



Illinois State Board of Education


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Darren Reisberg
Chairman

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
State Superintendent of Education

August 14, 2019

TO: Eligible Applicants

FROM: Dr. Carmen I. Ayala 
State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: **NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) / REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP):**
Fiscal Year 2020 Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) Professional Development

CSFA Number: 586-13-0542
CSFA Title: Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program (State)

Eligibility and Application Information

Eligible Applicants: Public school districts, Regional Offices of Education, community college districts, public university laboratory schools approved by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), charter schools, and area vocational centers are eligible to apply. Joint applications for funds may be submitted. However, in each case, an administrative agent must be designated, and the joint proposal must have the signature of each superintendent or the official authorized to submit the proposal.

NOTE: The State of Illinois Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) requires applicants to complete pre-qualification requirements before applying for an FY 2020 grant. This includes completion of the Grantee Registration and Pre-qualification process through the Illinois GATA Web Portal at <http://www.illinois.gov/sites/GATA/Grantee/Pages/default.aspx>. Grant applications must be submitted by the application deadline indicated in this NOFO/RFP.

Grant applicants are required to complete a FY 2020 Fiscal and Administrative Risk Assessment in the form of an Internal Controls Questionnaire (ICQ) available through the GATA Web Portal and a FY 2020 Programmatic Risk Assessment through the ISBE Web Application Security (IWAS) system. Grant awards will not be executed until the FY 2020 ICQ and Programmatic Risk Assessments are completed.

Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management (SAM): Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or federal or state awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR § 25.110(b) or (c) or has an exception approved by the federal or state awarding agency under 2 CFR § 25.110(d)) is required to:

- (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application. If you are not registered in SAM, you may do so at www.sam.gov;
- (ii) Provide a valid DUNS number in its application. You can request a DUNS number at <https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>; and
- (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal, federal pass-through, or state award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal or state awarding agency. ISBE may not consider an application for a federal pass-through or state award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements.

Code of Federal Regulations / Title 2 - Grants and Agreements / Vol. 1 / 2014-01-01192: Guidance is found at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2013-title2-vol1.pdf>.

This grant is subject to the provisions of:

- Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA), 30 ILCS 708/1 et seq. <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=3559&ChapterID=7>
- Administrative Rules for GATA, 44 Ill. Admin. Code Part 7000 <ftp://www.ilga.gov/JCAR/AdminCode/044/04407000sections.html>

Merit-Based Review and Selection Process for Competitive Grants: ISBE is required to design and execute a merit-based review and selection process for applications. This process is incorporated by reference in all applicable funding opportunities. The full text of the ISBE merit-based review policy can be found at https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Merit_Based_Review_Policy.pdf. Applicants are advised to refer to the policy document.

Grant Award/Cost Sharing or Matching: The total amount of grant funding will not exceed \$200,000. There is no matching requirement for this grant. Additional funding information can be found under Funding Information on page 6.

Grant Period: The grant period will begin no sooner than October 1, 2019, and will extend from the execution date of the grant until August 31, 2020. There will be two one-year renewals (FY 2021 and FY 2022) contingent upon a sufficient appropriation and satisfactory performance in each preceding grant year.

Submission Dates and Times/Other Submission Requirements: Proposals can be submitted electronically through the ISBE Attachment Manager, mailed, or hand-delivered no later than 4 p.m. on October 1, 2019. Directions for each submission method are found below.

Electronic Submission: Completed proposals submitted electronically should be scanned into PDF with all supporting documents and required signatures. The ISBE Attachment Manager is found at <https://sec1.isbe.net/attachmgr/default.aspx>. Choose Brian Houser from the drop down menu in Receiver Information. Submit the application using the button at the bottom of the page.

Mailed Proposals: Mail the original and an electronic copy of the proposal on a USB flash drive to Brian Houser, Illinois State Board of Education, Division of Regulatory Support, 100 N. First Street (E-222), Springfield, IL 62777-0001 to ensure the NOFO/RFP response is in the ISBE offices no later than 4 p.m. on October 1, 2019. It is advised to use certified mail with guaranteed delivery date and a return receipt requested.

Hand Delivered: Proposals may be hand-delivered to the following locations:

Springfield Office
Reception Area
1st Floor
100 North First Street

Late proposals will not be accepted

Grant Award Notice: It is anticipated that successful applicants will receive a Notice of Award from the State Superintendent via email approximately 90 days after the application deadline. The award letter is **NOT** an authorization to begin performance or expenditures. After the merit-based appeal timeframe has ended, awardees will receive additional information from the program area that includes the next steps for finalizing the grant. Monies spent prior to programmatic approval are done so at the applicant's own risk.

