



**Illinois NB First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy
Application Informational
Document Spring 2025 Version
Upcoming Fiscal Year Due Dates-
TBD**

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Congratulations on making the decision to seek National Board Certification! The staff at National Board Resource Center is excited that you are engaging in this professional learning opportunity. This document has been created to assist in understanding the process to becoming a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) and expectations of candidacy.

Understanding the National Board First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy Application and Process

Eligible Illinois teachers and counselors will be awarded \$1900.00 by the state of Illinois through the National Board Resource Center (NBRC)/Illinois State University (ISU) with the intent that it is used for the completion and submission of the four components that make up the whole National Board Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS henceforth) process. The fee for each component is \$475.00 for a total value of \$1,900. National Board candidates are expected to pay the annual \$75.00 non-refundable NBPTS registration fee.

Eligibility criteria includes:

- Currently employed as a **full-time** teacher or counselor (the subsidy application is not intended for administrators, part-time or retired teachers); Positions such as Curriculum Specialists, Reading Interventionist, Instructional Coaches, etc. are eligible as long as the educator position is based on the district's teacher contract.
- Teach in an Illinois public school;
- Hold a valid Illinois Professional Educator License (PEL);
- Hold a valid Illinois Educator Identification License Number (IEIN); and
- Be a first-time applicant who has not used the Illinois NB First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy in past years (Candidates who applied for the state subsidy during a previous year and withdrew within the required timeline may apply for the 2025-2026 subsidy).

Illinois NB candidates are given a three-year window to complete the National Board Certification process. Illinois Candidates will complete two components during the 2025-2026 cycle (*Component 1: Content Knowledge and Component 3: Teaching Practice and Classroom Environment*). This pertains to first year and second year candidates. First and second year candidates are required to complete and **SUBMIT** for scoring a minimum of one (1) component by the NBPTS submission date of **May 2026** to remain eligible for funding.

Applying for the Illinois National Board First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy

Before you begin the online application for the Illinois NB First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy, it is important that you:

1. Read the resource documents linked under the *Important Dates* section on the NBRC homepage.
2. Complete the *Practice Application* to gain access to informational links and directions which are not available in the online Illinois NB First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy application.
3. Complete the Illinois NB First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy application online at the NBRC website beginning on March 15th, 2025 - April 30th, 2025-Midnight. for the Spring 2025 Application Window. *It is best to use Mozilla, Firefox, Chrome or Safari.*
4. Candidates will be added to the Eligible List that is located on the NBRC website if there are no issues with their application. Allow 5-7 business days for this to happen. If there is an issue with eligibility, you will be emailed and given an opportunity to address if applicable.
5. Final approval will be based on the candidate 1) completing the online Illinois NB First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy application by the May 10th midnight deadline, 2) being on the Eligible List, and 3) completing the NBPTS registration and paying of the non-refundable \$75.00 NBPTS registration fee by October 18th.

Key Points about the Online Application:

- The red asterisks denote questions that must be answered to proceed.
- This is an application in a survey format.
- You cannot save the application so you must complete it in its entirety during one sitting.
- Once you are done and submit the application, you will not be able to return to the application.
- You will be emailed a copy of your completed application as your receipt, but you may also print it as a backup.

Creating a NBPTS Account

*Refer to the [Guide to National Board Certification](#) for information on registering and creating an account starting on page 27.

- **2025-2026 First-Time Candidates**: After you apply for the state subsidy and have been found eligible, you will need to create an account and register with NBPTS before beginning the National Board process. This includes paying the yearly, non-refundable \$75 NBPTS registration fee. This entire registration must be completed by October 18th, 2023, at midnight and is the final step in being approved for the Illinois NB First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy.
- **All Returning (2023-2024/ 2024-2025 Candidates MUST** first pay the yearly, non-refundable \$75 NBPTS registration fee and release their information to the ‘THIRD PARTY PAYER’ before proceeding to register for additional components. This entire registration must be completed by October 18, 2025 at midnight.

Important to know when registering with NBPTS:

- If you are approved to receive the Illinois NB First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy through the NBRC, Illinois will make the payment for the component/s you will be working on during the school year before the NBPTS final payment deadline of **February 2026**.
- Make sure that you understand the [NB CERTIFICATE](#) you select and that it is the correct certificate. Verify the age of the students before making the final selection. There may be a \$75 fee to switch your certificate at a later date. Selecting the incorrect certificate and missing the February 2026, deadline to switch your certificate may jeopardize your National Board candidacy.
- You **MUST** release your information to a ‘**Third Party Payer**’ each time you pay the yearly, nonrefundable \$75 NBPTS registration fee. Illinois is the ‘Third Party Payer’ and a payment can only be made to your account IF you release your information.
- It is **your** responsibility to **MONITOR** your account regularly.

