



Diverse Educator Recruitment and Success Plan: Partnership with American Institutes for Research

Frequently Asked Questions

What is AIR and why is ISBE partnering with it?

The American Institutes for Research® (AIR) is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research and delivers technical assistance to solve some of the most urgent challenges in the United States and around the world. [Read more about AIR's work.](#)

Twenty-seven percent of newly enrolled undergraduate teacher candidates across Illinois identified as people of color in 2019. In the same year, only 18 percent of undergraduate education program completers identified as people of color, indicating an opportunity to improve enrollment and retention rates for candidates of color. The Illinois State Board of Education recognizes that educator preparation programs (EPPs) are not solely responsible for creating a more diverse workforce. Districts, ISBE, and policymakers all play a critical role, but the programs that prepare our teachers need to take concrete steps to recruit and retain more teacher candidates of color to reach more equitable outcomes for students in Illinois. This was emphasized in the Illinois State Board of Education 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, which was built upon three goals -- student learning, learning conditions, and elevating educators. These goals are held together by ISBE's responsibility to tirelessly pursue educational equity for all students. One critical component of the Strategic Plan was -- and still is -- increasing the number of diverse educators who are attracted to the profession. ISBE has since expanded its definition of "diverse educator" to include candidates who are racially and ethnically diverse, and to include first-generation college students as well as recipients of Pell Grants.

This continued commitment to the recruitment, retention, and success of more diverse teacher candidates has led to a partnership between ISBE and AIR. Surveys completed by institutions of higher education (IHEs) in 2021 and 2022 indicated an interest in working with a content expert to support these efforts. As such, ISBE solicited bids for a vendor that has led similar projects with other education organizations. AIR was selected through the procurement process and will be ISBE's partner for this work through June 30, 2025.

ISBE and EPPs will be supported by a project team. Meet the [AIR team](#)!

How will AIR support ISBE and EPPs?

AIR, in partnership with ISBE, will provide support to our Illinois EPPs in the following ways:

- EPP Kickoff Meeting (Jan. 31): This meeting is for EPP leadership, faculty, and other team members who will play a key role in this effort. EPPs will learn about the support AIR will provide throughout the planning and implementation process and expectations from ISBE.

- EPP Training Webinar: In addition to the kickoff, AIR will host a webinar specific to education deans, program chairs, and individuals in other leadership positions who will guide program faculty and staff through the planning process.
- Small Group Meetings: These meetings will allow IHEs to collaborate and learn from their peers. There will be two, two-hour meetings in Year 1, and one, two-hour meeting in Year 2.
- Resource Development: AIR will also develop resources to assist ISBE and EPPs in evaluating successful implementation of strategies and plans in programs as well as assist ISBE with evaluating and providing feedback to each EPP on their submitted program plans.

Who should plan to attend and participate?

Each IHE should have identified a point of contact for the project with ISBE and assembled a team of faculty and staff critical to the development of a plan for the recruitment, retention, and the success of more diverse teacher candidates in Illinois EPPs. Anyone who is leading this work for their IHE should plan to attend the kickoff, professional development webinar, and the small group meetings. This audience will be mostly deans or college-level leadership and might include additional faculty, diversity, equity and inclusion representatives, or other members of your Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading planning and implementation team. Each IHE can determine who should attend each webinar. Registration links will be sent to Annual Program Reporting contacts and previously identified points of contact.

Are webinars and small group meetings required?

At least one representative of each IHE must attend the kickoff webinar, although we encourage your full planning team to attend. Each EPP planning team must attend all small group meetings.

Who will be coordinating the small group meetings?

Our AIR partners will be coordinating the small group meetings. The meetings will take place from spring through fall 2024.

We have already started our planning process for recruiting, retaining, and for the continued success of diverse candidates. Does bringing AIR on board mean we need to start over in our process?

No. We anticipate some programs have already made progress in their planning efforts. AIR is meant to provide support to programs in various stages of the process. The AIR team will review any work you have done so far, discuss problems that may have come up, and provide customized feedback based on best practices. The meetings will encourage collaboration regardless of where you are in the process.

Where can we find more details about the Diverse Educator Recruitment and Success Plan and ISBE expectations for programs?

Please see the [Diverse Educator Recruitment and Success Project webpage](#) for more information.

What is the deadline for submitting action plans?

EPPs are encouraged to incorporate changes and implement their plans on an ongoing basis. Two optional opportunities are available to receive feedback on draft action plans. Institutions may submit drafts for additional review and feedback either April 30- June 30, 2024, or Sept. 1- Oct. 31, 2024. Institutions must submit their action plan to ISBE by Jan. 1, 2025.

Are action plans required? How will institutions be held accountable for progress in diversifying the enrollment and success of candidates?

Every institution offering an educator preparation program in Illinois must submit an action plan. It is expected that plans will continue to be evaluated and updated as new data becomes available. Institutions will be held accountable based on the diverse candidate indicators in the Illinois Educator Preparation Profiles (IEPP). You can find more information on the [ISBE IEPP webpage](#).

Where should you direct further questions?

Direct all questions regarding ISBE expectations to your institution's assigned ISBE liaison. Please contact Dr. Beth Howard Brown at bhoward-brown@air.org or Lois Kimmel at lkimmel@air.org if you have content-specific questions.