

TITLE 23: EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES  
SUBTITLE A: EDUCATION  
CHAPTER I: STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SUBCHAPTER b: PERSONNEL

PART 60  
THE “GROW YOUR OWN” TEACHER EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Section

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**AUTHORITY:** Implementing the Grow Your Own Teacher Education Act [110 ILCS 48] and authorized by Section 90 of the Act [110 ILCS 48/90].

**SOURCE:** Adopted at 30 Ill. Reg. 1850, effective January 24, 2006; amended at 31 Ill. Reg. 3589, effective February 15, 2007; amended at 32 Ill. Reg. 8761, effective May 27, 2008.

**Section 60.10 Purpose**

This Part establishes the procedure and criteria for approval of proposals for grants to support teacher preparation initiatives under the Grow Our Own Teacher Education Act [110 ILCS 48].

**Section 60.20 Definitions**

“Act” means the Grow Your Own Teacher Education Act [110 ILCS 48].

“Applicant” means a consortium or a potential consortium, as applicable, as described in Section 60.30 of this Part.

“Candidate” means a person working toward a bachelor’s degree qualifying that individual for a teaching certificate who is assisted under a grant awarded to a consortium pursuant to this Part.

“Cohort” means a group of candidates preparing for a teaching certificate who, pursuant to Sections 20 and 25 of the Act, begin receiving assistance under this Part together. No member of any cohort may hold a bachelor’s degree at the time of entry into the program, provided that this restriction shall not apply to members of cohorts for whose preparation funding was granted during Fiscal Year 2006.

“Consortium” means an entity to which the State Board can issue grants under this Part. A consortium shall be composed of at least one 4-year institution of higher education with an accredited teacher education program, at least one school district or group of schools, and one or more community organizations. The consortium may also include a 2-year institution of higher education and/or a school employee union. Eligible consortia are further defined in Section 20 of the Act. A consortium shall implement a program of forgivable loans to cover any portion of tuition and direct expenses of students preparing for teaching certificates in excess of grants-in-aid and other forgivable loans received.

“Direct expenses” are an individual’s tuition for coursework required for completion of the preparation program in which the candidate is or will be enrolled, fees related to participation in the preparation program or required coursework, and expenses for books and other necessary instructional materials.

“Eligible school” is *an Illinois public elementary or secondary school that serves a substantial percentage of low-income students and either is hard to staff or has hard-to-staff teaching positions* (see Section 10 of the Act).

“Institution” means an institution of higher education.

“Potential consortium” is a group of entities that is eligible to submit a proposal for a planning grant in response to an RFP issued under this Part.

“Student with a non-traditional background” is either one who begins a baccalaureate program at a point in time other than immediately following graduation from high school

or one who began a baccalaureate program after high school, did not complete it, and re-enters a baccalaureate program after some passage of time.

“Year of service” means full-time employment for at least half a school year, or an equivalent amount of part-time employment, in:

a public school that, at the time the individual becomes employed, is either one of the schools targeted by the program completed by the individual with assistance under this Part or another school that is defined as hard to staff pursuant to this Section; or

a teaching position that, at the time the individual becomes employed, is hard to staff as defined in this Section.

(Source: Amended at 32 Ill. Reg. 8761, effective May 27, 2008)

**Section 60.30 Eligible Applicants**

- a) Only consortia whose membership meets the requirements of Section 20(1) and (2) of the Act shall be eligible to apply for implementation grants to cover expenditures discussed in Section 25 of the Act.
- b) Pursuant to Section 30 of the Act, potential consortia shall be eligible for grant funds for planning purposes under the Act. A “potential consortium” will be considered eligible to submit a proposal if it includes a four-year institution of higher education and at least one community organization and if its proposal:
  - 1) provides evidence that at least a subset of the teachers typically prepared by the institution seeks employment in communities where hard-to-staff schools are located; and
  - 2) demonstrates that the institution is not applying for funding on behalf of an existing consortium that is currently serving a group of candidates under a model substantially similar to that described in the Act and that further information is needed about the specific barriers that exist with respect to enabling individuals with a long-term commitment to those communities to complete teacher preparation; and
  - 3) includes:
    - A) letters of interest from one or more school districts or schools indicating willingness to collaborate in offering opportunities for candidates in the program to complete pre-student teaching clinical experiences in hard-to-staff schools or positions; and
    - B) if additional community organizations are being considered for membership in the consortium, letters of invitation that the applicant has sent to one or more relevant community organizations proposing a role for the organizations in the proposed consortium, along with a rationale provided by the applicant for inclusion of these organizations.

