

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What obligates a student to live and work in the state for 3 years following program completion?

The student will sign a Scholarship Award Agreement, which is a legally binding document.

Can a college offer an institutional scholarship if the student receives a ND Career Builders Scholarship?

Yes, there is nothing that prevents a student from receiving other scholarships and grants above and beyond the ND Career Builders Scholarship. However, The ND Career Builders Scholarship, when combined with other aid, may not exceed cost of attendance.

Can the ND Career Builders Scholarship be combined with other scholarships and grants, including federal and state grants or scholarships?

Yes, as long as total program cost of attendance as defined by the institution is not exceeded.

Is the ND Career Builders Scholarship a need-based award? If the student receives a Pell Grant or other state aid along with this award, what is applied first?

No. The ND Career Builders Scholarship is not need-based. The financial aid office will apply the Career Builders scholarship according to federal or state regulations, and institutional policy.

What if something occurs that prevents a student from meeting the obligation of the Scholarship Award Agreement in the timeline identified, such as health issues?

The student should contact the NDUS immediately. Recipients may appeal to the NDUS; however, all appeals will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Appeals may not be granted in all circumstances.

What if a student's tuition, fees, books and supplies are higher in the beginning of the program?

Can the student be awarded uneven increments of the \$17,000 maximum scholarship?

Yes, the scholarship can be disbursed in uneven increments to account for differences in costs between terms. As an example, tools may be required in the beginning of a program, which increases the cost to the student who is just starting his/her program of study.

Can the loan repayment also be disbursed in uneven increments?

No. The maximum loan repayment is \$5,667 per year, or no more than 1/3 of the outstanding principal balance at the time of application.

If a student only receives a portion of the \$17,000 total scholarship award (i.e. \$5,000 total), are they still required to live and work in ND for 3 years?

Yes. The amount of the funds received does not change the 3-year obligation that the student agrees to by signing the Scholarship Award Agreement.

For the scholarship, if the student completes only a portion of the 3-year obligation, are they required to pay back 100% of what was originally received?

No. The REMAINING balance on the obligation will be prorated for repayment. The individual will be required to pay back the remaining balance on the obligation if the terms of the Student Award Agreement are not met.

What is considered “private-sector” funds for purposes of ND Career Builders?

Any funds specifically raised from business or individuals for the specific goal of supporting ND Career Builders.

Can the private-sector match come from federal or state funds that the institution has received?

No.

If an institution has privately donated funds in hand, can they be used as the “match” for the scholarship?

Only if the funds are designated by the donor specifically for the support of ND Career Builders. The intent of the program is to seek new funds from the private sector to promote the program.

Does the donor have to issue funds directly to the NDUS?

No. The donor may work with the institution to donate funds specifically for the purpose of supporting ND Career Builders. The institution would then forward the private-sector funds to NDUS to account for the match of the public funds prior to payment being issued. However, a donor may also issue funds for ND Career Builders directly to the NDUS if they so choose. A donation form must accompany all payments sent to the NDUS.

When are the privately donated funds matched with state funds?

To provide equal access to the program across the state, donations are matched with state funds at the point in time an application is approved and finalized by the NDUS, unless the donation is made for the general good of the program without designation of institution, program or student. Funds with no designation of use should be sent directly to the NDUS by the donor. Please refer to the donation form on the website.

Is our institution or business required to find the private-sector funds for a student or new hire to be eligible for payment under this program?

Currently, yes, as there is not a pool of private-sector funds to tap into for the scholarship or loan repayment. All entities, businesses, institutions, career counselors, and even students and job-seekers, become the recruiters for the matching funds.

Are funds donated for the purpose of ND Career Builders a tax-exempt donation?

Individuals donating to a state program should contact their tax preparer for guidance on tax exemptions.

If an employee receives loan repayment, is that award taxable under IRS rules?

Possibly. Recipients of the loan repayment should contact their tax preparer for guidance on federal IRS tax consequences of receiving an award of this type.

Can a student use the scholarship funds toward a bachelor’s degree?

No. Qualifying programs for the SCHOLARSHIP must be certificates or degrees of 4 semesters or 6 quarters or less in length. The goal is to encourage students to seek skilled workforce careers that provide opportunity to be in the workforce in a shorter timeframe. The program was designed to help the workforce needs of ND by filling high need or emerging occupations.

If a job candidate has a 4-year degree, could they qualify for the loan repayment?

Yes, if the degree relates to the high need and emerging occupations list and provided it was earned from a North Dakota college or university.

If a job candidate's degree is from an out-of-state college, could they qualify for loan repayment?

No. Statute requires that the certificate or degree be earned from a North Dakota college or university.

Can a student defer the requirement to live and work in the state following an associate degree or certificate completion if they are continuing their education?

No, the work/residency requirement cannot be deferred for continued enrollment. The student agrees to live and work in North Dakota in a high demand or emerging occupation within 6 months of completing their degree or certificate. Failure to meet this obligation will result in the scholarship being repaid by the student.

What happens if a student completes a program of study but doesn't "graduate"?

Failure to be issued a certificate or degree in a reasonable time may result in the student not maintaining progress and the student will be required to begin repaying scholarship funds received. The NDUS will begin tracking the 6-month window the student has to complete the program according to the institution's stated "completion date", which is listed on the application.

Is the college responsible for collecting the funds that the student must repay in the event the student does not meet the terms of the Scholarship Award Agreement?

No. The NDUS and the Bank of ND will pursue repayment of the outstanding scholarship award. The institution is responsible for facilitating the scholarship for the student from the time of application through program completion.

Does a default on the Scholarship Award Agreement mean the scholarship turns into a loan?

No, it does not convert to a loan, however; the student does have to return the funds received.

Is there flexibility in the timeframe a student must satisfy the 3-year work/residency requirement of the Scholarship Award Agreement?

Students agree to begin employment in a high need or emerging occupation in ND, and to live in ND, within 6 months of program completion. Further, they agree to fully satisfy their 3-year work/residency obligation to the state within 48 months of program completion.

If an individual receives loan repayment, are they required to live and work in ND for 3 years just like the scholarship?

To qualify for the full benefit of \$17,000, yes. No more than \$5,667 per YEAR may be paid on qualifying student loan debt under the ND Career Builders Loan Repayment program. Therefore, to receive the full benefit of \$17,000, the employee would need to maintain the eligibility requirements for 3 years. The requirement to live and work in ND will be checked prior to each payment that is made to a lender.

If an employee receives loan repayment under this program for only 1 year and then leaves ND or his/her job, are they required to pay anything back?

Under loan repayment, the awards are issued AFTER the individual has established eligibility. Therefore, in this example, no, the recipient would not pay back year 1 because he/she met all the requirements for that payment. However, they would also not be eligible for year 2 or 3.

Can the employee directly be issued the payment on the loan repayment?

No. Payments are issued directly to loan servicers.

If a student received the ND Career Builders Scholarship but still has additional student loans, can they also apply for the ND Career Builders Loan Repayment?

No, currently individuals may qualify for either the scholarship or the loan repayment, not both.

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