Technical Assistance Session: A technical assistance session will be held via webinar at 2:00 p.m. on August 22, 2019. Registration information is found at <https://global.gotoweinar.com/join/6627245164346051587/367069790>. Attendance is not required.

Changes to NOFO/RFP: ISBE will post any changes made to the NOFO/RFP prior to September 24, 2019, at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Request-for-Proposals.aspx>. Applicants are advised to check the site before submitting a proposal.

Agency Contact/Contact to Request Application Package: For more information on this NOFO/RFP, contact Brian Houser at (217) 782-5270 or bhouser@isbe.net. *All questions asked concerning this NOFO/RFP will be responded to in a Frequently Asked Questions document found at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Special-Education-Truants-Alternative-and-Optional-Education-Program.aspx> so all respondents can see all questions and the responses to the questions. Changes to the FAQ will not be made after September 24, 2019. Applicants are advised to check the site before submitting a proposal.*

Program Description

Program Purpose:

The program is designed to provide a digital curriculum for enrolled TAOEP students; professional development for program staff; technical assistance for program implementation and use of the digital curriculum; electronic statewide network services, including a program website and listserv; and program evaluation services.

Program Description:

Funds will be used to provide online curriculum to students participating in TAOEP and for professional development activities for staff involved in TAOEP.

Program Background/History:

Section 5/2-3.66 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/2-3.66) authorizes ISBE to provide grants for the establishment of TAOEP. State funds have been appropriated by the General Assembly since 1986 to provide grants to eligible entities for the purpose of establishing dropout prevention programs. ISBE awarded 74 TAOEP grants serving more than 26,000 students statewide in FY 2019. Historically, these services to the grantees have included the provision of a digital curriculum for enrolled students; professional development for program staff; technical assistance for program implementation and use of the digital curriculum, electronic statewide network services, including a program website and listserv, and program evaluation services. The successful applicant is responsible for and must address each of the required objectives of the grant to support the TAOEP grantees.

ISBE Board Goal(s):

The grant program is aligned to the following Board goals:

- Ninety percent or more of students graduate from high school ready for college and career.
- All students are supported by highly prepared and effective teachers and school leaders.
- Every school offers a safe and healthy learning environment for all students.

Program Objectives:

Project coordination – Enhance the work of the TAOEP grant and ISBE personnel.

Staff requirements – Have qualified and experienced staff to provide professional development opportunities, negotiate contracts, and provide technical assistance.

Digital curriculum – Negotiate and execute a contract on an annual basis in order to provide a digital curriculum for TAOEP students to use.

Professional development – Provide technical assistance and professional development to TAOEP personnel in the more than 70 programs funded each year.

Evaluation – Conduct professional development based upon a needs assessment, report the use of digital curriculum, and complete mid-year and end-of-year reports regarding grant activities.

Policy Requirements:

No policy requirements are applicable.

Performance Measures:

Online curriculum will be available for all students enrolled in TAOEP.

Professional development activities will be available to all TAOEP staff.

Targets:

Project coordination and communication are occurring on a regular basis with ISBE personnel.

Qualified and experienced staff are providing professional development opportunities and technical assistance.

Professional development activities for TAOEP grantees are in progress or completed.

Digital curriculum is provided to TAOEP students with quarterly usage data being reported.

An evaluation of professional development opportunities and needs assessment of TAOEP programs are in progress or completed.

Performance Standards:

A minimum of 1500 online curriculum licenses will be purchased.

At least 50% of TAOEP students will have access to online curriculum.

At least 50% of TAOEP staff will have access to professional development activities.

Deliverables and Milestones:

Mid-year and end-of-year reports are required for the current year's program. These reports will document the services provided and describe the degree to which the grantee achieves its stated objectives. Report will be submitted in a Word document via e-mail

Funding Information

Introduction:

The total amount of funding for the first year of the grant (FY 2020) will be \$200,000. A commensurate amount of funding is anticipated for each subsequent renewal period, contingent upon sufficient appropriation for the program and satisfactory progress of the preceding year.

Cost Sharing or Matching:

Cost sharing or matching is not required.

Indirect Cost Rate:

The federal Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 requires that grantees be provided the opportunity to seek indirect cost reimbursements based on negotiated indirect cost reimbursement rates. Rates are determined and applied as follows.

Local Education Agencies (LEAs)

- LEA indirect cost rates are developed in accordance with a delegation of authority agreement between ISBE and the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The plan includes both a restricted and unrestricted rate for each individual LEA. Both the restricted and unrestricted LEA rates are published annually on the ISBE website. The FY 2019 rates are available at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Indirect-Cost-Rate-Plan.aspx>. In the past, only the restricted rate was allowed when budgeting indirect cost reimbursements.

