Dear Applicant,

Region 4 Lakes Country Service Cooperative and your special education directors are thrilled to inform you that you may be eligible for up to $20,000 of tuition assistance* through the Region 4 Lakes Country Service Cooperative SPED Pathway Grant starting with the Summer 2026 term.

The Region 4 LCSC Pathway Grant aims to increase the number of Tier 3 licensed special education teachers by funding the professional development of Tier 1 and Tier 2 educators over a multi-year period. This initiative directly addresses the critical shortage of qualified special education teachers in our region, working towards providing inclusive and effective education for students with diverse learning needs.

This funding opportunity is available for at least one more year, until you achieve your Tier 3 license, or until you've spent the total individual award allocation of $20,000, OR grant funding runs out, whichever comes first.
Allocations are based on the number of applicants who apply, up to **26 individuals region-wide for the duration of this grant cycle (~1 year remaining). A waiting list will be implemented once 26 applicants are accepted. **There are currently 4 (FOUR) open spots available for 26-27***

Important Deadlines

For those applying who are **currently enrolled in a program or will be starting Summer 2026:**

- Summer 2026 Application Deadline: April 10, 2026
- Summer 2026 Notification of Acceptance: April 24, 2026

For those applying who are **starting their program Fall 2026:**

- Fall 2026 Application Deadline: May 29, 2026
- Fall 2026 Notification of Acceptance: June 12, 2026

Application Link-Opens MARCH 20, 2026

Application for SPED Pathway Grant Region 4 LCSC This application is for any applicant who will be taking courses Summer 2026 and/or Fall 2026 (which can include Spring 2027 and beyond). A letter of acceptance from your university will be required for full acceptance for SPED Pathway grant funds. *This link will not work until March 20th, to allow time for all Region 4 schools to notify potential applicants.*

To Qualify:

You must be employed as a licensed teacher in your school district pursuing a special education teaching license (either an initial teaching license or adding a special education teaching license). **Priority for the 2026-27 school year will be given to Tier 1 and Tier 2 teachers enrolled in a PELSB Approved special education teacher prep program in Minnesota** but others (such as Tier 3 and Tier 4 teachers on Out of Field Permissions and paraprofessionals) are also welcomed to apply. **However, due to the grant priorities of ensuring Tier 1 and Tier 2 teachers are fully licensed, applicants who are on an OFP or are not currently licensed (such as a paraprofessional) will be immediately placed on a waiting list for 2026-2027.** Once your application has been accepted and you are awarded, you will need to follow the payment process outlined below for each term and make each deadline to remain eligible. Please be aware this grant is for teaching licenses, not related services licenses such as School Psychologists, Speech/Language Pathologists, School Social Workers, etc.

Eligible Districts:

Candidates must be employed in any of the Region 4 member districts. If you have received this from your special education director or principal (or other district administrator), you are already employed by a Region 4 member district.

Commitment:

The commitment required by you is to ensure you follow all processes outlined below by the stated deadlines. Failure to follow/meet deadlines will result in your spot being given away to a waitlist applicant and you will need to reapply for future consideration, if available. Region 4 Lakes Country Service Cooperative's SPED Pathway grant does not require you remain employed by your current school district after obtaining your license, but we do ask that you remain a teacher in a Minnesota school district for at least 5 years once you obtain your Tier 3 special education license.

How is your bill paid?

Region 4 Lakes Country Service Cooperative - Payment Process:

1. **Create a third-party payor account in your university account and send the login information to Angela Doll at adoll@lcsc.org once your account reflects your bill for the semester/term.** Giving access early will likely cause you to have to redo the process once your semester/term bill is ready to be viewed.
2. Access to your account is required to download and print your invoice for processing. Keep an open line of communication with Angela Doll to ensure access is granted at the time of billing. Because each university is unique, it is up to you to keep Angela informed. You are responsible for monitoring your billing account at your university.
3. An "Intent To Pay notice" will be sent to your University's business office informing them of the Grant payment. Your university will then bill LCSC after their withdrawal deadline for the remainder of your balance for the term (after all other grants and scholarships are applied). LCSC will then send a check to your university to pay your bill. According to the statute, all bills MUST be paid directly to the school and not the applicant directly.

To Remain Eligible for Grant Funding Each Subsequent Semester:

1. Send Angela, adoll@lcsc.org, a copy of your transcript (does not need to be official) from your completed semester.
2. Send Angela, adoll@lcsc.org a copy (PDF preferred) of your registered classes and bill estimate for the current/upcoming semester you wish to receive grant funding for.
3. Notify Angela Doll, adoll@lcsc.org, when your tuition bill is ready and send her the link to review your account to be paid as a third–party payor.
4. Complete any data collection forms sent from Angela after your semester/term is completed.
5. Follow all deadlines communicated for each above item.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, feel free to contact Angela Doll at adoll@lcsc.org.

We encourage you to take advantage of this fantastic opportunity to further your education and contribute to the special education community. Thank you for your dedication!

Region 4 Lakes Country Service Cooperative SPED Pathway Grant, Ed Services Dept, LCSC