



# Program Information Guide

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National Board Certification State and Local  
Incentive Program

July 1, 2025- June 30, 2026

NB Cycle 39

Division of Educator Effectiveness

May 2025

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## Program Description

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The *Blueprint for Maryland's Future* aims to elevate the teaching profession to a profession with status, compensation, and career advancement comparable to other fields. The Maryland National Board Certification State and Local Incentive Program provides Maryland public school teachers, instructional specialists, and administrators pursuing National Board Certification (NBC) funding to cover the cost associated with obtaining such credentials. Working with [Local Education Agency \(LEA\) National Board Coordinators](#) who administer the program at the local level, candidates interested in pursuing certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards have the opportunity to do so. Through this program, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is supporting candidates in becoming reflective, accomplished educators thus ensuring Maryland students receive excellent and equitable instruction.

The *Blueprint for Maryland's Future* requires that each candidate who pursues NBC receives an amount equal to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) fees associated with the initial completion and maintenance of NBC from the State. The legislation requires each LEA to reimburse the State one-third of the cost for each candidate sponsored through this program.

### NAME OF PROGRAM

Maryland National Board Certification State and Local Incentive Program

### AUTHORIZATION

Authorized through [Maryland Education Article §6-1012](#) and [COMAR 13A.07.08](#)

### PURPOSE

To cover the fees associated with the initial completion and maintenance of National Board Certification for Maryland public school teachers, instructional specialists, and administrators.

### DISSEMINATION

This Program Information Guide was released on June 1, 2025.

### PROGRAM PERIOD

July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

### FUNDING AMOUNT AVAILABLE

Annual funding amount available is contingent upon Maryland General Assembly appropriations.

### AVERAGE AWARD AMOUNT

Up to \$1,900 for each initial candidate (\$475 per component - four components total).

\$495 for each maintenance of certification (MOC) candidate.

Up to \$1,925 for each retake candidate (one retake per component – \$475-\$500 per component).

Retakes will only be funded if appropriation remains after the funding of initial and MOC candidates.

## SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

LEAs must submit the National Board Incentive Program documentation by 11:59 p.m. on **October 3, 2025**, via email to [melissa.chandler@maryland.gov](mailto:melissa.chandler@maryland.gov).

## STATE RESPONSIBILITIES

MSDE is responsible for providing required information, data, documentation, and technical assistance to facilitate the LEA's management of the program and will provide such additional assistance when requested. MSDE will pay the total cost of the fees to NBPTS and invoice the LEA for one-third of the cost.

## PROGRAM CONTACT

Melissa Chandler  
NBC Coordinator  
(410) 767 - 5654  
[melissa.chandler@maryland.gov](mailto:melissa.chandler@maryland.gov)

## Eligibility

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This program is designed for eligible public-school teachers, instructional specialists, and administrators to receive funding to achieve National Board Certification.

## LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY ELIGIBILITY

Maryland LEAs are required by [Md. Ed. Article 6-1012](#) to pay to the State one-third of the cost associated with NBC for each candidate in their LEA participating in the National Board Certification State and Local Incentive Program.

## CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY

The candidate must meet the following criteria to be eligible to participate in the National Board Certification State and Local Incentive Program:

- Fulfill the definition of “teacher” or “nonclassroom teacher” as stated in [MD. Ed. Article 6-1001](#);
- Meet the requirements established by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which may be found in the [Guide to National Board Certification](#).
  - Hold a bachelor's degree, unless pursuing a Career and Technical Education certificate;
  - Completed three years of successful teaching experience in one or more early childhood, elementary, middle, or secondary schools at the time of application; and
- Hold a professional Maryland certificate or license at the time of application and maintain a professional Maryland certificate or license throughout their candidacy.

For each initial candidate, the LEA must submit the program Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This form may be submitted electronically.

For each Maintenance of Certification (MOC) and retake candidate, the LEA must submit to MSDE the corresponding MOU. MOUs may be submitted electronically.

**NOTE:** In June 2022, the National Board announced that candidates no longer need to have 3 years of teaching experience prior to enrollment in the candidacy if they will have it upon completion. MSDE requires 3 years of experience at the time of enrollment in the 2025-2026 cycle.

## Program Requirements

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### LEA IDENTIFICATION OF CANDIDATES

In the identification of candidates for this program, LEAs are required to:

- Establish and publish written criteria for the identification of candidates to participate, including the following:
  - Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution. *Note candidates pursuing the Career and Technical Education National Board certificate may not be required to hold a bachelor degree;*
  - Three years of successful teaching at one or more early childhood, elementary, middle, or secondary schools;
  - A valid Maryland professional teaching certificate or license;
  - Voluntary participation in the NBPTS certification process; and
  - Compliance with the deadlines specified by the NBPTS and the Maryland State Department of Education.
- Collect proof of eligibility for each candidate participating in the program, including the following:
  - Verification that each candidate meets the definition of “teacher” or “nonclassroom teacher” as defined by Maryland Education Article [§6-1001](#); and
  - [NBPTS Eligibility Verification Form](#) for each candidate
    - If the LEA's human resources department has already verified all of the information required in the forms, the candidate may submit the combined form found on page 6, even if the three years of successful teaching experience was not completed in the same school district
    - Proof of eligibility will be retained by the LEA through the duration of the applicant's candidacy in the event that the candidate's documents are audited by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
- Submit the LEA Candidate Package to MSDE. This packet includes:
  - Candidate Spreadsheet, including the following for each participant:
    - Full name
    - National Board Candidate ID
    - State Assigned Teacher ID (SATID)
    - NBC components the candidate intends on completing during the 2025-2026 submission window. Retake components must be included.
    - Amount requested
    - School
    - Verification of MOU
    - Verification of Eligibility
  - A copy of the signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for each candidate.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

The candidate must submit the following documentation to their LEA to be considered for funding:

- A signed [NBPTS Eligibility Verification Form](#);
- A signed Memorandum of Understanding (the MOU will be customized depending on whether the candidate is pursuing initial certification, maintaining their certification, or retaking a component(s)); and
- Any additional documentation required by the LEA.

