

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

PART 70

EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER PREPARATION ASSISTANCE GRANT

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AUTHORITY: Implementing Sections 1C-2 and 2-3.71 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/1C-2 and 2-3.71] and authorized by Section 1C-5 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/1C-5].

SOURCE: Emergency rule adopted at 30 Ill. Reg. 17952, effective October 24, 2006, for a maximum of 150 days; adopted at 31 Ill. Reg. 3599, effective February 20, 2007.

Section 70.10 Purpose and Applicability

The goal of the Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Assistance Grant is to address the shortages experienced by preschool education programs funded under Section 2-3.71 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.71] of teachers holding Early Childhood certificates issued pursuant to Section 21-2.1 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/21-2.1] and State Board of Education rules governing Standards for All Illinois Teachers (23 Ill. Adm. Code 24), Certification (23 Ill. Adm. Code 25) and Standards for Certification in Early Childhood and in Elementary Education (23 Ill. Adm. Code 26).

- a) This Part establishes the procedures and criteria for the approval of proposals submitted to the State Board of Education by eligible applicants for grants to establish programs to assist individuals employed in State-funded preschool education programs and other early childhood education programs to enroll as candidates in and complete a teacher preparation program leading to an Initial Early Childhood teaching certificate. The Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Assistance Grant program shall:
 - 1) be designed to enroll a single group of individuals who will move through their coursework and educational experiences at the same time;
 - 2) offer the coursework necessary for individuals possessing a bachelor's degree to obtain an Initial Early Childhood teaching certificate or the coursework necessary for individuals possessing an associate's degree to obtain a bachelor's degree and an Initial Early Childhood teaching certificate; and
 - 3) make a commitment to continue the program with the group of candidates so that those candidates will be able to successfully complete their education and teaching experiences in an amount of time that is commensurate with the amount of time it would take a candidate in the institution's regular program to complete the same course of study and experiences, provided that the program continues to receive State funding.
- b) The provisions of this Part shall not apply to a school district that receives funding for early childhood programs as part of its general education block grant pursuant to Section 1D-1 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/1D-1] nor to any entity that receives a grant from that school district for early childhood programs funded under Section 1D-1 of the School Code.

Section 70.20 Eligible Applicants

- a) An eligible applicant for the Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Assistance Grant shall be a partnership consisting of:
 - 1) One or more educational entities serving elementary and secondary schools (e.g., school districts, private schools, Regional Offices of Education) and/or one or more community-based organizations that provide early childhood education programs or related services, such as technical assistance or professional development, to early childhood programs and practitioners; and
 - 2) One or more four-year institutions of higher education with an accredited teacher education program for early childhood education.
- b) The partnership shall designate one entity to serve as the administrative agent for the grant.
- c) Preference for funding shall be provided to eligible applicants whose programs target individuals, as defined in Section 70.10(a) of this Part, who are:
 - 1) from a bilingual or minority background and already possess bachelor's degrees and need only to complete coursework necessary for Early Childhood certification purposes; or
 - 2) willing to work in State-funded preschool programs in geographic areas experiencing a shortage of teachers who hold Early Childhood teaching certificates. A shortage area is defined as one in which State-funded preschool education programs operating in that area are unable to enroll additional students in their programs due to a lack of properly certified teachers or the State Board of Education is unable to fund additional programs to meet the need of a particular area for preschool education due to a lack of properly certified teachers.

Section 70.30 Planning Grants – Procedures and Content of Proposals

A planning grant shall be used to support costs associated with developing a plan for implementation of an Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Assistance Grant program, which shall include the identification and recruitment of the group of individuals to be enrolled in the program.

- a) When sufficient funding is available, the State Superintendent of Education shall issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) specifying the information that applicants shall include in their planning proposals, informing applicants of any bidders' conferences, and requiring that proposals be submitted no later than the date specified in the RFP. The RFP shall provide at least 30 calendar days in which to submit proposals.
- b) Each proposal submitted in response to an RFP shall include the following components.
 - 1) Demographic information about the area to be served by the program, which shall include statistics about number of programs funded under Section 2-3.71 of the School Code that serve the area and their need for certified teachers.
 - 2) Demographic information about individuals employed by State-funded preschool education programs and other early childhood education programs who do not hold Early Childhood teaching certificates, including, but not limited to, their race/ethnicity, language (other than English) and cultural background, and educational attainment.
 - 3) Descriptive information about each entity involved in the partnership:
 - A) the teacher preparation program must provide the specific information about the institution's success in preparing teachers for early childhood teaching positions, particularly in areas serving bilingual and minority children; and
 - B) the community-based or nonpublic educational organization must include its mission statement, organizational structure, and goals or policies regarding early childhood programs and services, including the applicant's existing competencies to provide early childhood education programs, if applicable, and a list of any early childhood accreditations that have been achieved.