**Section 60.40 Implementation Grants –Procedure and Content of Proposals**

New implementation grants shall be offered in years when the level of available funding is such that one or more new programs or cohorts of candidates can be supported given the requirements of Section 25 of the Act for ongoing support of cohorts that have begun their preparation in previous years. (See Section 60.70 of this Part.)

- a) When sufficient funding is available, the State Superintendent of Education will issue an RFP specifying the information that proposals must include and specifying a deadline for their submission, which shall provide at least 45 calendar days in which to submit proposals.
- b) Each RFP shall specify the descriptive information that applicants will be required to provide, which shall be designed to permit comparative judgments of the degree to which each program will address the requirements of Section 20 of the Act and shall address:
  - 1) the teacher preparation programs involved and their qualifications relevant to the requirements of the Act, including specific information on the institution's success in preparing teachers for positions in schools that serve a substantial percentage of low-income students;
  - 2) the consortium's plans for recruiting and providing support to participants, including information that demonstrates that potential or existing members of the cohort are paraeducators or parent and community leaders as defined in the Act;
  - 3) the preparation status of existing candidates, if a cohort is already engaged in the program;
  - 4) the hard-to-staff schools and positions that are targeted; and
  - 5) the demographic make-up of the area served by the targeted schools.
- c) Each RFP shall describe the required proposal format, if any (e.g., cover page, proposal abstract, proposal narrative, letters of intent to participate, etc.).
- d) Each RFP shall identify the categories of allowable expenditures and require the submission of a budget summary and payment schedule, completed on the forms provided, as well as a narrative budget breakdown that provides a detailed explanation of each line item of expenditure and covers the entire period of time

during which the identified cohort is expected to be enrolled in the teacher preparation program.

- 1) Applicants shall be required to demonstrate that grant funds will supplement and not supplant amounts typically devoted by the institution of higher education to, and other resources available for, assisting teacher candidates.
  - 2) Applicants shall be required to describe the steps that will be taken to decrease the need for external financial support for the consortium and its program over time.
- e) Each RFP shall identify the information that consortia will be required to collect and furnish to the entity that conducts the evaluation required by Section 35 of the Act, including but not limited to zip codes of the candidates, the racial/ethnic make-up of the candidate cohort, the percentage of candidates who progress at the expected rate through the preparation program, the percentage who complete the program, and information on the positions eventually taken by these candidates.
- f) Each RFP shall identify the assurances and certifications that entities receiving funding must furnish.

**Section 60.50 Implementation Grants – Criteria for the Review of Proposals**

Proposals for implementation grants shall be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

- a) Feasibility, Impact, and Cost-Effectiveness (40 points)
  - 1) The proposal identifies a need for teachers in hard-to-staff schools and hard-to-fill positions and describes either a cohort that is available to enroll in the identified preparation program or time-specific plans for identifying and attracting the members of such a cohort.
  - 2) The proposal describes strategies that will be used to reach members of underrepresented groups that reflect the diversity of the students enrolled in the participating schools and outlines plans for serving additional cohorts in future years.
  - 3) The proposal demonstrates that:
    - A) coursework and experiences required for certification will be scheduled and located to be accessible to members of the cohort; and
    - B) supportive services (e.g., child care, counseling, tutoring) that have been identified as necessary will be offered to enable candidates to progress through the program and attain certification.
  - 4) The proposal establishes a timetable or performance level for candidates as a condition for their continued receipt of assistance under this program.
  - 5) The evaluation plan is designed to yield information that can be used both in judging the program's qualitative and quantitative impact and in identifying changes or new approaches that will improve the program's outcomes.
  - 6) The proposal describes commitments on the part of all the consortium's members that will enable the consortium to sustain the program over time with a reduction in the need for external resources.
- b) Quality of the Plan (30 points)
  - 1) The proposal describes the role of each entity that is a member of the consortium, including the resources each entity will devote to this

