



2024-2025 Special Education Staff Stipends Guidance

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Webpage:

<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/Pages/Special-Education-Staff-Stipends.aspx>

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Purpose

The Legislature allocated funding to the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) for providing one-time payments to Oregon’s special education staff in the 2024-25 school year. The purpose of these funds are to recognize the critical services staff provide to students served by Oregon’s public special education programs, as well as to support retention of qualified special education professionals.

The source of this funding is the state of Oregon’s General Fund. [SB 5506](#) (2023) directed ODE to request funding in the interim Legislative Session, eventually allocated through [SB 5701](#) (2024), for \$8.9 million to provide stipends to licensed educators and classified school employees working in special education during the 2024-2025 school year. The definitions of special education staff found in [Section 5 of SB 283](#) (2023) inform ODE’s understanding of the types of qualifying staff under the law. On October 17, 2024, the State Board of Education adopted administrative rules to implement the stipend program ([OAR 581-017-1000](#)).

Summary of steps to access funds:

- Step 1.** Read this Guidance document.
- Step 2.** Submit the [Application Form](#), including the list of qualifying special education staff (names, USID number, and position type) to ODE by **January 13, 2025**.
- Step 3.** Review and sign your grant agreement, which will provide the grant award amount.
- Step 4.** Once approved, submit the request for funds through ODE’s Electronic Grant Management System (EGMS) and issue stipend payments to qualifying staff.

Timeline

- November 15, 2024: Application form opens and is emailed to all eligible entities.
- January 13, 2025: Application form closes at 5PM.
- January 31, 2025: Stipend amount determined and award amounts released.
- February 3 - May 30, 2025: Grant agreements issued and signed, and EGMS claims can be submitted (after grant agreement is signed).
- June 30, 2025: Final date to issue stipends to qualifying staff.
- July 31, 2025: Final date to submit proof of stipend payments and EGMS claims to ODE.

Grant Eligibility

The following entities are eligible to apply for a grant:

1. A school district.
2. An education service district.
3. The Oregon School for the Deaf.

4. A public charter school.
5. An educational program under the Youth Corrections Education Program and Juvenile Detention Education Program.

How to Apply

Application Deadline: 5PM January 13, 2025

Stipend funds will be distributed to eligible entities that employ qualifying special education staff. The eligible entities are then responsible for issuing funds to qualifying individuals. If an eligible entity does not apply for the funding, qualifying staff employed at the entity will not be able to receive the stipend. ODE is not able to issue funds directly to qualifying individuals. **Applications will not be accepted after the deadline on 5PM January 13, 2025.**

1. Application Form

Each eligible entity employing qualifying staff and seeking funding must submit an [Application Form](#). The form must indicate the total number of qualifying staff employed by the entity and include an attached list specifying the names, **USID**, and positions of these qualifying special education staff members.

2. Qualifying Staff List Template

Each entity wishing to receive funds must complete and attach to their application form the [Qualifying Staff List Template](#). This is intended to be a complete and final list of qualifying staff; final grant allocations will be confirmed based on this list. Submit the list as an Excel File, NOT a PDF, attached to the [application form](#).

Template Instructions: Complete the Staff List on the second tab of the template. Each line of the table is for an individual staff participant. Only include staff who qualify to receive a stipend under this grant (refer to the definitions below). For each staff member, enter their first and last name, then select from the drop-down menu their position category as listed in ODE's Staff Position Collection. For definitions of each position, please review the [ODE Staff Position Manual](#).
12/11/24 UPDATE: The list of qualifying staff must also include the ODE assigned Unique Staff Identification number (USID) for each staff member. The template has been updated to include a column for entering the USID of each qualified staff member.

Required Program Reporting

Entities receiving funds are required to complete and submit to ODE a **Final Expenditure Report** that provides documentation from the entity's financial department of payments made to qualifying staff, including names and stipend amounts. The report is **due no later than 5PM on July 31, 2025. If a**

grantee fails to provide the required final reporting, then all funds will be required to be returned to ODE.

Definition of Qualifying Staff

Per [OAR 581-017-1000](#), special education staff must meet the following requirements to qualify for the one-time stipend payment:

1. Are **employed through a direct relationship** by a **school district**.
 - a. “Direct Relationship” means the entity directly employs the staff member.
 - b. “School district” includes:
 - i. A school district.
 - ii. An education service district.
 - iii. The Oregon School for the Deaf.
 - iv. A public charter school.
 - v. An educational program under the Youth Corrections Education Program and Juvenile Detention Education Program.
2. Are **employed as a Classified School Employee or a Licensed Educator**, which are defined as:
 - a. “Classified School Employee” includes all employees of a school district except those for whom a teaching or administrative license is required as a basis for employment in a school district.
 - b. “Licensed Educator” means a teacher, administrator or other school professional who is licensed, registered or certified by the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission.
3. Provide **significant special education support**, meaning that **75 percent or more** of the educator or employee’s student caseload consists of students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
 - a. For staff who do not have an assigned caseload, this requirement can be met if at least 75 percent of their work time is spent supporting students with IEPs or IFSPs, whether that is based on their work time in a classroom or school assignment, performing job duties, or any combination of activities. This includes staff in non-instructional roles, such as bus drivers, school nutrition staff, etc.
 - b. Caseload and work time should be based on the staff member’s assignment on December 2, 2024.

To be eligible for the stipend, qualifying staff must be **employed and working on December 2, 2024 and through the date stipends are issued by their employer in spring 2025**. Staff must have an active, paid position with the entity and must not be on leave for more than half the school year.

Funding Availability and Award Determination

- The total amount of funds provided by [SB 5701](#) is \$8.9 million.
- ODE will determine and publish the stipend amount that will be paid to each qualifying staff member by the participating entities. The stipend amount will be calculated by dividing the available funds by the total number of qualifying staff identified by entities on their application forms. ODE will reserve a contingency fund, not to exceed 5% of the total funds, in order to address any discrepancies in staff counts should districts fail to capture all qualifying staff in their January counts.
- Each participating entity will receive the amount of funds that is equal to the individual stipend amount multiplied by the number of qualifying staff identified on the entity's application form.
- If an entity fails to provide the required final expenditure reporting, then all funds will be required to be returned to ODE.
- If an eligible entity does not apply for the funding, qualifying staff employed at the entity will not be able to receive the stipend. ODE is not able to issue funds directly to qualifying individuals.

Eligible Uses of Funds

If receiving funds, entities must issue one-time stipend payments to qualifying staff by June 30, 2025.

- If a staff member that qualified in December is no longer employed and working at the district on the date stipends are issued, those funds may not be used for any other purpose. Any remaining funds must be returned to the state.
- This payment must be in addition to the qualifying staff's salary or hourly wage, and must be in the amount published by ODE. Entities may not issue stipends to staff with these funds that are less than or in excess of the per person amount identified by ODE.
- These stipend funds are to supplement and not supplant any other funding sources, so they may not be used in place of nor to reimburse the district for other, local payments made to staff by the district.
- Funds may not be used to pay health or other benefits, including payroll taxes, paid by the employing entity, nor may they be used to pay for indirect or administrative costs incurred by the district in issuing the stipend payments.

Funding Disbursement

In order to receive funds, entities are required to execute a grant agreement with ODE. Once the grant agreement is signed and executed, recipients must **submit a request for release of funds** through ODE's Electronic Grant Management System (EGMS). All funds will be distributed through EGMS. **If a grantee fails to provide the required final expenditure reporting, then all funds will be required to be returned to ODE.**