

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Contact:**

Deputy Secretary Carmen Lopez-Wilson

carmen.lopezwilson@state.nm.us

505-795-2302

July 10, 2019

# **Aspiring N.M. Teachers Now Eligible for More Than \$10M in New Scholarship Funds**

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Higher Education Department on Wednesday announced it is awarding millions in scholarship funds to New Mexico colleges and universities for teacher education scholarships, providing up to \$3,000 per semester toward each eligible applicant's tuition, fees, books, course supplies and other costs beginning with the fall 2019 semester.

House Bill 275, which has been referred to commonly as the Teacher Preparation Affordability Act and was signed into law by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham this year, provides up to \$10 million for students studying education and intending to become teachers. Bilingual and Native aspiring educators are given preference by the program.

The Grow Your Own Teachers Act, or House Bill 20, also signed into law this year, provides more than \$500,000 for educational assistants to complete programs of study and become licensed teachers. Scholarship recipients under this program will also receive up to \$3,000 per semester as well as paid time off from their schools to complete degree and licensure requirements.

New Mexico colleges and universities and the Higher Education Department will post points of contacts, timelines for the application process and the criteria for applicants on their websites by the end of the week. Grow Your Own Teachers applicants can visit this website: <https://hed.state.nm.us/financial-aid/scholarships/grow-your-own-teachers>

“We need to be reaching out to aspiring educators, and we need to be facilitating their study and increasing access to this essential field,” Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham. “When we build the next generation of New Mexico educators, we will have done a tremendous service for the next generation of New Mexico students.”

“Now is the time for students to take advantage of these resources to further their dreams of becoming teachers,” said Secretary of Higher Education Kate O’Neill. “We need teachers in all areas of the state and at all grade levels. We need Hispanic, Native, first-generation, returning, veterans, bilingual and alternative licensure applicants for these scholarships.

There's a fast track to earning a teaching license for those with bachelor's degrees or higher. We need to help New Mexicans get to work on the important business of educating our children."

"We will leverage the new scholarship programs to recruit, prepare and support the next generation of teachers," said Deputy Higher Education Secretary Carmen Lopez-Wilson. "These scholarships will also help address the widespread teacher shortage in New Mexico."

"The Teacher Preparation Affordability Scholarship program prioritizes awards to English-language learners, minority students, and those who want to teach in high-need teaching positions," Lopez-Wilson added, emphasizing the agency's appreciation for how university regents, administration and educator preparation programs are proactively using the scholarship opportunities to improve access and affordability to aspiring teachers.

###