

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY GRANT PROGRAM



**Massachusetts Department of Higher Education
One Ashburton Place, Room 1401
Boston, Massachusetts 02108**

June 10, 2013

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IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY GRANT PROGRAM

GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT AND PROCEDURES

Background

The Massachusetts (MA) Department of Higher Education (DHE) is issuing this Request for Proposals to distribute Federal Fiscal Year 2013 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 MA DHE will administer Title IIA funds by awarding competitive sub-grants to eligible partnerships of Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) meeting high-need requirements. The partnerships must use the funds to conduct professional development activities that creatively address challenges to teacher and educator quality, principals' capacity and effectiveness of school leaders in high need schools and programs. The MA program priorities focus on preventing and closing the achievement gap through innovative projects based on the science of early learning between birth and eight years old.

ITQ Funds must be used to:

- Increase child learning outcomes
- Increase teacher/educator/principal content knowledge
- Increase teacher/educator/principal pedagogical knowledge
- Improve effectiveness in teacher/educator/principal practice

The DHE will administer ITQ funds by awarding competitive sub-grants to eligible not-for-profit public and private 2-year and 4-year institutions of higher education. Sub-grants must be used to meet the goals and objectives established for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as awarded under the ITQ and described in this RFP.

I. ITQ Grant Program Purposes and Priorities 2013

The goal of this funding is to improve academic achievement through initiatives that provide high-quality training for teachers that are grounded in the science of early learning between birth and eight years old. 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 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, Massachusetts Early Learning Standards, Common Core State Standards and the Massachusetts Early Learning and Development Assessment System.

Funds must support at least one of the following authorized types of activities to enhance child learning outcomes in LEA schools and programs participating in the partnerships.

US Department of Education 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 (see A. and B. below) 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.
- Educators from other districts and non-profit educational organizations are welcome and encouraged to participate.
- An attempt must be made to advertise and contact educators in non-profit private educational programs in the high-needs districts, to help design and participate in the project.

Eligibility is limited to partnerships comprising at a minimum:

1. A department or school within a Massachusetts IHE responsible for teacher and educator preparation
2. A department or school within a Massachusetts IHE specific to the subject matter being addressed and
3. A high-need LEA defined as an LEA satisfying **both criteria A and B** described below:
A. 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) a high percentage of teachers are not teaching in the academic subjects or at the grade levels that the teachers were trained to teach, (including teachers with the 1-6 license, and not the P-2 license, teaching in prekindergarten and kindergarten grades) **or**

(2) for which there is a high percentage of teachers with emergency, provisional, or temporary certification or licensing.

The current Massachusetts school districts serving not fewer than 10,000 students and meeting the percentage of children below the poverty line eligibility criteria are as follows:

Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Fall River, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, Springfield, Worcester¹

- 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 future teachers or principals. They must either provide evidence that they offer a program of study that meets the standards of the statewide Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education Compact or have signed articulation agreements providing enrollment at a 4-year college to qualified students in approved teacher preparation programs that lead to Massachusetts licensure.

ESEA Section 2132(c) -

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 sub-grant. 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 children's 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 the local needs of the school district's teaching force capacity to enable all students to meet challenging State content and academic achievement standards.

Grantees will be required to work directly with the Statewide Evaluator (University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute) to set up both formative and summative evaluation of their projects. Formative evaluation will gather information that contributes to project improvement. Summative evaluation will gather information that documents growth toward fulfillment of Anticipated Outcomes (see p. 7). The Statewide Evaluator will provide some standardized data collection and evaluation tools to the projects, will advise participants on designing data collection that is

¹ <http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/data/interactive/#view=SchoolDistricts> Retrieved 4/26/2013

specifically focused on their projects and will meet with the grantees in-person before projects commence to assist them with evaluation, data collection & reporting requirements. A more detailed outline of the evaluation requirements can be found in Section III of this RFP, Proposal Application Procedures and Formatting Requirements under "*Expected Impact and Project Evaluation*".

- The proposed project shall not duplicate programs already funded by the Department of Higher Education, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Early Education and Care, the federal government, or other sources. Projects may extend or further develop an existing program. 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 educators and teachers in Massachusetts.
- Grantees must inform the ITQ Program Director if expected enrollments fall below 75% of predicted enrollments and do so BEFORE project activity commences. No project activity will be funded if enrollment falls below 15 participants.

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

II. Massachusetts Improving Teacher Quality Grant Program Activities and Anticipated Outcomes Requirements

Authorized Activities:

- Professional development in multiple and integrated approaches to developmentally appropriate early childhood assessment and curriculum for children between birth through age eight. The professional development experiences should be aligned with the Massachusetts Early Learning and Development Assessment System
- Learning experiences that increase understanding of child development and the principles of instruction derived from epistemologies of early childhood education from birth through age eight and are aligned with Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks including Early Learning, Head Start Child Development Early Learning Frameworks, and Common Core State Standards.
- Learning experiences in mathematics and the sciences, which are aligned across multiple education sectors (e.g. museums, libraries, child care, etc) and include educator partners serving the same children in schools and other non-profit community educational organizations; and are aligned with Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks including Early Learning, Head Start Child Development Early Learning Frameworks and Common Core State Standards.
- Learning experiences that integrate the content areas of mathematics and the sciences with the arts, are aligned across multiple education sectors (e.g. museums, libraries, child care, etc), and are aligned with Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks including Early Learning, Head Start Child Development Early Learning Frameworks and Common Core State Standards.

