



2024 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Application Instructions

Program administered by

Nebraska Department of Education

Program sponsored by

Nebraska State Board of Education

BlueCross BlueShield of Nebraska

Nebraska Association of School Boards

Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA)

Nebraska Council of School Administrators

University of Nebraska

Nebraska State Education Association

Nebraska Corn Board

Dillard's Gateway Mall Lincoln

Timeline

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| March 2024 | Nomination forms and Application packets available. Application includes: Candidate information, professional memberships, professional preparation and experience, authorizations, resume, letters of recommendation, and essay questions and a written lesson plan. |
| August 1, 2024 | Deadline for receipt of Application Submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. (Central Daylight Time). Application packets that are incomplete or do not comply with the format will be disqualified. |
| August 2024 | Application packets scored and finalists selected. |
| Late August 2024 | Finalists interviewed in Lincoln, Nebraska. |
| September 2024 | Announcement of Finalists. |
| September 2024 | 2025 Nebraska Teacher of the Year Announced. Press release of 2025 finalists and Nebraska Teacher of the Year. |
| December 2024 | Awards Recognition Event. Nebraska Teacher of the Year state obligations begin December 2025. |

Eligibility Criteria

The **Nebraska Awards of Excellence Program**, which features selection of the **Nebraska Teacher of the Year**, serves to recognize the contributions of the classroom teacher. The Nebraska Teacher of the Year candidate has the respect and admiration of their colleagues and:

- Is an expert in their field who advances growth for students of all backgrounds and abilities;
- Builds collaborative relationships with colleagues, students, and families to create a school culture of equity and success;
- Deliberately connects the classroom to community to impact student growth and learning;
- As a lifelong learner and teacher leader, they utilize innovation to create learning experiences within and beyond the classroom; and
- Expresses themselves in an engaging and clear way, conveying the lived classroom experience to a variety of audiences.

Teachers who have been nominated in prior years but did not achieve at least an Award of Excellence ranking may be nominated.

Teachers who have received recognition as Nebraska Teacher of the Year or who have been recognized as an Award of Excellence Recipient in the previous three years are not eligible for nomination.

Application Information

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972); or handicap (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) in educational programs of activities receiving federal assistance. Employees, students, and the general public are hereby notified that the Nebraska Department of Education does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities or in employment policies.

Selection and Interview Process

- The **Nebraska Application Review Panel** examines all applications submitted and selects **up to five** finalists (**Award of Excellence Teachers**).
- Award of Excellence recipients will be in the running for selection of 2025 Nebraska Teacher of the Year.
- Award of Excellence recipients will be interviewed to determine the 2025 **Nebraska Teacher of the Year** and will be eligible for consideration as the National Teacher of the Year.
- Only completed applications will be considered. The Nebraska Teacher of the Year will serve as a representative at National Teacher of the Year events in 2025.

Background Information

The National Teacher of the Year Program originated in 1952 and continues to recognize teachers on the local, state, and national levels. The Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program has been in place since 1972 and affords opportunity to honor dedicated teachers for excellence in the classroom. The Nebraska Teacher of the Year program recognizes outstanding Nebraska certified teachers who plan to continue in an active teacher status in any state-approved or accredited school pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Supervisory and administrative responsibilities are secondary considerations. The National Teacher of the Year Program is a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers.

In order to encourage innovative educational programs to benefit students and local school districts, the Nebraska State Board of Education awards a \$1,000 grant to each of the finalists so each honored teacher can pursue an educational project of special interest. Since 1988, teachers and their students have acquired (or produced) special curriculum materials, purchased classroom technological equipment, acquired new skills through attendance at seminars, studied arts and humanities, sponsored student field trips, and purchased unique items not otherwise budgeted for (such as art work for display and a school sign for placement outside a new building).

The Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program has received financial support from BlueCross BlueShield of Nebraska, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, the Nebraska State Education Association, the Nebraska Association of School Boards, and Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA). These sponsors and other friends of the Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program provided stipends to the Awards of Excellence recipients and to the Nebraska Teacher of the Year. The Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program has also received support from the University of Nebraska, SMART Technologies, Dillard's Gateway Mall Lincoln, and the Nebraska Corn Board.

Application Checklist

We recommend having all materials ready (resume, references, and written lesson plan) before starting the online application. You will be able to return to an incomplete application, but you will not be able to proceed with the application until each section is completed.

Before submitting the application please be sure the application is complete, the required information is provided, and the format guidelines were followed. The Application will not be returned to the nominee.

The Nominee signed the Application and the Nominee Authorization Form.

Five Essay Questions (**each a maximum of 750 words**) are completed.

Résumé (**maximum of two pages**) is attached to the Application.

Letters of Recommendation (**maximum of one page each**) are attached to the Application.

A Written Classroom Lesson is attached to the Application.

The applicant's Superintendent and Principal will be contacted and must authorize the Nominee's Application by completing the Superintendent and Principal Authorization Forms. These will be sent once a completed application is received.

Questions/Application Requests

Questions should be directed to David Jespersen at (402) 471-4537 or david.jespersen@nebraska.gov.