- initiative, the major areas requiring collaboration among the members, and how decisions will be made with input from the members and the participants.
- 2) The proposal includes plans for assisting candidates in tapping sources of financial aid beyond those made available under this Part and by the members of the consortium.
  - 3) The proposal demonstrates that the institution of higher education has the capacity (i.e., faculty and other resources) to serve the cohort in its approved teacher preparation program. If a two-year institution is involved in the consortium, the proposal delineates how coursework, other requirements, and services will be coordinated between the institutions.
  - 4) The proposal describes the needs of the participating schools and demonstrates that the consortium's plan for certification under the program is relevant to those needs and will have an impact on the availability of qualified staff.
  - 5) The plan of work for the program includes specific strategies for overcoming known barriers faced by the participating schools in retaining qualified teachers as well as barriers faced by the individuals who make up the cohort to be enrolled in the program.
  - 6) The proposal describes the consortium's plans for extending support to candidates for at least two years after they attain certification, including such activities and services as mentoring and group meetings of the cohort.
- c) Experience and Qualifications (20 points)
- 1) The proposal provides evidence that faculty and relevant staff of the institution are knowledgeable regarding the needs of hard-to-staff schools and the specific issues that candidates from non-traditional backgrounds encounter when attempting to complete preparation for teaching careers.
  - 2) The proposal demonstrates that the community organization that is a member of the consortium has conducted projects or initiatives with a specific focus on involving parents and others in school improvement, either in the participating schools or schools with similar characteristics, and has the capacity to recruit candidates for and support them as they progress through the program.

- 3) The individual who is identified as coordinator for the cohort has experience in education and/or community organizing and in supporting individuals in the collegiate environment and is knowledgeable about group dynamics, support services, and cultural issues relevant to the cohort.
- d) Evaluation Plans (10 points)
  - 1) The proposal relates plans for the evaluation of candidates' teaching skills to the relevant portions of the institution's educational unit assessment system (see 23 Ill. Adm. Code 25.140) and demonstrates that candidates in the program will be expected to meet the standards applicable to the approved program.
  - 2) The proposal includes a plan for the evaluation of the program by or on behalf of the members of the consortium that will provide:
    - A) information on the progress of candidates within the preparation program; and
    - B) when applicable, information on this initiative's outcomes in terms of candidates' placement into hard-to-staff teaching positions or hard-to-staff schools and their retention in those positions.

(Source: Amended at 32 Ill. Reg. 8761, effective May 27, 2008)

**Section 60.60 Implementation Grants - Allocation of Funds**

The State Superintendent of Education shall approve proposals for funding and make final determinations regarding the amounts to be provided based upon:

- a) the total funds appropriated for this initiative;
- b) the needs and resources described and the amounts requested in the top-ranked proposals identified in accordance with the criteria set forth in Section 60.50 of this Part; and
- c) the need to make programs under this Part accessible on a statewide basis in a manner that will increase the availability of candidates to serve in hard-to-staff schools and positions.