Anticipated Outcomes:

The Department of Higher Education has developed an established set of anticipated outcomes related to the overall objectives and authorized activities. Learning experiences should be targeted to two or more of the following lists of anticipated outcomes:

1. Increase educator content knowledge of child development across sectors, and its relationship to how children develop understandings of numeracy and literacy
2. Increase educator application of developmentally appropriate practices and the science of early learning across curriculum areas, connecting learning experiences in numeracy, literacy, and the arts with thematic content knowledge in the sciences
3. Increase educator partnerships between sectors and within local communities to increase children's learning in sciences and arts

4. Increase educator content knowledge of how children develop numeracy and mathematic intelligence during pre-representational and concrete-operational stages of growth
5. Increase educator pedagogical understanding of evidence of children’s learning through observation and how to use observations to inform curriculum plans and teaching / learning practices and activities
6. Increase educator knowledge and aptitude with Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R), Arnett Caregiver Interaction Scale (Arnett- CIS), Pyramid Model – Collaboration for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL), and Strengthening Families Self Assessment Tool (SFSAT)
7. Increase educator pedagogical knowledge of how social-emotional development impacts cognitive learning and how to use this knowledge to help children learn self-regulation and increase learning

Funding Targets and Timetable

Upon receipt of an award, the designated partner becomes a sub-recipient of federal assistance. The partner, therefore, 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 the Office of Management and Budget. Disbursement of funds is contingent upon an approved Interagency Service Agreement or Standard Contract.

Improving Teacher Quality Grant Program Timetable

Description	Date
Request for Proposals (RFP) Release	June 10
Proposal Due Date	July 19
Announcement of Awards	August 16
Commencement of Program Activities	September 20
Completion of Program Activities	June 30

III. Improving Teacher Quality Grant Program PROPOSAL APPLICATION PROCEDURES & FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

- [Project Abstract](#)
- [Project Narrative](#)
- [Expected Impact & Project Evaluation](#)
- [Proposed Budget](#)
- [Budget Narrative](#)
- [Letters of Agreement](#)

All applications for funding **must be submitted online** and directions for using the online system will appear when you login. Your application **must include** the following information:

Project Abstract Form

Write a one page abstract that describes the following: (1) List of Partners, (2) Project's Principal Objectives, (3) Major Activities, (4) and a brief outline of your Local Evaluation Plan.

1. Statement of the need for the project
2. Authorized Activities (from RFP page 7)
3. Anticipated Outcomes (from RFP pages 7-8)
4. Major project components and the link between these and the stated objectives
5. Timeline indicating the implementation and completion dates of the proposed activities and related tasks
6. Description of Partners, their sector, role in the project, and how this relates to the objectives
7. Description of the target population (e.g. in-service, pre-service teacher, administrator, director, principal) and target school districts or schools (see RFP p 4 eligibility)
8. Educator enrollment projections; recruitment and retention; for multi-year proposals, address how you will revise the plan if enrollments fall below expectations. (*Note: if enrollment for any project activity falls below 75% of your projection, then permission of ITQ program director is necessary to proceed.*)
9. Dissemination plan - describe how the project director will make annual performance information available to project team members and local stakeholders.

The Project Narrative should not exceed 3 double-spaced pages, size 12 font. This is the *maximum length permitted*. Proposal exceeding this limit will not be accepted.

- **Expected Impact and Project Evaluation**

ITQ projects will be required to fulfill to two types of evaluation: state-wide evaluation and local evaluation. Requirements for the state-wide evaluation will be determined after projects are selected such that they will overlap with local evaluation activities. The proposal requires a description of your local evaluation plan. Components of a local evaluation should include a description of how this project will impact educators' content and pedagogical knowledge and skills, and learning outcomes for children. Describe how the project will be evaluated to determine whether or not the stated goals and objectives are met.

The proposal should describe the formative evaluation plan for documenting specific project activities, their implementation, and the particular standards to which the activities are aligned (see p. 7 Authorized Activities). The proposal requires the overall summative evaluation plan to address four primary outcomes: (1) changes in educators' content knowledge, (2) changes in educators' pedagogical knowledge, (3) changes in educators' practices, and (4) changes in child learning outcomes (see p. 7 Anticipated Outcomes). Additionally the summative plan requires information about participants, the participating LEA(s) and any other non-profit educational partners.

State-wide Data Collection Activities

To facilitate better state-wide program evaluation, the Department of Higher Education requires all projects to engage in expanded data collection at the activity, participant/teacher, and school levels. Forms, spreadsheet templates, and online portals will be provided for collecting and reporting information. Data collection activities will be reported on an annual basis.

The Expected Impact and Project Evaluation Plan should not exceed 3 double-spaced pages, size 12 font.

BUDGET

- **Total:** The total amount required to complete the project.

Budget Narrative - Provide a *Budget Narrative* that includes calculations and breakdowns of budget amounts, description of budget items and describes any materials or software. If any contracted services are included, provide an explanation. Describe all matched funding sources and amounts.

Note: For multi-year projects, it is permitted to have budgets that vary year-to-year; for example, some projects might add activities in subsequent years. If the project budget changes year-to-year, include a separate budget discussion for each year.

Complete Budget Form (see appendix)

Letters of Agreement – Attach letters of agreement from all partners indicating their specific participation and role in the project.

2013 Budget Form

Project Title: _____

Institution: _____

Total Amount Requested: _____

	ITQ Grant Funds Requested	Institutional Funds	Other Funds	Total
Salaries:				
Administrators				
Staff: Instructional & Professional				
Staff: Support				
Fringe Benefits				
Contractual Services				
Supplies and Materials				
Travel				
Other Costs:				
Advertising				
Maintenance and Repairs				
Memberships and Subscriptions				
Printing and Reproduction				
Telephone/Utilities				
Rental of Space/Equipment				
Mailing/Postage				
Non-classified				
Indirect Costs *				
Equipment				
Totals				

*not to exceed 8 percent of total operating costs

Signature _____ Date _____

Name and Title (Please Print)

