



WELCOME

Growing Agriculture Science Teachers
(GAST) Grant RFP for FY2020

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GAST Program Background

- Illinois recognizes the importance of agriculture through identification as one of the key industries in the Governor's State Economic Development Plan, indicating it is of central importance to the growth and economic welfare of the state.
- Agricultural education is a critical component vital to continued prosperity and requires a source of trained and qualified individuals for employment in the industry and in Illinois classrooms.
- The Growing Agriculture Science Teachers (GAST) grant was instituted in 2009 to assist in accomplishing long-term goals for preparing individuals in agricultural education.
- Allocations up to \$50,000 per institution to provide funding for programming and activities to address the growing agriculture teacher shortage in Illinois.
- (105 ILCS 5/2-3.80) (from Ch. 122, par. 2-3.80)



Eligibility Guidelines

- Four-year institutions of higher education that offer state-approved agriculture science teacher preparation programs, and
- Public community colleges in Illinois that provide an articulated agriculture science teacher education course of study, meaning that they offer at least:
 - The introductory agricultural education course for which transfer credit is accepted by the public universities under the Illinois Articulation Initiative (see the information posted by the Illinois Board of Higher Education at <https://itransfer.org/>); and
 - A one-semester-hour internship or other, equivalent field experience.
- All eligible applicants submitting approvable proposals shall receive funding. Applications for funding will be evaluated to determine funding level via a competitive process with priority points awarded to institutions that offer full teacher certification programs.



Grant Award

- All eligible applicants that submit approvable proposals that score 45 points or greater will receive a grant award.
- The size of individual grants will vary according to the activities proposed and their responsiveness to the funding priority up to a maximum of \$50,000.
- The grant had an appropriation of \$139,000 and seven grantees were funded in FY2019.
- The program has a total appropriation of \$300,000 in FY2020.
- This NOFO/RFP does not have a cost matching requirement.
- Additional funding information can be found under Funding Information on page 9 of the RFP.



Grant Award Timeline

- The grant period will begin no sooner than March 25, 2020, and will extend from the execution date of the grant until June 30, 2020.
 - Successful applicants may reapply via continuing application for up to two additional year(s).
 - Funding in the subsequent years will be contingent upon compliance with federal and state law, state grant-making rules, passage of sufficient appropriations for the program, and satisfactory performance in the preceding grant period.



Grant Award Timeline

- Proposals can be submitted electronically through the ISBE Attachment Manager, mailed, or hand-delivered no later than 4 p.m. CST on March 25, 2020.
- Directions for each submission method are found in the RFP on Page 3.



Grant Award Timeline

- 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.



Program Description and Guidelines

- The GAST grant provides funds to eligible universities with agricultural education programs and community colleges that have programs articulated with agricultural education teacher preparation programs to provide activities in four categories:
 - Professional learning of agricultural education faculty,
 - Professional learning of preservice agriculture teacher students and novice teachers in their first five years of teaching,
 - Agriculture teacher recruitment and retention initiatives, and
 - Mentoring activities by master teachers.



Program Description and Guidelines

- ISBE will give priority consideration to applications that include or emphasize **data collection or other research activities** related to agriculture teacher recruitment and retention factors and initiatives.
- Applicants may propose activities in the other categories; however, applicants are advised that ISBE will prioritize applications that propose to use a portion of grant funds for activities aimed at expanding knowledge on the recruitment and retention of agriculture teachers.
- Applicants are encouraged to include a data collection and evaluation components regarding effectiveness for all proposed activities.



Program Description and Guidelines

- Pursuant to 23 Illinois Administrative Code 75, Subtitle A, Section 75.40 Program Specifications, for the purposes of teacher education candidate recruitment and retention the program will include:
 1. The identification of 11th and 12th grade students who may be interested in pursuing agriculture education as a profession; and
 2. Activities and strategies that are designed to attract these and other students to teaching in agriculture education, including, but not limited to:
 - a) Introducing the students to multiple aspects of agricultural work and agricultural education in Illinois;
 - b) Providing mentors or other forms of personal support to the students as they determine whether to pursue careers as agricultural education teachers and as they progress through the teacher preparation program; and
 - c) Providing scholarships, stipends, or other forms of financial or in-kind support that will make completion of a teacher preparation program in agricultural education more affordable and accessible to students from a broad range of backgrounds.



