes FY26 and FY27, or summer programing for summer 2026 and summer 2027.

Eligibility to be considered an approved program sponsor for SAEP eligible programs (summer camps) is determined through a Request for Applications (RFA) process, which includes review by a committee representing content and community specialists with knowledge of academic enrichment programs and State funding processes. The review committee may include representatives of postsecondary institutions, school districts, organizations providing precollege outreach services, agency staff and others deemed appropriate by OHE.

III. Minimum Requirements

Applicants must meet the requirements to be considered eligible to participate in SAEP.

Sponsor applicants must submit the following:

- Sponsor applications must be completed and submitted via Microsoft Form by February 23, 2026 to be considered for a student to use an SAEP stipend. You will be required to enter the following into the SAEP Sponsor Application:

- Sponsor Name
 - Program/Camp titles
 - Program Start Date
 - Program End Date
 - Statement of program goals and objectives
 - Description of learning process and activities
 - Curricular area for the program
 - Instructional hours per day
 - Number of days of the program
 - Designation of if students stay on campus, commute or attend virtually
 - Grade levels that can participate in the program
 - Projected enrollment for the program
 - Geographic region(s) of MN served
 - Number of staff members/faculty delivering the program content
 - Qualifications of the staff members/faculty
 - Estimated charge of the program per student
 - Program's refund policy
 - Demographic data on who your program serves: provide year-end data from previous summers to indicate participant level of low-income students, students from greater Minnesota and students from diverse backgrounds.
- Supplemental documentation to be emailed to Nichole.Andersen@state.mn.us for nonprofit educational organizations:
 - Articles of incorporation and bylaws.
 - Indication of favorable financial performance (one of the following):
 - Most recent board reviewed financial statements, which should include a balance statement, income statement and a statement of functional expenses
 - Most recent IRS form 990EZ or 990
 - Most recent Certified Financial Audit

IV. Eligibility

Program Sponsor - Who can be an eligible SAEP program sponsor?

Applications to be a SAEP eligible program sponsor may be submitted by postsecondary institutions, or non-profit educational organizations.

- A Minnesota public postsecondary institution is an eligible program sponsor.
- A private postsecondary institution is an eligible program sponsor if it:

1. is accredited by an agency recognized by the United State Department of Education for purposes of eligibility to participate in title IV federal financial aid programs;
 2. offers an associate or baccalaureate degree program under sections [136A.61](#); and
 3. is located in Minnesota.
- A nonprofit educational organization is an eligible program sponsor if it:
 1. is incorporated;
 2. has had favorable financial performances with federal or state funds; and
 3. has not had significant audit findings.

Applicants must be able to provide services listed in section **Eligible Programs**, below.

Eligible Programs: What programs (summer camps) can be considered eligible SAEP programs?

Institutions and organizations that meet the SAEP criteria to be an eligible program sponsor as outlined above will submit eligible programs (summer camps) for consideration to be included as an eligible summer academic enrichment program where a student may use a stipend to pay or partially cover the cost of participating. To be considered an eligible program (summer camp), a program must:

1. Provide, as its primary purpose, academic instruction for student enrichment in core curricular areas of:
 - English and language arts,
 - humanities,
 - social studies,
 - science,
 - mathematics,
 - fine arts,
 - performing arts,
 - or world languages and culture;
2. Not be offered for credit to postsecondary students;
3. Not provide remedial instruction;
4. Must have a charge for the student to participate
5. Meet any other program requirements established by the office; and
6. Be approved by the commissioner.

Student Participants: Which students can be eligible for a SAEP program stipend?

Student eligibility to receive a SAEP program stipend, a student shall:

- a. Be a resident of Minnesota;
- b. Attend an eligible office-approved program;
- c. Be in grades 3 through 12, but not have completed high school;

- d. Meet income requirements for free or reduced-price school meals; and
- e. Be 19 years of age or younger.

Financial Need: Need for financial assistance for the SAEP program is based on the federal definition of "education benefit student". OHE will provide an income eligibility chart for determining the student's family meets the income guidelines for the SAEP. Student eligibility, as outlined above, shall be verified by program sponsors of approved academic programs. Documentation that an approved program sponsor verified student eligibility shall be maintained for a minimum of 3 years from the end of the program.

Distribution of Funds - How will students receive stipends?

Approved program sponsors will be responsible for entering student applications into MNAid SAEP program portal once OHE has indicated to all approved programs that the student application part of the portal has opened. Stipends will be awarded to students based on a first-come, first served basis until the program funds have been exhausted.

Fifty percent of the program's initial allocation will be divided among all approved sponsors and reserved for each sponsor. The other fifty percent of program funds will be awarded on a first-come, first served basis after awards have been approved through reserved funding. Funds will be reserved until a deadline specified later. If the sponsor does not have enough completed and eligible student applications by a deadline to be set later to utilize their reserved funding, the remaining funds will be added to the general pool. Approved program sponsors should continue to enter student applications into the SAEP portal so that OHE can monitor demand for student stipends, in case supplemental dollars are added to the program, and in the event that some students cancel or do not show up for eligible summer programs and those stipends can be reallocated to other students from the waitlist. Approved program sponsors shall take attendance and maintain these records for a minimum of 3 years from the end of the program. Certification of attendance by the student in the approved eligible program (summer camp) via the online SAEP program portal will trigger payment. SAEP stipends are sent directly to approved program sponsors on behalf of each student; program sponsors then apply the funds to the student account or billing statement.

