

2010 Massachusetts ITQ Grant Program Information

Background

The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) is issuing this Request for Proposals to distribute Federal Fiscal Year 2009 funds allocated under the *No Child Left Behind: Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund*. The State Agency for Higher Education Partnership grants are funded by the Title II: Part A Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) component of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).

The DHE will administer Title IIA funds by awarding competitive sub-grants to eligible partnerships of Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) (including public and private institutions at both 2-year and 4-year levels), and local educational agencies (LEAs). The partnerships must use the funds to conduct professional development activities in mathematics and/or writing in order to ensure that high school educators have appropriate subject matter knowledge in these academic subjects and an understanding of the current national dialogue around "college readiness" in order to raise student achievement and to enhance students' readiness for the expectations and demands of college mathematics and writing courses.

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US Dept of Education ITQ Grant Program Purposes and Priorities

The goal of this funding is to improve student academic achievement through initiatives that provide high-quality training for teachers that are grounded in scientific research. The program supports partnerships to develop innovative initiatives that prepare, train, recruit, and retain highly-qualified educators. These initiatives should be aligned with current Massachusetts' education reform initiatives, including the [Massachusetts curriculum frameworks](#) and the [Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System](#) (MCAS).

Funds must support one or both of the following types of activities to enhance student achievement in LEAs and schools participating in the partnerships:

- Professional development activities in core academic subjects to ensure that teachers, highly qualified paraprofessionals and, if appropriate, principals have subject matter knowledge in the academic subjects that the teachers teach, and
- Development and provision of assistance to LEAs and its teachers, highly qualified paraprofessionals, or school principals, in providing sustained, high-quality professional development activities that:
 - ensure that those individuals can use challenging State academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and State assessments to improve instructional practices and student academic achievement, and
 - may include intensive programs designed to prepare individuals who will return to a school to provide instruction related to the proposed professional development to others in their schools.

The program priorities focus on closing the student achievement gap through innovative projects that address the following:

- Support teachers currently teaching in a content area for which they do not hold a license and prepare them to obtain a license in this field.
- Align professional development activities with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and with the standards for the licensing and re-licensing of teachers to ensure that educators possess the knowledge and skill to improve student achievement in the core academic areas.
- Provide professional development activities that integrate curriculum frameworks and standards-based teaching into teacher preparation and in-service programs.

Massachusetts 2010 ITQ Grant Program; General Information, Priorities and Requirements

Under the Improving Teacher Quality State Grants Program, the DHE will make competitive grants to partnerships comprised, at a minimum, of:

1. A department or school within a Massachusetts IHE responsible for teacher preparation;

2. A department or school within a Massachusetts IHE specific to the chosen content field;
3. A high-need LEA

In addition, these partnerships may include multiple IHEs, multiple LEAs (including non-high need school districts), non-profit independent schools, non-profit organizations (such as museums, science centers, educational partnership organizations), and college assessment personnel.

Participating IHEs must have a record of demonstrated experience and effectiveness with professional development and college remedial coursework. At least some of the IHE faculty participating in the partnership must have experience with college-readiness outreach to high school teachers to ensure that teachers will acquire sufficient knowledge and appropriate teaching methodologies to design new courses or to enhance existing ones with a college-readiness focus.

An IHE partner must be the fiscal agent and official applicant for the grant. Moreover, project directors or co-directors must be IHE faculty members and/or permanent staff persons with background and expertise in the related subject matter.

In 2010, the Massachusetts ITQ program's focus will align with the mission of the Board of Higher Education in the areas of college readiness and curriculum alignment. ITQ funds will be allocated to partnership activities designed to enhance student achievement and college preparation in mathematics and/or writing in participating high-need school districts, which will increase the chance of student success and ultimately, reduce the number of students who are unprepared to begin credit-bearing mathematics and writing courses upon college admission. Note that ITQ funds cannot be used directly for curriculum development of new high school courses; other funds will need to be accessed for these purposes.

ITQ grant proposals may include projects focused solely on mathematics or writing, however, proposals that bring faculty together around both disciplines will be given priority during the proposal review. Furthermore, preference will be given to proposals which:

- Improve communication and collaboration across Massachusetts' education system around college readiness, curriculum alignment, and new ways for teachers to prepare students with the necessary content proficiency to succeed in entry-level college courses with the ultimate goal of increasing college attendance and completion. (As an example, a project may enroll high school teachers in college courses to learn new content, different pedagogy and learning expectations in the college setting. Another project may explore course alignment and content gap analysis, wherein high school and college faculty from the same discipline conduct norming sessions to collaboratively review and evaluate student work from both high school and college courses. Another project might bring together faculty, curriculum coordinators, guidance counselors, principals, college assessment staff, and parents to explore important college expectations and demands on students, such as: habits of mind, intellectual maturity, ability to think critically, and independent study skills.)
- Provide sustained and intensive professional development in mathematics, plus reading and writing, to raise student achievement on college placement exams and reduce enrollment in developmental courses. (As an example, a project may include administering one or more Accuplacer[®] computerized placement tests to assess high school students' college readiness as a form of early assessment. While ITQ funds will not cover this cost, be aware that The College Board is interested in supporting some components of these projects under the condition that they can work with grantees collaboratively in assessing college readiness. Furthermore, College Board is encouraging the usage of their new Accuplacer[®] diagnostic instrument which will provide a detailed analysis of students' strengths and weaknesses. Grantees will need to contract with College Board directly, if interested in this.)
- Include plans for connecting "lessons learned" from this professional development project to the IHE's teacher preparation programs for a "college-readiness" perspective.