Program Description and Guidelines

- *Data collection* or other *research-based activities* related to the initiatives of agriculture teacher recruitment and retention are key priorities in this grant.
- A deep understanding of the effectiveness of programming developed and provided for the purposes of teacher recruitment and retention is essential in prudent expenditure of resources aimed at addressing the critical agriculture teacher shortage.
- Applicants are encouraged to consider the findings of the Illinois Agriculture Education Shortage Task Force, which can be found at: <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Agriculture-Education-Shortage-Task-Force.aspx> to inform development of proposals.



Program Objectives

1. Promote increased awareness of agricultural education as a potential career among students from diverse backgrounds and communities.
2. Create enhanced incentives for individual students to enter and persist in teacher preparation programs in agricultural education.
3. Help eliminate barriers that may otherwise prevent individuals from completing preparation programs in agricultural education.
4. Enhance teacher preparation candidate understanding of agricultural education as a profession and broadened awareness of the varied facets of agriculture and agriculturally based careers.
5. Deliver professional learning that is designed in response to the expressed needs of individuals who are in their first five years of teaching in the field of agricultural education and the districts or cooperatives where they are employed.
6. Promote adequate participation by teacher educators in agricultural education in professional learning related to the needs of the individual.



Allowable Activities

- For purposes of this Subpart A, "teacher education candidate recruitment and retention initiatives" include:
 - a. The identification of 11th and 12th grade students who may be interested in pursuing agricultural education as a profession; and
 - b. Activities and strategies that are designed to attract these and other students to teaching in agricultural education, including, but not limited to:
 1. Introducing the students to multiple aspects of agricultural work and agricultural education in Illinois;
 2. Providing mentors or other forms of personal support to the students as they determine whether to pursue careers as agricultural education teachers and as they progress through the teacher preparation program; and
 3. Providing scholarships, stipends, or other forms of financial or in-kind support that will make completion of a teacher preparation program in agricultural education more affordable and accessible to students from a broad range of backgrounds.



Allowable Activities

- Each institution that elects to deliver professional learning experiences for new teachers shall first seek approval as a provider of professional learning for teachers in this field under the applicable provisions of the rules of the State Board of Education for Educator Licensure. (See 23 Ill. Adm. Code 25.855)



Allowable Activities

- A "master teacher" is a teacher with no fewer than six years of teaching experience, that ended no more than 10 years prior to submission of an application under this Subpart A, in the field of agricultural education, exclusive of teaching experience on an educator license with stipulations endorsed for either career and technical educator or provisional career and technical educator; and
- A "practitioner" is an individual who, as demonstrated by the institution's proposal narrative:
 - Is currently engaged, or has been engaged within the previous 10 years, in an agricultural occupation requiring knowledge and skills in agricultural science, agricultural mechanization, agricultural business, horticulture, or agricultural resources; or
 - Holds an educator license with stipulations endorsed for provisional career and technical educator for a skill area related to agricultural education and is currently teaching, or has taught within the previous 10 years, in a position requiring that educator license.



Allowable Activities

- Activities shall be supported by funding under this Subpart A only to the extent that they do not duplicate or supplant efforts already conducted by or under the auspices of the community college or university. The use of grant funds for administrative expenditures shall be limited to amounts demonstrably necessary for the implementation or coordination of additional activities under this Subpart A.



Performance Standards

- Performance Standards: must be met when applicable. Funding could be pulled if performance standards are not met.
 1. Eighty percent of proposed grant recruitment initiatives and activities must be designed to attract students in 11th and 12th grade who may be interested in pursuing agriculture education as a profession.
 - a. All recruitment activities must provide opportunities for middle, secondary, or post-secondary students to explore the agriculture science teaching career pathway.
 2. One hundred percent of retention initiatives must be designed for an audience of individuals who are teaching in the field of agricultural education and the districts or cooperatives where they are employed.
 3. One hundred percent of student field experiences in postsecondary educator preparation programs must be aligned with agriculture education career pathways.
 4. One hundred percent of professional learning events for an institution's agricultural education staff are relevant to the Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources pathway.



Performance Measures

- Performance measures: ideal minimum outcomes of the programs funded. *Should be the goal of grantees seeking funding for subsequent years.*
 1. One hundred percent of proposed grant recruitment initiatives and activities must be designed to attract students in 11th and 12th grade who may be interested in pursuing agriculture education as a profession.
 - a. At least 10 percent of recruitment activities must include schools that do not have agricultural education programs;
 - b. At least 10 percent of recruitment activities must include students who are not agricultural education students; and
 - c. All recruitment activities must provide opportunities for middle, secondary, or post-secondary students to explore the agriculture science teaching career pathway.
 2. One hundred percent of retention initiatives must be designed in response to the expressed needs of individuals who are in their first five years of teaching in the field of agricultural education and the districts or cooperatives where they are employed.
 3. One hundred percent of student field experiences in postsecondary educator preparation programs must be aligned with agriculture education career pathways and effective at introducing students to multiple aspects of agricultural work including teaching agriculture education in Illinois public schools.
 4. One hundred percent of professional learning events for an institution's agricultural education staff must be demonstrably related to the needs of the individual.