**Section 60.70 Continuation of Implementation Funding**

- a) A consortium that has received implementation funding for a cohort of candidates shall be subject to the requirements of this Section with respect to continued funding for that cohort in subsequent years.
  - 1) The consortium shall submit an application for continued funding for the cohort, using a format specified by the State Superintendent of Education.
  - 2) Each application shall contain a mid-year report on the current status of the program and the cohort, documenting the activities and support provided to date and describing the degree to which candidates are achieving the program's objectives.
  - 3) Each application shall provide an updated narrative description of the objectives, activities, timelines, and evaluation procedures for the renewal year, relating the proposed plan of work to the results that have been achieved to date.
  - 4) Each application shall include an updated budget summary and payment schedule for the renewal year, including a narrative budget breakdown that describes any needed variances from the budget proposed in the initial year of funding.
  - 5) Each application shall include such certifications and assurances as the State Superintendent of Education may require.
- b) The State Board shall, contingent upon appropriation of funds for this initiative, provide continuation funding to consortia that:
  - 1) demonstrate that:
    - A) a majority of the candidates in the cohort served have completed coursework or other requirements for certification during at least one semester of the preceding year; or
    - B) funds will be used to support only those candidates who have progressed toward certification and/or have identified steps to be taken toward certification in the academic year in which funding is requested; and

- 2) demonstrate success in providing the supports necessary to retain candidates in the program.

**Section 60.80 Implementation Funding for “Transitional Projects” (Repealed)**

(Source: Repealed at 31 Ill. Reg. 3589, effective February 15, 2007)

**Section 60.90 Planning Grants**

In order to identify potential consortia with a substantial likelihood of establishing additional Grow Your Own programs, the State Superintendent of Education will issue an RFP for planning grants. The RFP may be issued repeatedly, contingent upon the availability of funding. Each RFP shall indicate the maximum amount to be reserved for planning grants and the maximum available amount per grant. The RFP shall specify the information that proposals must include and a deadline for their submission, which shall provide no fewer than 30 calendar days in which to submit proposals.

- a) Eligible applicants for planning grants shall be as set forth in Section 60.30 of this Part.
- b) Allowable uses of planning grant funds shall include:
  - 1) activities that are designed to secure the participation and commitment of the required members and the optional members of a consortium; and
  - 2) activities that are designed to attract or identify potential candidates for teacher preparation who are paraeducators or parent and community leaders as contemplated by the Act, including assistance that will permit potential candidates to complete developmental coursework that will verify their academic readiness for enrolling in teacher preparation; and
  - 3) activities that are designed to identify barriers to teacher certification for potential members of a given cohort and to identify strategies and resources for mitigating those barriers.
- c) Each proposal shall describe a plan of work for developing a consortium and a Grow Your Own program that will be eligible for an implementation grant under this Part. Each proposal shall include a budget for the planned activities, provided in a format specified in the RFP.
- d) Applicants may be asked to clarify aspects of their proposals.
- e) Each proposal that is submitted by an eligible applicant and meets the requirements of this Section shall be considered qualified for funding. Funding decisions shall be made in each cycle by balancing the goals of geographic distribution and accessibility with the level of need and the potential number of candidates to be served by the potential consortia.

(Source: Amended at 31 Ill. Reg. 3589, effective February 15, 2007)

**Section 60.100 Loans; Waiver or Deferral of Repayment**

Any candidate in a program administered under this Part may receive a forgivable loan for direct expenses associated with completion of the teacher preparation program, provided those expenditures are not otherwise paid for through grants-in-aid, other forgivable loans, or other resources of the consortium. Any amount expended for an individual's direct expenses shall be considered a part of that individual's loan, regardless of how the payment is administered and regardless of whether the individual receives any actual payment of funds. The total amount of any candidate's loan shall not exceed \$25,000.

- a) Pursuant to Section 25 of the Act, *loan funds provided to candidates as part of this program shall be fully forgiven if a graduate completes five years of service in hard-to-staff schools or hard-to-staff teaching positions, with partial forgiveness for shorter periods of service.* Forgiveness and repayment of loans shall be determined as provided in this Section.
- b) An individual may accrue the service required for forgiveness of loans under this Part in one or more eligible schools or positions.
- c) If an individual has not assumed employment in an eligible school or position within two years after receiving a teaching certificate, the individual shall be required to begin the repayment of amounts loaned under this Part. No interest shall apply. An individual who drops out of the program shall be required to begin repaying the amounts loaned in the month following the month when it becomes evident that he or she will not be completing any of the program's requirements for two consecutive semesters.
- d) If an individual has not completed five years of service within 10 years after receiving a teaching certificate, the individual shall be required to begin the repayment of amounts loaned under this Part. The amount due shall be the total amount borrowed, less a percentage reflecting the relationship that any time taught by the individual in eligible schools or positions bears to the total five-year commitment. Loan amounts shall be reduced in increments of 10 percent for each semester completed.
- e) Repayment of loans shall be made in no more than 60 equal installments. The minimum monthly payment will be determined by dividing the total amount due by 60. An individual may prepay the balance due on the loan in its entirety at any time or make payments in addition to the minimum amount owed each month without penalty.