Funding Targets and Timetable

The DHE currently has approximately \$500,000 available to support new 2010 Teacher Quality Partnership Grant projects via a competitive review process. DHE expects to fund up to five grants for between \$75,000 and

\$150,000 per year for up to three years, pending US Department of Education ongoing funding. The annual project cycle will be May 1 through April 30.

The announcement of awards will be made in March 2010. Project will commence upon approval of the Interagency Service Agreement (for awards to public colleges and universities) or the Standard Contract (for awards to independent colleges and universities and nonprofit organizations).

Upon receipt of an award, the lead IHE becomes a sub-recipient of federal assistance. The Institution must retain all program and financial records related to this grant for a minimum of five years. The sub-recipient also is required to provide records and financial statements as well as access to those records and statements such that DHE can assure that an audit of the sub-recipient meets the requirements of OMB Circular A-21 or A-122. Disbursement of funds is contingent upon an approved Interagency Service Agreement or Standard Contract.

Timetable

Description	Date
Request for Proposals available	November 2009
On-line proposals due on DHE website	By noon on January 15, 2010
Announcement of Awards	March 2010
Year 1 Project period begins	May 1, 2010
Year 1 Project finish	April 30, 2011
Year 2 Project finish	April 30, 2012
Year 3 Project finish	April 30, 2013

Mandated Requirements

All projects shall meet the following requirements in order to receive assistance under this program:

- The lead IHE shall enter into an agreement with a high-need local educational agency or consortium of such agencies, to provide sustained, high-quality professional development for educators in the schools of each such agency. Each project shall be planned and implemented in conjunction with a high-need school district, but teachers from other districts are welcome to participate.
- An attempt must be made to advertise and/or contact teachers in all non-profit private schools in the corresponding high-needs partner districts.
- Eligibility is limited to partnerships comprising at a minimum:
 1. A department or school within a Massachusetts IHE responsible for teacher preparation;
 2. A department or school within a Massachusetts IHE specific to the subject matter being addressed;
and
 3. A high-need LEA

A high-need LEA is defined as an LEA satisfying **both** criteria A and B described below:

A. (1) that serves at least 10,000 children from families with incomes below the poverty level; **or** (2) for which at least 20% of the children served by the agency are from families with incomes below the poverty line;

and

B. (1) for which there is a high percentage of teachers not teaching in the academic subjects or at the grade levels that the teachers were trained to teach; **or** (2) for which there is a high percentage of teachers with emergency, provisional, or temporary certification or licensing. (Section 2102)

The current [list of MA school districts](#) that meet the "percentage of children below the poverty line" eligibility criteria is as follows:

Boston, Chelsea, Chicopee, Fall River, Fitchburg, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, North Adams, Revere, Southbridge, Springfield, West Springfield, Worcester

- Community or two-year colleges may receive funds as eligible partners to provide professional development activities, as long as they have a division that prepares teachers and principals. Furthermore, they must either 1) have signed articulation agreements that guarantee enrollment to qualified students in approved teacher preparation programs that lead to Massachusetts licensure, or 2) provide evidence that they offer a program of study that meets the standards of the statewide Elementary Education Compact or Early Childhood Education Compact.
- **Section 2132(c) - "the special rule"**

This law requires that no single participant in an eligible partnership (i.e., no single LEA, no single IHE school/department that prepares teachers, no single IHE school/department of arts and sciences, and no single other partner) may "use" more than 50% of the subgrant. This provision does not focus on which partner receives the funds, but which partner directly benefits from them.
- Projects shall promote "*effective professional development*." This includes a set of activities that produce a demonstrable and measurable effect on student academic achievement. Effective professional development as defined in *No Child Left Behind* emphasizes that project activities must be grounded in scientifically-based research. All project activities shall:
 - A. Be grounded in scientifically-based research. This is defined in the federal guidelines as "research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs." [Section 9101(37) of ESEA as amended by *No Child Left Behind*]; and
 - B. Reflect an assessment of local needs of the school district's teaching force in order to be able to have all students meet challenging State content and academic achievement standards.
- Grantees will be required to work directly with the Statewide Evaluator (UMass Donahue Institute) to set up both formative and summative evaluation of their projects. Formative evaluation will gather information that contributes to program improvement. Summative evaluation will gather information that documents fulfilling goals & outcomes. The Statewide Evaluator will provide some standardized data collection and evaluation tools to the projects, will advise them on designing ones that are specifically focused on their projects and will meet with the grantees in-person in before projects commence to assist them with evaluation, data collection & reporting requirements. A more detailed outline of the evaluation requirements can be found under "Expected Impact and Project Evaluation" in "Proposal Application Items."
- The proposed project shall not duplicate programs already funded by the Department of Higher Education, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the federal government, or other sources. If a proposed project is similar to an already funded program, evidence shall be provided to show how the proposed project differs from or adds to the existing program.
- Funded activities are restricted to students and teachers in Massachusetts schools.
- Grantees must inform the ITQ Program Director if expected enrollments fall below 75% of predicted enrollments and do so BEFORE project activity commences. Furthermore, no project activity will be funded if enrollment falls below 15 teachers.

Further guidance on ITQ federal requirements may be found at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/guidance.pdf>
