



Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
www.isbe.net

James T. Meeks
Chairman

Tony Smith, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education

DATE: April 20, 2016

TO: Eligible Applicants

FROM: Tony Smith, Ph.D. *AMS*
State Superintendent of Education

**SUBJECT: NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS):
Illinois Service Resource Center**

General Information

CSFA Number: 586-64-0417
CSFA Title: Special Education - Grants to States
CFDA Number: 84.027A
CFDA Title: Federal Special Education IDEA Discretionary

Eligible Applicants: Entities experienced in providing technical assistance and professional development relative to the mental health and behavioral services for students with hearing and/or vision loss are eligible to apply. Such entities include: not-for-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, professional organizations, school districts, public university laboratory schools approved by the Illinois State Board of Education, charter schools, cooperatives and other joint agreements with a governing body or board of control (e.g., area vocational centers, special education cooperatives), and Educational Service Regions (ROEs and ISCs)..

NOTE: Applicants must register for pre-qualification on the State of Illinois GATA Web Portal before being awarded a FY17 grant. The state's Grant Accountability and Transparency Unit has indicated it expects the portal's prequalification function to be operating by approximately the end of April, 2016. In the meantime, applicants must submit their application by the application deadline below.

Grant Award: One grant will be awarded in FY 2017 (year one of the project) in an amount not to exceed \$650,000. It is the intention of the State Board of Education to fund this program for five years (through FY 2021). The annual grant awards in successive years of the grant period will be \$650,000. Annual allocations will depend on program needs and scope of activities in each year as well as total appropriation for the program.

Grant Period: The grant period will begin no sooner than July 1, 2016, and will extend from the execution date of the grant until June 30, 2017. Funding in the subsequent years will be contingent upon a sufficient appropriation for the program and satisfactory progress in the preceding grant period.

Application Deadline: Mail the original and three (3) copies (six applications in all) Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, N-253, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001, Attn: Amy Richards, Special Education Services, to ensure receipt no later than **June 3, 2016**. No electronic submissions including facsimiles will be

accepted. The original and three (3) copies must be received by the due date in order for the proposal to be considered. Late or substantively incomplete proposals will not be eligible for consideration.

Proposals also may be hand-delivered to the following locations:

Springfield Office
Information Center
1st Floor
100 North First Street

Chicago Office
Reception Area
Suite 14-300
100 West Randolph Street

Contact Person: For more information on this RFP, contact Amy Richards at 217/782-5589 or arichard@isbe.net.

This grant is subject to the provisions of:

- 2 CFR Part 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards
http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl
- 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 Rule for GATA, 44 Ill. Admin. Code Part 7000
<ftp://www.ilga.gov/JCAR/AdminCode/044/04407000sections.html>

Background

In 1994, Public Act (P.A.) 87-1127 (105 ILCS 5/14-11.03) established, subject to appropriations, the operation of the Illinois Service Resource Center (ISRC) for children and adolescents through the age of 21 who are deaf or hard of hearing and exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges. Since 1994, there have been no State appropriations for the operation of the ISRC. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), Special Education and Support Services Division recognizes the importance of the services outlined in P.A. 87-1127; therefore Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) discretionary funds have been utilized to operate the ISRC.

Starting in FY17, the addition of behavioral, emotional, or mental health services for students with visual impairments will be an added support provided by the state. After calls from LEAs regarding behavioral concerns with students who are visually impaired it was discovered that there are currently no direct resources in the state for students who have a visual impairment and a behavioral, emotional, or mental health issue. As of June 30, 2015, there are 2,095 students in Illinois with a vision loss. Vision impairments are a low incidence disability, but even with the low incidence of the disability, 5% of students with vision loss also are in need of behavioral, emotional, or mental health support at an "intensive level".

The purpose and objective of this grant program is to act as the coordination center for a wide variety of services throughout the state, tailored specifically for children who are deaf and hard of hearing and/or visually impaired, *and* who exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges. Any child or adolescent diagnosed as both deaf and hard of hearing and/or visually impaired, *and* as having behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges, who is referred to the ISRC qualifies for services on a no-reject basis.

The ISRC assists local school personnel, students and families in developing a service plan that addresses the specific needs of the student. The service plan identifies the student's targeted behavior(s) and any activities or positive behavioral interventions to support the replacement of the targeted behaviors. The service plan may include other information/activities such as data collection procedures and methods, a crisis plan, counseling services, consultation services, training for any individual involved with the student/family, a transition plan to return the student to another setting, visits to be conducted with the school and/or home, and the identification of a community support network. ISRC staff members then provide many of the services included in the plan.

During FY15, the ISRC provided direct services to 173 students who are deaf and hard of hearing *and* who exhibited behavioral, emotional or mental health challenges. These services resulted in the development of or updates to 938 service plans and a total of 1020 on-site visits, including 476 home visits and 115 home-school team meetings.

ISRC also provided behavior support at all three tiers of the Response to Intervention (RtI) model.