Candidate Steps for Purchasing Components with Third-Party Payer Funding

1. Create an account or log into your [National Board account](#).
 2. Pay \$75 registration fee.
 3. After paying the registration fee, you will need to complete the Candidate Registration Agreement located on the Certification Dashboard of your National Board account. Your registration is not complete until you do this.
 4. For Initial Candidates: If you don't already have a certificate area selected, click "Browse" under Certifications in the left-hand navigation menu. Once you've located the certification area you'd like to pursue, click "Save to my home" (this will bring you back to the homepage). Skip this step if you've already selected your certification area. You can find additional details on the available certificate areas in Choosing the Right Certificate.
 5. Under the "Your Component Selections" section, click the name of the component you would like to purchase. Note: Candidates must complete (test/submit) components in the cycle in which they are purchased. Only purchase the components you plan to complete this cycle.
 6. If a portfolio component is selected, you will need to sign an attestation form.
 7. Verify your Contact Information Verification details and select if you need testing accommodations.
 8. Do not pay for components! Once you have completed these steps, the NBRC will send funding to NBPTS on your behalf and notify you of your next steps.
- **Contact NBPTS at 1.800.22TEACH with any questions.** The NBRC does not have access to candidate accounts and will not be able to assist with component purchase issues.

National Board Component Registration - Understanding the four statuses.

Incomplete: You began the registration process but did not complete all the necessary fields. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) cannot make a payment.

Submitted: NBRC/ISBE will make the payment for the components before the NBPTS payment deadline *provided* you have completed all steps in the NBPTS registration process as well as the NBRC application process.

Purchased: You have successfully registered for the component/s and the component/s have been paid for. ISBE made the payment by the NBPTS payment deadline.

Withdrawn: You selected the component and ISBE paid for the component, then you withdrew. You must withdraw before the NBRC deadline, February 2026, to avoid repayment of the Illinois NB First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy. OR, you selected the component and ISBE has not yet paid for the component. You must still withdraw before the NBRC deadline, February 2026 to prevent ISBE from making the payment and to avoid repayment of the Illinois NB First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy.

Paid Status: Your components have been selected and paid by ISBE by the February 2026, deadline.

Unpaid Status: Your components have been selected, but payment has not yet been applied to your components.

Understanding Withdrawals, Refunds, and How to Avoid Penalties

The NBPTS offers two options for managing your candidacy, component withdrawal (sometimes referred to as a “pause”) and registration withdrawal. These options are:

Component Withdrawal

You are expected to complete all components for which you register during the assessment cycle in which the component is purchased. If you are unable to complete a component, you can withdraw the component by contacting NBPTS at 1.800.22TEACH prior to the NBRC February 2026, withdrawal deadline.

The State of IL will only pay for a component once. If you do not submit work for a paid component OR withdraw by the NBRC February 2026, withdrawal deadline **you will be responsible to pay for the component the next time you attempt to complete the component.**

Registration Withdrawal

If circumstances require you to end your candidacy, you can withdraw your entire registration. By withdrawing your entire registration, you are cancelling your candidacy and will be required to apply anew if you later wish to continue the pursuit of certification.

If you are a first-time candidate and have not completed a component(s): (i.e. you have not submitted a component or tested at the assessment center), you can withdraw your registration by contacting NBPTS at 1.800.22TEACH prior to the withdrawal deadline. **Note:** You must withdraw by the NBRC February 2026 withdrawal deadline to ensure any unused funds are returned to the State and to avoid any penalties.

If you are a returning candidate: If you have completed one or more components in a previous cycle (i.e., you submitted a component or tested at the assessment center), you can withdraw your registration by contacting NBPTS at 1.800.22TEACH. You must withdraw by the NBPTS February 2026, withdrawal deadline to ensure any unused funds are returned to the State and to avoid any penalties.