- 4) A list of the persons, and their affiliations, who will be involved in the planning process.
 - 5) A plan of work for the planning process that includes objectives, specific activities, timelines and responsible parties.
 - 6) Budget information that corresponds to the categories of allowable expenditures identified in subsection (c) of this Section, completed on the forms provided and detailing each line item of expenditure.
 - 7) Such certifications and assurances as the State Superintendent of Education may require.
- c) Allowable uses of planning grant funds shall include:
- 1) activities that are designed to secure the participation and commitment of the required partners; and
 - 2) activities that are designed to attract or identify individuals for teacher preparation who currently work in State-funded preschool education programs or other early childhood education programs and hold either a bachelor's degree or an associate's degree but do not have an Early Childhood teaching certificate; and
 - 3) activities that are designed to identify barriers to teacher certification for the individuals to be enrolled and to identify strategies and resources for mitigating those barriers.

Section 70.40 Criteria for Review and Approval of Planning Proposals

- a) Planning grant proposals shall be reviewed and ranked according to the following criteria.
 - 1) The applicant demonstrates that the area proposed to be served has unmet needs that could be effectively addressed by the Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Assistance Grant program. (40 points)
 - 2) The planning activities proposed respond to the needs identified and are directed at implementing a program that will enable individuals to successfully complete requirements necessary for obtaining an Initial Early Childhood teaching certificate. (40 points)
 - 3) The activities proposed are cost-effective, as evidenced by the scope of the planning work to be conducted and the potential number of individuals proposed to be enrolled in the program. (20 points)
- b) The State Superintendent of Education shall determine the amount of individual grant awards. The final award amounts shall be based upon:
 - 1) the total amount of funds available for the Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Assistance Grant; and
 - 2) the resources requested in the top-ranked proposals, as identified pursuant to subsection (a) of this Section.

Section 70.50 Implementation Grants – Procedures and Content of Proposals

Implementation grants shall be offered in years when the level of available funding is such that one or more new partnerships can be funded, or for partnerships already funded, a new group of individuals can be supported in addition to the group of candidates already enrolled. Priority for funding shall be given in the initial implementation cycle (i.e., FY 2008) to grantees awarded funds under Section 70.40 of this Part that have successfully completed the planning process and are ready to implement an Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Assistance Grant program.

- a) When sufficient funding is available, the State Superintendent of Education shall issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) specifying the information that applicants shall include in their implementation proposals, informing applicants of any bidders' conferences, and requiring that proposals be submitted no later than the date specified in the RFP. The RFP shall provide at least 45 calendar days in which to submit proposals.
- b) Each proposal submitted in response to an RFP shall include the following components.
 - 1) Descriptive information about each entity involved in the partnership, including the roles and responsibilities of each partner.
 - A) The teacher preparation program must indicate specific information about the institution's success in preparing teachers for early childhood teaching positions, particularly in areas serving bilingual and minority children.
 - B) The community-based organization or nonpublic educational entity must include its mission statement, organizational structure, and goals or policies regarding early childhood programs and services, including the applicant's existing competencies to provide early childhood education programs, if applicable, and a list of any early childhood accreditations that have been achieved.
 - 2) The goals and objectives of the partnership in ensuring a program that is successful and sustainable.
 - 3) A description of the need for the program, which shall include:
 - A) Demographic information about the area to be served by the program, including statistics about number of programs funded

under Section 2-3.71 of the School Code that serve the area and their need for certified teachers.

- B) Demographic information about individuals employed by State-funded preschool education programs and other early childhood education programs in the area to be served who do not hold Early Childhood teaching certificates, including, but not limited to, their race/ethnicity, language (other than English) and cultural background, and educational attainment.
- 4) A description of the program to be implemented, to include:
- A) the partnership's plans for recruiting and providing support to individuals enrolled in the program, including working with employers to ensure that the individuals can fully participate in the program;
 - B) strategies to be employed to ensure that individuals to be enrolled are adequately prepared to successfully progress through the program, which shall include but not be limited to assistance to ensure each individual's passage of the Basic Skills Test required for admittance to a teacher preparation program [105 ILCS 5/21-1a];
 - C) coursework and experiences needed to complete the program, to include the length of the program and sample schedules;
 - D) identification of sites where student teaching will occur; and
 - E) expectations for candidates' course completion rates or the performance levels needed to continue their participation in the program.
- 5) A plan for evaluating the impact of the proposed program and activities, which shall correspond to the applicable specifications set forth in the RFP.
- 6) Budget information that corresponds to the categories of allowable expenditures identified in the RFP, completed on the forms provided and detailing each line item of expenditure. The budget information shall cover the entire period of time during which the proposed group of candidates is expected to participate in the teacher preparation program.