LEAs have the ability to seek indirect cost reimbursement at the published unrestricted rate for any program other than those identified as restricted by ED.

- Newly organized LEAs, Regional Offices of Education, Intermediate Service Centers, area vocational centers, charter schools, university laboratory schools, and governmental entities formed by a joint agreement among LEAs utilize either the statewide average of LEA unrestricted or restricted indirect rates as appropriate, depending on program.
- LEAs that jointly administer federal program(s) utilize either the approved unrestricted or restricted indirect cost rates for the administrative district of the joint program as appropriate, depending on program.

Non-LEAs

- Programs eligible for an unrestricted indirect cost rate; not-for-profit entities; community/faith-based organizations; and other non-LEA, non-university subgrantees shall utilize rates negotiated through the Governor's Office of Management and Budget centralized process where they will have the option to:
 - Select the 10 percent diminimus rate.
 - Submit documentation supporting a rate determined through negotiation with their federal cognizant agency.
 - Negotiate a rate.

Non-LEA, non-university grantees may initiate the unrestricted indirect cost rate negotiation process through the GATA grantee portal at <https://grants.illinois.gov/portal/>.

- Federal programs requiring the use of a restricted indirect cost rate, not-for-profit entities, community/faith-based organizations, and other non-LEA subgrantees shall utilize the 8 percent default rate described at 34 CFR 76.564.
- Colleges and universities will be limited to a maximum indirect cost rate of 8 percent or other indirect cost rate calculated by their cognizant federal agency, whichever is less, for grants administered by ISBE.

Costs associated with Fiscal Support Services (2520), Internal Support Services (2570), Staff Support Services (2640), Data Processing Services (2660), and Direction of Business Support Services (2510) charged to the Educational Fund are properly budgeted as indirect costs.

Funding Restrictions:

This is an unrestricted indirect cost program. Colleges and universities will be limited to a maximum indirect cost rate of 8 percent or other indirect cost rate calculated by their cognizant federal agency, whichever is less, for grants administered by ISBE.

Reporting Requirements

- Quarterly cumulative expenditure reports and a final completion report are required.
- Periodic programmatic performance reporting are required through the Grant Periodic Reporting System in IWAS.
- The mid-year report is required by January 31, 2020, which includes updates on online curriculum usage and professional development offerings. Report will be submitted in a Word document via e-mail.
- The end-of-year report must be submitted no later than 30 days after the end of the grant period.

Content and Form of Application Submission

Instructions: Each application must be submitted in the format outlined below to be considered complete. A complete application will include all required components (the numbered items below) and signatures when mentioned. Please use the checkboxes in front of the numbers as a checklist when assembling your completed application. It is advised to attach a copy of the completed checklist with the application.

- 1. Uniform Application for State Grant (Attachment 1):** Include the name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and email of the entity; name, and telephone number of the contact person; Federal Employer Identification number; DUNS number; SAM CAGE Code; and all other listed information. The Application page must be signed by the official authorized to submit proposals.
- 2. Proposal Abstract (Attachment 2):** Briefly describe the general purpose, activities, and major outcomes of the proposal. Responses limited to one page.
- 3. Program Narrative (Attachment 3):** The Program Narrative should follow the objectives outlined in the Program Description of the RFP and should provide the activities that support the objectives. Please describe how funds will be used to provide online curriculum to TAOEP students and professional development activities to staff involved with TAOEP programs across the state. Include staff experience, statistical data and research to support effective strategies, and overall evaluation and cost effectiveness. Responses must be limited to no more than ten pages.
- 4. Objectives and Activities (Attachment 4):** Use the form provided to list the Objectives and Activities of the proposed project in a time-specific format. Include specific details regarding staff involvement of the work plan to accomplish activities and meet objectives. At a minimum, all Program Objectives described in the Program Description of this RFP should be addressed. Responses must be limited to not more than ten pages.
- 5. Evaluation Design (Attachment 5):** Use the form provided to complete the Evaluation Design. Responses must be limited to not more than five pages.
- 6. Budget Summary and Payment Schedule (Attachment 6):** The budget **MUST** be submitted on this form. No other budget form will be accepted. District budgets **MUST** be signed by the district superintendent. Other applicants should have the authorized official sign the form. The payment schedule should be based on the projected date of expenditures. Salaries and fringe benefits should be requested in equal intervals on the schedule. Supplies, equipment, contracted services, and professional development should be requested in the month for which the expenditure is anticipated.
- 7. Budget Summary Breakdown (Attachment 7):** The Budget Summary Breakdown **MUST** include descriptions of the anticipated expenditures, correlated to the line items set forth on the Budget Summary. The Budget Summary Breakdown should also include subcontract information, if applicable.
- 8. Certifications and Assurances (Attachments 8 and 9):** Each applicant is required to submit the forms below. These must be signed by the official legally authorized to submit the proposal and to bind the applicant to its contents.
 - A. Program-Specific Terms of the Grant (Attachment 8)**
 - B. Grant Application Certifications and Assurances (Attachment 9)**