Candidates participating in the program must attempt all four components of National Board candidacy within the first three years of their candidacy. Candidates who do not attempt all four components of the National Board Certification process within three years will be removed from their candidacy by the National Board and must reimburse the State the full amount of funding received.

Candidates who attempt all four components within three years and do not achieve National Board certification are NOT subject to repayment.

### WITHDRAWALS

If a candidate withdraws from the Fee Incentive Program, they shall complete the [MSDE NBC Fee Incentive Withdrawal Form](#). In addition, they must also complete the National Board's withdrawal process. MSDE will periodically share the withdrawal responses with the LEAs. The LEAs will update their candidate spreadsheet to note withdrawals for candidates with active components.

### ATTACHMENTS

The following attachments are required as part of the National Board Incentive Program Application:

A completed Candidate Spreadsheet is required.

Signed candidate Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs). Scanned copies of the MOUs are acceptable. LEAs can opt to use the Superintendent signature cover sheet with the names of the candidates in lieu of the Superintendent's signature on each MOU.

## Review Process

MSDE will review and verify all the required documentation submitted by the LEA on behalf of each candidate listed on the candidate spreadsheet. If documentation is missing, MSDE will notify the LEA coordinator. Missing documents must be submitted prior to **October 24, 2025**.

### AWARD NOTIFICATION

By October 27, 2025, LEAs will receive a list of eligible initial, MOC, and retake candidates approved for funding. The LEA is responsible for communicating directly with all candidates who are approved for funding by **November 14, 2025**, to ensure that each candidate completes the necessary steps in the National Board candidate portal to select components and apply third party payer funds by the due dates established by the MSDE and National Board.



## Reporting Requirements

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### FOR THE LEA

LEAs must comply with the following reporting requirements, collected no later than **January 5, 2026**:

An updated candidate spreadsheet including:

- Names of candidates withdrawing from the National Board process; and
- The components each candidate will submit during the funding cycle.

### FOR THE CANDIDATE

Candidates must comply with the following reporting requirements:

Written withdrawal notification to MSDE and local coordinator, if applicable; and  
Any other requirement established by the LEA.

## Non-Discrimination Statement

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The Maryland State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry/national origin, color, disability, gender identity/expression, marital status, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. For inquiries related to Department policy, please contact:

Equity Assurance and Compliance Office  
Office of the Deputy State Superintendent for Operations  
Maryland State Department of Education  
200 W. Baltimore Street - 2nd Floor Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2595 410-767-0123 - voice  
410-767-0431 - fax  
410-333-6442 - TTY/TDD

## Customer Service Support Sessions

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MSDE will hold customer service support sessions for LEAs. During these sessions, MSDE personnel will provide an overview of the National Board Certification State and Local Incentive Program, submission requirements, and an opportunity to address LEAs questions. Customer service sessions will be held on:

- May 20, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- September 11, 2025, from 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- December 2, 2025, from 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Additionally, MSDE staff will be available for office hours throughout the grant application period. To schedule time, please contact Melissa Chandler at [melissa.chandler@maryland.gov](mailto:melissa.chandler@maryland.gov).

## Questions

If you have questions about the application or the process, please contact the MSDE NBC Coordinator:

Melissa Chandler  
NBC Coordinator  
(410) 767 – 5654  
[melissa.chandler@maryland.gov](mailto:melissa.chandler@maryland.gov)

## Program Timeline

Program information, including updates, can be found on the [National Board Incentive Program webpage](#).

Date	Program Milestone
May 20, 2025	The Program Information Guide is released.
May 20 - October 3, 2025	LEA publishes written criteria for the identification of candidates to participate, receives applications from candidates, and verifies the eligibility of candidates.
May 20, 2025	Customer service support sessions provided virtually for LEA NBC liaisons.
September 11, 2025 December 2, 2025	Customer service support sessions provided virtually for LEA NBC liaisons.
Due <b>October 3, 2025</b>	The LEA Candidate Package, including all required supporting documentation, is due to the MSDE by 11:59pm.
October 27, 2025	MSDE sends confirmation of candidacy for initial, MOC, and retake candidates to LEA program liaisons via email. Continuing candidates do not receive this confirmation each year.
No later than November 14, 2025	LEA communicates confirmation of candidacy to initial, MOC, and retake candidates via email notifying them of their eligibility. LEA sends an email to continuing candidates reminding them of their continued participation.
No later than December 30, 2025	Candidates login or register on <a href="https://nbpts.com">NBPTS.com</a> . No late submissions will be accepted.

Due <b>January 6, 2026</b>	LEA submits final candidate spreadsheets.
January 7, 2026	MSDE runs the registration report through the National Board database. Candidates <i>must</i> be on the report to receive payment.
February 6, 2026	MSDE submits payment for all eligible candidates who have been submitted by the LEA <u>and</u> have registered and selected components with NBPTS.
No later than February 28, 2026	Candidates apply third party payer funds to pay for the selected Components/MOC in their NB accounts.
No later than April 30, 2026	MSDE invoices LEAs their one-third share for each initial, continuing, renewal, and retake candidate.
No later than June 1, 2026	LEAs submit payment to the MSDE for the above-mentioned invoice.