A program stipend may only be used at an approved SAEP eligible program (summer camp) offered by an approved eligible program sponsor. Stipends will cover the cost of the eligible program (summer camp) up to a maximum of \$1,000. Students will only be able to receive one stipend per summer. Program sponsors are responsible to notify students if they are eligible for a SAEP stipend and students apply for the stipend directly with the eligible summer program. Program sponsors must use approved award notification language from the Office of Higher Education and retain documentation of the award notice to each recipient. Program sponsors must also track program outcomes for SAEP recipients as this information will be collected in a post-program survey and included on the required legislative report.

Site visits will be conducted between the program start and end dates.

V. Application Availability

Applications can be submitted on the Summer Academic Enrichment Program page on February 9, 2026.

VI. Application Evaluation

Evaluation of applications will be based on the following criteria:

1. *Determination of whether or not the institution or nonprofit educational organization meets the statutory language to be considered an eligible program sponsor. Refer to the Eligibility/Applicants section above.*
2. *Determination of whether or not programs meet the statutory language. Refer to the Eligibility/Eligible Programs section above.*
3. *Determination of whether or not programs align with OHE priorities of a commitment to serving one or more of the following: low-income students, students from greater Minnesota and students from diverse backgrounds. Refer to the demographic data detailed under the Minimum Requirements section above.*

VII. Technical Assistance During Application Solicitation

Two technical assistance sessions will be held during the proposal application process. The two options will be identical in content.

1. **SAEP Technical Assistance Session: Program overview and history of SAEP portal**
Thursday, February 12, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Hosted via Microsoft Teams
2. **SAEP Technical Assistance Session: Program overview and history of SAEP portal**
Tuesday, February 17, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
Hosted via Microsoft Teams

Email Nichole.Andersen@state.mn.us to register for your session choice.

VIII. Questions and Answers during Application Process

Any questions that follow release of this Request for SAEP Applications should be directed to Nichole Andersen, SAEP Program Administrator, at Nichole.Andersen@state.mn.us.

IX. Approval Process

Upon receipt by the Office of Higher Education, applications submitted via the SAEP online portal will be reviewed to determine if all required materials are included and if the applications respond to program

requirements. Incomplete, late, and/or applications not responding to submission guidelines will not be considered.

Qualifying applications will be reviewed and recommendations made by a review committee, which may be composed of representatives of postsecondary institutions, elementary and secondary education, organizations providing precollege outreach services, organizations providing postsecondary retention services, community members, agency staff and others deemed appropriate by the Office of Higher Education.

X. Financial Review Process

All Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must undergo a financial review prior to a grant award. In order to comply with the Office of Grants Management's [Pre-Award Risk Assessment Potential Grantees](#), nonprofit educational organizations will be asked to submit:

- The nonprofit's most recent Form 990 or Form 990-EZ filed with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
- If the nonprofit has not been in existence long enough, or is not required to file Form 990 or Form 990-EZ, then the nonprofit must submit:
 - Proof of the IRS determination that the nonprofit is not required to submit any 990 forms, and
 - the nonprofit's most recent board-reviewed financial statements, and
 - documentation of existing internal controls.
 - If there is no nonprofit board, then the financial statements and internal controls documentation from the nonprofit's leadership or managing group must be provided.
 - If the nonprofit is required to complete an audit under [Minnesota Statutes, section 309.53](#), subdivision 3, the nonprofit must submit its most recent certified financial audit report.

XI. Timeline for Applications, Notifications and Opening of SAEP Student Application

- **February 9, 2026** | Request for Applications released
- **February 12, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.** | Technical Assistance Session: Sponsor Application
- **February 17, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.** | Technical Assistance Session: Sponsor Application
- **February 27, 2026, at 4:30 p.m.** | Deadline for Sponsor Applications to be submitted via online

Early submissions are highly encouraged, especially if you are new to using the SAEP portal. It is not advisable to wait until the day of the deadline to begin submitting your application.

- **March 6, 2026** | Review of Applications
- **March 10, 2026** | Notification to Approved Program Sponsors
- **March 23, 2026** | Technical Assistance Webinar: Demo of Program Approval and Student Application Process
- **March 23, 2026** | Program Applications Opens
- **April 3, 2026** | Program Application Update Deadline

- **April 6, 2026** | Program Applications Approved or Denied
- **April 13, 2026** | Student Applications Open: Exact time will be communicated to approved Program Sponsors
- **April 27, 2026** | Student Applications Due for Awarding
- **April 28, 2026** | Student Awards Begin
- TBD | Rewarding of Reserved Funds