Application Review

Review and Selection Process:

The selection of the grantees will be based upon the overall quality of the application. The scoring is based upon the following criteria:

- Need is defined as the identification of stakeholders, facts, and evidence that demonstrate the proposal supports the grant program purpose. There is sufficient need for the program/services, as evidenced by the number or proportion of students identified as eligible for program services;
- Capacity is defined as the ability of an entity to execute the grant project according to the project requirements;
- Quality is defined as the totality of features and characteristics of a service, project, or product that indicate its ability to satisfy the requirements of the grant program;
- Criteria and indicators for identifying students who are eligible for the program are clearly established and likely to target those students most in need of services.
- Program objectives and activities are well-defined, linked to identified needs, and likely to lead to improved outcomes for the students served in the program.
- The program is cost-effective as evidenced by the cost of proposed services in relation to the numbers to be served and the services to be provided.
- The evaluation strategies will effectively gauge the success of the program and yield sufficient data that can be used to improve the program. The proposal demonstrates strategies, other than those routinely offered by the regular school program that will be effective in decreasing the dropout rate and increasing school attendance.

Criteria:

These overall criteria are built into the scoring rubric below. Scoring is based upon the level of detail provided to reflect the overall quality of the application. The scoring table below is applied to each statement within the six categories, with a maximum of five points awarded to each.

Following the notification of grant awards, an applicant may request copies of reviewer comments and scores by contacting Brian Houser at bhouser@isbe.net.

Selection criteria and point values are as follows:

Not Provided	Very Limited	Somewhat Limited	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong
0	1	2	3	4	5
Proposal requirements are absent.	Proposal provides very few details to meet the project outcomes.	Proposal is unclear and lacks enough evidence to meet project outcomes.	Proposal provides moderate detail and conveys potential to meet project outcomes.	Proposal provides good detail and strong evidence to meet project outcomes.	Proposal exceeds expectations and provides a solid plan to meet project outcomes.

Scoring Rubric:

Section 1: Project Need 20 Points	Possible Points
Proposal clearly shows how online curriculum can effectively provide credit recovery and reduce truancy / dropout rates.	5
Proposal clearly states the number of potential students that would utilize the online curriculum.	5
Proposal includes statistical data that supports the need for quality digital curriculum.	5
Proposal clearly shows the need for professional development for teachers, administrators, and staff.	5
Section 1 Total	20
Section 2: Criteria and Indicators for Identification 20 Points	Possible Points
Expectations for stakeholder involvement and communication, including interaction with ISBE, are clearly stated in the proposal.	5
Proposal clearly establishes a process to provide online curriculum services for truants, chronic truants, potential dropouts, and/or dropouts.	5

Proposal clearly defines the process to inform TAOEP grantees about developing an Individual Optional Education Plan and providing effective services to students.	5
Proposal clearly identifies and selects online curriculum services appropriate for grantees and students.	5
Section 2 Total	20
Section 3: Program Objectives and Activities 20 Points	Possible Points
Proposal demonstrates the ability to provide professional development activities in relation to truancy and dropout prevention.	5
Objectives clearly show experience with digital online curriculum management.	5
Proposal identifies qualified and experienced staff to execute objectives.	5
Objectives are realistic and attainable based upon program resources and timeline.	5
Section 3 Total	20
Section 4: Strategies 10 Points	Possible Points
Strategies described in proposal are research/evidence-based.	5
Effective strategies to coordinate activities with ISBE, grantees, and stakeholders are provided in proposal.	5
Section 4 Total	10
Section 5: Evaluation 10 Points	Possible Points
The type of assessment tool(s) to evaluate strategies are identified.	5
Proposal demonstrates how collection of data will improve program effectiveness and efficiency.	5
Section 5 Total	10
Section 6: Cost-Effectiveness 20 Points	Possible Points
Proposal clearly provides a cost analysis breakdown.	5
Staffing costs are adequate and reasonable based on proposal objectives and budget.	5

Applicant clearly shows experience negotiating contracts with educational vendors in a cost-effective manner.	5
Overall, proposal clearly demonstrates the applicant can successfully implement the program and provide effective services with requested funding.	5
Section 6 Total	20