Targets

- Target achievement will be assessed through required reporting.
 1. Data identifies an increased expressed interest in agricultural education as a potential career among students from varied background and communities.
 2. Narrative or data identifies a reduction of barriers that may otherwise prevent individuals from completing preparation programs in this field.
 3. Data identifies an increase in retention rates of individuals who are in their first five years of teaching in the field of agricultural education.
 4. An increase in relevant events attended to promote participation by an institution's agricultural education staff in professional learning related to the needs of the individual.



Deliverables and Milestones Timeline

- Mid-year report due to ISBE on January 30 (unless otherwise stated by program administrator)
- End-of-year report due to ISBE on September 30
- Reporting requirements vary according to programs funded. See page 7 of RFP for details.
- **All reports submitted by attaching to the Grant Periodic Report in IWAS.**



Content and Form of Application Submission

- Each application must be submitted in the format outlined on page 11 of the RFP to be considered complete.
- Incomplete applications will not be evaluated and will be returned to the applicant with notification that the application was identified as incomplete.
- 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 on page 11 of the RFP with the application.



Content and Form of Application Submission

- 9 Form Templates for Attachments
 - Uniform Application for State Grant
 - Proposal Abstract—*500 words max*
 - Program Narrative—*10 page max*
 - Objectives and Activities—*8 page max*
 - Evaluation Design—*5 page max*
 - State Budget Summary and Payment Schedule
 - Budget Summary Breakdown
 - Certifications and Assurances (2 forms)



Application Review and Rubric

- The selection of the grantees will be based upon the overall quality of the application. The scoring is based upon the following criteria:
 - *Priority* is defined as institutions offering full teacher licensure programs in agricultural education.
 - *Need* is defined as the identification of stakeholders, facts, and evidence that demonstrate the proposal supports the grant program purpose.
 - *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.
 - *Student recruitment* is defined as the institution's identification of targeted students for participation and establishment of critical supports and resources for those students to increase knowledge and preparedness and likelihood of subsequent enrollment in an agricultural education teacher preparation program.
 - *Teacher retention* is defined as the institution's identification of targeted novice agriculture teachers in their first five years of service for participation and establishment of critical supports and resources to increase preparedness to teach agriculture and the likelihood of persistence in the agricultural education classroom.
 - *Field-based education* is defined as the institution's identification of need-based activities that occur in authentic PreK-12 agricultural education settings with students and educators currently engaged in agricultural education.
 - *Professional learning for agricultural education faculty and staff* is defined as the institution's identification of targeted faculty and staff for participation and establishment of support and resources for those individuals to improve the technical skills or knowledge necessary for agricultural education faculty and staff to prepare preservice agricultural educators or to conduct recruitment and retention activities consistent with the definition previously outlined.
 - *Scope* is defined as the relationship of the proposal to the purpose of the program and its goals.
 - *Cost Effectiveness, Evaluation, and Sustainability.* *Cost effectiveness and evaluation* are defined as overall impact of planned activities towards meeting or exceeding performance standards and measures through qualitative and quantitative evaluation methodologies and data collection. *Sustainability* is defined as the proposal's long-term plan to sustain programming in subsequent years including use of outside resources.



Application Review and Rubric

Criteria	Points	% of Total Points
Priority Current Status	20	22.2%
Section 1: Need	15	16.7%
Section 2A: Program Description—Scope	5	5.6%
Section 2B: Program Description--Capacity (Faculty/Staff Training and PD)	10	11.1%
Section 3: Quality of the Plan	5	5.6%
Section 4: Cost-effectiveness, Evaluation, and Sustainability	15	16.7%
Section 5: Evaluation Design Components	20	22.2%
Total	90	



Rubric

- Rubric that will be used for evaluation of proposals begins on page 16 of the RFP



Q & A

- Please type any questions you have in the chat box feature.
- Other questions can be emails to ag_ed@isbe.net
- All questions asked and their answers will be added to the FAQ document as they arrive.



Next Steps

Complete your proposal and submit prior to March 25, 2020 deadline.

THANK YOU!