- f) In addition to the loan forgiveness permitted under Section 25 of the Act, the State Superintendent may defer or waive an individual's obligation to repay an amount due as provided in this subsection (f).
- 1) The State Superintendent shall waive the repayment obligation for an individual who is counseled out of a preparation program or found ineligible to continue, provided that the individual's exit from the program is not due to a violation of law or of applicable institutional policies.
  - 2) The State Superintendent shall waive the repayment obligation for an individual who drops out of a preparation program or demonstrates that he or she is unable to complete a portion of the required teaching service due to:
    - A) the onset or exacerbation of a disability;
    - B) the need to care for an immediate family member during serious illness or disability;
    - C) destruction of the individual's residence; or
    - D) other circumstances that require the individual to assume responsibilities that cannot be avoided without serious financial hardship or other family disruption (e.g., death of a spouse that results in the need to take a second job or assume operation of a business).
  - 3) The State Superintendent shall waive the repayment obligation for a candidate who does not complete a preparation program due to the unavailability of a State appropriation for this initiative for at least two consecutive years.
  - 4) The State Superintendent shall defer the repayment obligation for a period of time specifically related to the circumstances when an individual:
    - A) is unemployed or is working for fewer than 30 hours per week;
    - B) is experiencing a financial hardship (e.g., receiving public assistance, earning an amount per month that is no greater than 200 percent of the amount of the loan payment, or experiencing circumstances such as those outlined in subsection (f)(2) of this Section); or

- C) has re-enrolled as a full-time student in an institution of higher education or in a program under this Part.
- 5) Each request for a waiver or deferral of repayment shall be submitted in a format specified by the State Superintendent. The affected individual shall describe the specific circumstances that apply. This description shall be accompanied by evidence such as a physician's statement, insurance claim, or other documentation of the relevant facts.
- g) When a teaching certificate is issued to an individual who received assistance under this Part, the certificate shall be accompanied by:
- 1) a statement indicating the total amount of the loan received by the individual and identifying the dates applicable to repayment under this Section; and
  - 2) a claim form that the individual may use to claim forgiveness of the loan amount, which shall require the individual to identify the periods of service completed in eligible schools or positions and the school administrators who can verify the individual's service.
- h) Management of Loans
- 1) It shall be the responsibility of each four-year institution of higher education, and of any two-year institution that participates in a consortium, to assist the State Board of Education with the forgivable loan process in the following manner:
    - A) by keeping records of the amounts provided to or on behalf of each individual for direct expenses;
    - B) by keeping up-to-date contact information regarding the address and telephone number of each individual during the individual's preparation at that institution; and
    - C) by notifying the State Superintendent within 30 days after a candidate fails to enroll in coursework as expected or otherwise ceases to participate in the program and informing the State Superintendent of the total amount of the candidate's loan for direct expenses as of that point in time.

- 2) When a candidate leaves a two-year institution and enters a four-year institution to continue in a program under this Part, the two-year institution shall inform both the State Superintendent and the four-year institution of the total amount of the candidate's loan for direct expenses as of that point in time. Each two-year institution shall ensure that the affected four-year institution continues to receive any information that subsequently affects the amount of a candidate's loan.
- 3) Each institution shall notify the State Superintendent as to who will be responsible for this information and shall provide contact information for the responsible individual within the institution.
  - i) It shall be the responsibility of the State Superintendent to take such actions as may be necessary to secure repayment when necessary.

(Source: Amended at 32 Ill. Reg. 8761, effective May 27, 2008)