

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Fiscal Affairs and Administrative Policy **NO.:** FAAP 06-02
COMMITTEE DATE: November 10, 2005
BOARD DATE: November 17, 2005

PARAPROFESSIONAL TEACHER PREPARATION GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby adopts the attached
Paraprofessional Teacher Preparation Grant Program Guidelines, as
amended.

Authority: MGL Chapter 15A S-19
 C. 45 of the Acts of 2005, Item 7070-0065
Contact: Dr. Clantha McCurdy, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Financial
 Assistance

Background Information

The Paraprofessional Teacher Preparation Grant Program was established by the Massachusetts Legislature in Fiscal Year 2003 for the purpose of encouraging and assisting paraprofessionals who wish to become certified to teach full-time in Massachusetts' public schools to pursue their higher education credentials. In its initial appropriation language, only paraprofessionals enrolled in public colleges and universities were eligible to receive grant assistance. The appropriation language for Fiscal Year 2006 incorporates Massachusetts independent (private) colleges and universities into the list of eligible colleges that paraprofessional may attend and participate in the grant program.

The Paraprofessional Teacher Preparation Grant helps to reduce financial barriers that often become obstacles for many paraprofessionals, particularly those from low-income and disadvantaged populations. The guidelines, as amended, provide grants to support the educational expenses of paraprofessionals who choose to enroll full- or part-time during the academic year, including summer terms. Since its inception, an average of 400 paraprofessionals receives financial support through this program each year. This number is expected to increase with the participation of paraprofessionals who enroll in eligible programs at independent colleges. This grant will facilitate the successful pathway for paraprofessionals attempting to achieve teacher certification.

The attached guidelines have been modified to reflect the Fiscal Year 2006 appropriation language.

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
PARAPROFESSIONAL TEACHER PREPARATION GRANT PROGRAM**

DEFINITIONS:

INSTITUTION:

Any regionally accredited public or independent college or university in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that offers a teacher preparation program leading to licensure, approved by the Massachusetts Department of Education (MDOE); or a two-year college that has a signed articulation or joint admissions agreement with a four-year college or university for a teacher preparation program.

ELIGIBLE PROGRAM:

Any undergraduate baccalaureate degree program, offered by an eligible institution, with a teacher preparation program approved by the Massachusetts Department of Education or a program at a two-year college with a signed articulation or joint admissions agreement with an institution offering an MDOE approved program.

ELIGIBLE STUDENT:

An eligible student is an undergraduate student enrolled full- or part-time and meeting the following requirements:

- a) Is a permanent legal resident of Massachusetts for at least one year prior to the start of the academic year and who is a U.S. citizen or a non-citizen eligible under Federal Title IV regulations.
- b) Is in compliance with applicable law regarding Selective Service Registration.
- c) Is not in default with applicable law regarding any federal or state student education loans for attendance at any institution or owes a refund for any previous financial aid received.
- d) Is enrolled full-time (12 semester credits or the equivalent) or part-time (3 to 11 credits or the equivalent) in a traditional academic semester.
- e) Has worked, and continues to work, as a paraprofessional in a public school in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a minimum of two years or is employed as a paraprofessional and is enrolled in and pursuing courses of study that will lead to certification as a teacher in bilingual education, special education, math, science, or foreign language, while working as a paraprofessional in a public school in the Commonwealth.
- f) Maintains satisfactory academic progress in accordance with institutional standards.
- g) Annually files the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and completes a minimum of credits each academic year as part of the application for renewal of the grant.

- h) Provides documentation to the Office of Student Financial Assistance of compliance with required program of study and academic progress, as requested.
- i) Signs an agreement to teach in a public school in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts upon graduation and certification in accordance with section 38G of Chapter 71 M.G.L.
- j) Has not earned a baccalaureate or professional degree or the equivalent.

STUDENT AWARD VALUES

The award under this program shall be as follows:

- a) up to \$625 per credit at an independent college or public university, not to exceed \$7,500 per academic year, or \$3,750 per semester.
- b) up to \$450 per credit at a public four-year college, not to exceed a maximum of \$6,000 per academic year, or \$3,000 per semester
- c) up to \$250 per credit for public two-year colleges, not to exceed a maximum of \$4,000 per academic year, or \$2,000 per semester

Awards may not exceed the recipient's cost of attendance for any academic term of study.

The Board of Higher Education will annually review the public university and college tuition and fee charges and adjust the program award values, as it deems necessary.

TEACHING OBLIGATION

Recipients of the Paraprofessional Teacher Preparation Grant must sign a Terms and Conditions Statement acknowledging their obligation to provide service as a full-time teacher in a Massachusetts public school (K-12). The service commitment will range from a minimum of two and a maximum of four years, depending on the number of semesters of grant assistance received.

Failure to provide the required service may result in a repayment of funds received, prorated on the length of service, as defined in the Terms and Conditions Statement and as determined by the Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance.

INSTITUTIONAL DISBURSEMENT OF GRANTS:

Each participating institution must certify that the recipient is eligible in accordance with guidelines established for the Paraprofessional Teacher Preparation Grant Program. Academic year awards will be disbursed in equal payments for the fall and spring semesters.

Grants may be awarded for summer terms only if funds are available. All funds must be disbursed by June 30.

PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT:

All institutions participating in the Paraprofessional Teacher Preparation Grant Program must file a State Financial Aid Program Participation Agreement to be maintained on file in the Office of Student Financial Assistance.

AUDIT REQUIREMENTS:

- a) It shall be the responsibility of each college and university to maintain adequate documentation of a recipient student's eligibility for the Paraprofessional Teacher Preparation Grant Program.
- b) The Chancellor shall require each campus to furnish annually to the Board of Higher Education a report detailing specific information regarding recipients of the Paraprofessional Teacher Preparation Program. The Office of Student Assistance will coordinate specification and procedures for this report to Financial Assistance (OSFA).
- c) All financial books, records and documents pertaining to this program shall at all times be open to inspection, review and audit by the Chancellor, the State Auditor or their authorized representatives who shall have access to the premises wherever such books, records and documents are located. The institution shall retain such financial books, records and documents for seven years. An institution may retain such records for a period of five years if approval is received from the Records Conservation Board in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 30, Section 42.

AUTHORITY

MGL Chapter 15A S-19
C. 45 of the Acts of 2005, Item 7070-0065