UpGrade FAQs

What is UpGrade?

To promote broader computer science education in the state, The New Hampshire Department of Education (NHED) has created two programs to increase the number of computer science certified educators, with the goal of preparing more students for employment in the field. **UpGrade for Tech Leaders** offers a bonus stipend to industry professionals who hold eligible industry recognized credentials (IRCs) when they become New Hampshire (NH) computer science educators. **UpGrade for Educators** reimburses current NH teachers for computer science credentials earned.

What is UpGrade for Tech Leaders?

Working professionals in computer science, cybersecurity, software engineering, or related fields holding certain IRCs may be eligible for a $10,000 bonus for becoming a NH certified teacher.

Through the **UpGrade for Tech Leaders** program, professionals with eligible IRCs can receive the NH Computer Science Educator endorsement and are qualified to teach computer science classes in NH schools. After successfully completing the first year, these teachers will receive a $5,000 bonus stipend. They will be eligible to receive an additional $2,500 after both year two and three.

Learn more about the program and eligibility here:
https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/sonh/upgrade-program-information.pdf

What is UpGrade for Educators?

Current New Hampshire teachers may be reimbursed for the cost of eligible computer science certifications and receive a bonus stipend.

NHED is offering reimbursement to eligible teachers for successfully acquiring industry recognized credentials (IRCs) in computer science. NHED will reimburse the cost of any exams or licensure costs for qualified certifications, not to exceed a combined total of $2,000. In addition, teachers will receive a bonus stipend for each certification acquired, not to exceed a combined total of $750.

Learn more about the program and eligibility here: http://upgrade.nh.gov/ and https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/sonh/upgrade-program-information.pdf

Do I qualify for the $5,000 stipend?

Through the **UpGrade program**, educators teaching computer science on an intern authorization can receive a $5,000 bonus stipend at the end of year 1, and then an additional $2,500 after years 2 and 3.

Teachers that currently hold a teacher's license with the Computer Science Educator Endorsement are not eligible for the UpGrade stipend. You may be eligible for the **UpGrade for Educators** program.

What are IRCs?

Industry recognized credentials (IRCSs) are attestations of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Typically, they are accredited by independent licensing bodies, though some are awarded by industry-leading companies. IRCs represent validated demonstrations in a body of knowledge.

For the UpGrade program, certain IRCs are recognized by NHED to be equivalent to the competencies for a teacher's license Computer Science endorsement. To qualify for the UpGrade program, the certification must be current and in good standing with the accrediting body. This includes passing any required examinations or other criteria to attain the credential.

What IRCs qualify for the computer science endorsement?

For a complete and up-to-date list for educators, visit https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/sonh/upgrade-educator-irc.pdf. For an IRC list for tech leaders, visit https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/sonh/upgrade-tech-leaders-irc.pdf

The list is periodically updated, as IRCs are retired and issued.

How do I learn more?

For more information, visit the UpGrade landing page: http://upgrade.nh.gov/

If you have specific questions, email upgrade@doe.nh.gov

What certificates and courses can I get reimbursed for?

If you are a current NH teacher, you can be reimbursed for the cost of eligible computer science certifications and receive a bonus stipend.

For a list of certifications, certificates, and short-form courses, see here: https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/sonh/upgrade-educator-

irc.pdf and https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/sonh/upgrade-tech-leaders-irc.pdf

When does the program start?

UpGrade will launch for the 2024-2025 school year.

Educators can begin pursuing professional development opportunities and certificates **after July 1, 2024**.

New teachers in computer science programs can apply for the stipend at the conclusion of the **'24-'25 school year.**

What type of school do I need to teach in?

To qualify for the UpGrade program, educators must be employed by a NH public, public chartered, or private nonpublic school serving K-12 students.

How many days out of the year do I need to teach?

To qualify for the UpGrade for Tech Leaders annual stipend, you must complete a full academic year teaching computer science classes in a NH public, public chartered, or nonpublic school serving K-12 students.

If the school year starts at different time for different schools, is there a strict start date to be eligible?

Eligibility for the UpGrade program begins with the '24-'25 school year, as defined by the local SAU.

If I teach an online program in a NH school, but live in another state am I eligible?

You must teach at an in-person, NH public, public chartered, or nonpublic school serving K-12 students to qualify for the UpGrade program. Online schools are not eligible for the UpGrade program. You must reside in New Hampshire or one of its border states (Massachusetts, Maine, or Vermont).

How do I receive my funds?

Reimbursement payment will be provided and conducted through FACTS Education Solutions, a third-party vendor, procured by NHED, that will verify eligibility for reimbursement. Current pay stub or verification from current employer will be required, as well as receipts for credential fees. Completion of a W-9 will be required from all applicants for reimbursement.

To receive the **UpGrade for Tech Leaders** stipend, educators must submit the following documentation via an application here:

- Proof of attaining the IRC
- A copy of the Intern Authorization

- SBLP Progress report for the preceding year

To receive **the UpGrade for Educators** reimbursement and stipend, educators must submit the following documentation via application here:

- Proof of attaining the credential, including, but not limited to:
  - Official certificate
  - Digital badge
  - Successful examination grade or skill demonstration, as applicable
  - Date acquired - credential must be acquired after 7/1/2024

Submit all documentation no later than July 30 of each year.

What if I think a certain IRC should be listed but it isn't?

NHED will periodically review and update the IRC list as the industry creates new certifications and retires others. If you hold an IRC that you believe should qualify for the UpGrade program, send a brief description and a link to the issuing body's website to upgrade@doe.nh.gov.

Who can I contact for additional information?

Reach out to upgrade@doe.nh.gov with questions about the UpGrade program that are not covered in this FAQ. Questions or troubleshooting the application process should be directed to NHSupport@factsmgt.com.

If I transfer schools halfway through the year and I'm still teaching in computer science, can I still be eligible?

SBLPs are not portable but are instead tied to a specific school. If you intend to change districts, you will need to reapply for a new SBLP and acquire a new mentor. You may no longer qualify for the UpGrade stipend. Reach out to upgrade@doe.nh.gov for more information if this situation applies to you.

When is this ending?

The upGRADE program is funded through a state allocation and will continue until funds are exhausted. For up-to-date information about ongoing eligibility of this program, email upgrade@doe.nh.gov.

How long will stipends be available for?

The upGRADE program is funded through a state allocation and will continue until funds are exhausted. For up-to-date information about ongoing eligibility of this program, email upgrade@doe.nh.gov.