- A) 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.
 - B) Applicants shall be required to describe the steps that will be taken to decrease the need for external financial support for the partnership and its program over time.
- 7) Such certifications and assurances as the State Superintendent of Education may require.

Section 70.60 Criteria for Review and Approval of Implementation Proposals

- a) Proposals for implementation grants shall be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria.
 - 1) Quality of Proposed Program (40 points)
 - A) The proposal demonstrates that:
 - i) coursework and experiences required for certification will be scheduled and located to be accessible to candidates in the program; and
 - ii) supportive services (e.g., counseling, tutoring, child care) that have been identified as necessary will be offered to enable candidates to progress through the program and attain certification.
 - B) The proposal establishes a timetable or performance level for candidates as a condition for their continued receipt of assistance under this program.
 - C) 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 partnership.
 - D) The plan of work for the program includes effective strategies for overcoming known barriers faced by the candidates.
 - E) 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.
 - 2) Program Need (30 points)
 - A) The proposal clearly indicates that the area to be served has State-funded preschool education programs that are experiencing a shortage of teachers with Early Childhood certificates.
 - B) Criteria and indicators for identifying individuals to be enrolled in the program are clearly established and likely to target those

individuals who have the greatest likelihood of successfully completing the program.

- C) The recruitment strategies that are proposed are likely to be effective in enrolling the individuals in the program, particularly individuals who reflect the diversity of the children participating in State-funded preschool education programs that serve the targeted area.
- 3) Experience and Qualifications (20 points)
- A) The proposal demonstrates that the institution of higher education has the capacity (i.e., faculty and other resources) to serve the group of individuals to be enrolled in its approved teacher preparation program.
 - B) The proposed roles and responsibilities of each entity that is a member of the partnership are appropriate, given the entity's qualifications, experience with early childhood initiatives and services, and the resources each will devote to the program.
 - C) The proposal demonstrates that the community organization or educational entity is familiar with the needs of early childhood education programs, in particular the needs of State-funded preschool education programs, located in the area proposed to be served and has the capacity to recruit individuals for and support them as they progress through the program.
- 4) Cost-Effectiveness (10 points)
- A) The program is cost-effective as evidenced by the cost of proposed services in relation to the individuals to be enrolled and the services to be provided.
 - B) The proposal describes commitments on the part of all the partnership's members that will enable the partnership to sustain the program over time with a reduction in the need for external resources.
- b) Priority consideration may be given to proposals with specific areas of emphasis, as identified by the State Superintendent of Education in a particular RFP.

- c) The State Superintendent of Education shall determine the amount of individual grant awards. The final award amounts shall be based upon:
- 1) the total amount of funds available for the Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Assistance Grant; and
 - 2) the resources requested in the top-ranked proposals, as identified pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) of this Section.

Section 70.70 Application Content and Approval Criteria for Continuation Programs

- a) A partnership that has received implementation funding for a group of individuals shall be subject to the requirements of this Section with respect to continued funding for that group in subsequent years.
 - 1) The partnership shall submit an application for continued funding for the candidates enrolled in the program, 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 candidates, documenting the activities and support provided to date and describing the degree to which the 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 updated budget information for the renewal year, including a detailed 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 Superintendent of Education shall, contingent upon appropriation of funds for this initiative, provide continuation funding to a partnership that demonstrates:
 - 1) success in providing the supports necessary to retain candidates in the program; and
 - 2) Either:
 - A) that a majority of the candidates in the group served has completed coursework or other requirements for certification during at least one semester of the preceding year; or
 - B) that 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.

Section 70.80 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 Early Childhood 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 \$12,000.

- a) Loan funds provided to candidates as part of this program shall be fully forgiven if a graduate completes five years of service in a State-funded preschool education program established pursuant to Section 2-3.71 of the School Code. 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 State-funded preschool education programs.
- c) If an individual has not assumed employment in a State-funded preschool education program 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 State-funded preschool education programs 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 in accordance with subsection (a) of this Section, 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; or
 - B) is experiencing a financial hardship (e.g., receiving public assistance or 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 by a representative of the partnership under whose auspices the individual is or was enrolled in teacher preparation. Using a format specified by the State Superintendent, the representative and 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 the amount due 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 a State-funded preschool education program or positions and the school administrators who can verify the individual's service.
- h) Management of Loans
- 1) It shall be the responsibility of the four-year institution of higher education 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; and
 - 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 of Education 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) Each institution of higher education 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 of Education to take such actions as may be necessary to secure repayment when necessary.