Withdrawing by the NBRC February 2026 withdrawal deadline will direct any unused Illinois NB First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy funds back to Illinois to be used by other educators. You will not be reimbursed for the non-refundable and nontransferable \$75 NBPTS registration fee or any service fees. If you do not submit a component by the NBPTS Submission Date of **May 2026**, and you did NOT withdraw by the NBRC February 2026, withdrawal deadline, you may be required to repay Illinois the amount of the Illinois NB First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy that was paid towards your NBPTS Account but NOT used as intended. For example: Illinois, in good faith, “**PURCHASES**” the two components you are working on this school year and makes the \$950 payment to NBPTS for these two components with the agreement that you are completing and submitting the two components for scoring, per the agreement included in the Illinois NB First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy application. You do not submit either component, and therefore, may be required to repay the \$950 to Illinois. You will also be responsible for contacting NBPTS and requesting that all ‘unused’ funds be returned to Illinois.

Candidate Support

A Candidate Support Registration message will be emailed to all candidates approved for the subsidy. Candidates teaching in Chicago have two support options. The first is attending support sessions provided by the CTU Quest Center. Contact Lynn Cherkasky-Davis at lynncherkasky-davis@ctuf.org for more information. The second option for candidates teaching in Chicago is to take part in any of the virtual candidate support programs offered through the Illinois

National Board Resource Center (NBRC). This virtual support option that will only include CPS educators. *These two options are not intended to be combined.*

Face to-Face candidate cohorts (outside of Chicago) will be located strategically throughout the state for face-to-face meetings. This support is anticipated to begin in September 2025 and ends in May 2026 and is provided through twelve, two-hour sessions. Face-to-face cohorts may be based in a National Board Professional Development School OR in collaboration with a hosting Regional Office of Education.

Online candidate support is being offered through the NBRC. This system uses the ZOOM platform and is in real-time with a NBCT facilitator. This support is anticipated to begin in September 2025 and ends in May 2026 and is provided through twelve, two-hour sessions and include educators from around the state of Illinois.

The National Board facilitators are paid for the support they provide to candidates. Just like teaching a class, they must prepare ahead of time, facilitate the cohort, and reply to follow-up questions and discussions. **ONLY** the candidates who plan to attend the sessions should register for these services. Those who are not in compliance with regular attendance will be dropped from the cohort.

Important Dates and Deadlines

WHAT TO DO as found in the <i>Guide to National Board Certification</i> TBA((TBA)	NBPTS DATES as found in the <i>Guide to National Board Certification</i>	What does this mean for <u>Illinois</u> Candidates?
NBPTS Registration and \$75 payment	After deemed eligible for the state of Illinois subsidy to October TBD 2025 (midnight -for Illinois candidates)	ALL Illinois candidates are expected to create an account and register with NBPTS. This includes paying the yearly, non-refundable \$75 registration fee to NBPTS by October 2025 at midnight.

NBPTS Payment Deadline for components.	February 2026	Illinois will make all component payments to your account before the February 16, 2024 payment deadline.
Change of Certificate and/or Specialty Area	February 2026	Regularly monitor your account and make sure your certificate is correct. IF it is not correct, this is the final date to make changes to your certificate.
Change of Component Selection	February 2026	If you selected the incorrect component, this is the final date to make changes or additions.
ePortfolio Submission Window	April – May 2026	Final date to submit your component/s to NBPTS for scoring is TBD by NBPTS. Please check with NBPTS for the exact date in April/early May 2026.
Withdrawal Deadline	February 2026	NBRC final date to withdraw and have the funds returned to Illinois. Contact NBPTS to withdraw.
Component 1: Content Knowledge Testing Window	March – June 2026	Component 1: Content Knowledge Testing Window
Scores Released for Candidates who Submitted All Four Components/MOC as of May 2025	On or before December 31, 2025	You will receive the scores for each component on or before December 31, 2025.

Contact Information

The National Board Resource Center (NBRC) is located at Illinois State University (ISU) in Normal, IL, and manages the National Board Subsidy Program for the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). This program includes the application and approval process for the Illinois NB First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy in addition to serving as the Third-Party support provider for Illinois NB candidates going through the NBPTS process. The phone number for the NBRC is 309-438-1835 and the website is <http://nbrc.illinoisstate.edu>.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is a national organization, and it is located in Arlington, VA. Teachers and counselors register as candidates at the NBPTS Board Certified Teachers website and pay the yearly, non-refundable \$75 NBPTS registration fee. NBPTS provides information and directions about candidacy and the NB process. The phone number for NBPTS is 1.800.22TEACH.