- At the “Universal Level,” ISRC provided technical assistance by implementing positive behavioral interventions and supports in 12 programs that serve students who are deaf and hard of hearing and exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges. Classroom management mentoring was provided for six (6) educators.
- At the “Secondary Level,” ISRC provided quarterly training to 32 deaf and hard of hearing behavior support teams. Approximately 75 educators attended each training session. One hundred and seventy-one (171) parents received direct training. Data collection coaching was provided during 573 on-site visits. Support for “Check-In Check-Out” as a secondary level intervention was provided during 360 on-site visits.
- At the “Intensive Level,” ISRC has an active caseload of 297 students, as of June 30, 2015. This represents approximately 5.8% of the 5,126 students in Illinois who are deaf and hard of hearing. Research indicates that 3-5% of students will need Intensive Level services.

The ISRC library, newsletter, website, monthly e-mail, parent facilitators, conference participation, online training, and additional communications with the field provided additional outreach intended to provide behavior support for all students in Illinois who are deaf and hard of hearing and/or visually impaired, *and* who exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges.

Program Specifications

Project Deliverables: The successful applicant is responsible for and must address each of the following activities in its proposal:

1. Develop and maintain a directory of public and private resources, including crisis intervention services and materials;
2. Establish and maintain a statewide student identification and tracking system;
3. Develop, obtain, and ensure the consistency of screening instruments;
4. Perform case coordination, referral, and consultation services;
5. Provide technical assistance and professional development training for programs and providers;
6. Conduct participant evaluations of all training activities, aggregate and analyze the data, and report the findings to ISBE;
7. Monitor, evaluate, and assess statewide resources, identify gaps, and develop and deliver services; and
8. Maintain standard accounting practices for the allocation and expenditure of federal grant funds.
9. Maintain a resource library of material that can be loaned out
10. Maintain a website and newsletter of current opportunities for professional development, resources for educators, parents, and students, as well as any information deemed appropriate in regards to behavioral and emotional concerns with children who are deaf or hard of hearing or who have a visual impairment.

The overarching objectives of the program are to provide an array of services that result in measurable improvements in the following areas:

1. Student behavioral progress in both school and home environments;
2. Suspension and expulsion rates;
3. Least restrictive environment placements;
4. Family stressors.

The successful applicant also must secure approval as a continuing professional development provider in order for participants to claim credit for the training activities completed. (See Section 25.855 and 25.860 of rules governing Certification at <http://www.isbe.net/rules/archive/pdfs/25ark.pdf>.) As part of the provider's responsibilities, the successful applicant must collect from each participant an evaluation of the training activity completed. The data collected from the participants must be included in the reports provided to ISBE.

Personnel Qualifications: The successful applicant must employ or contract with personnel who are uniquely qualified to perform the work outlined in this RFP. For the purpose of this grant, ISBE does not require specific educational or experience qualifications with the following exceptions: (a) all professional staff that will be working with students who are deaf or hard of hearing must be proficient in manual communication and have demonstrated experience in providing and directing behavioral and mental health assistance activities; and (b) all professional staff that will be working with students who are visually impaired will have demonstrated experience in providing and directing behavioral and mental health assistance activities. Additionally, the successful applicant must have knowledge of and the ability to work with psychiatric hospitals and therapeutic schools that specialize in providing services specific to students who are deaf or hard of hearing and/or visually impaired *and* who exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges.

Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals that include a staffing structure that will advance the mission of the ISRC and accomplish the day-to-day work of the center. To that end, proposed positions must be described, and personnel must be named and supported with documented qualifications. Each proposal must provide the following personnel information as appendices to the proposal.

- Organizational chart reflecting the proposed staffing structure;
- Current job description for each proposed position;
- Current resume or curriculum vitae for each proposed staff member.

For planning purposes only, the following information is provided to applicants regarding the current staffing structure, on a full time equivalency (FTE) basis, of ISRC. Further information can be accessed at [http://isrc.us/contact us](http://isrc.us/contact_us).

- Project Director, 1.0 FTE
- Deaf and hard of hearing behavioral specialist, 3.0 FTE
- Vision behavioral specialist, 1.5 FTE
- Librarian/information specialist, 1.0 FTE
- Project assistant, 1.0 FTE

Reporting Requirements: The following are the requirements for reporting:

1. Performance Reporting: Data and information must be reported relative to the types of activities, services, and trainings provided to students, schools, communities, and families; and the impact of those services on the participants' students, including progress toward attainment of the objectives of the program. Evaluation data collected from participants in the professional development training must also be included in the quarterly performance reports provided to ISBE.
2. Expenditure Reporting: Fiscal information must be reported relative to project expenditures and in accordance with the State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures handbook.

Cumulative quarterly reports will be due to ISBE according to the schedule provided below.

Quarter	Cumulative Reporting Periods			Report Due Date
1	Project Begin Date	Through	September 30	October 20
2	Project Begin Date	Through	December 31	January 20
3	Project Begin Date	Through	March 31	April 20
4	Project Begin Date	Through	June 30	July 20

Project Evaluation: Data collection regarding the services administered by the successful applicant and an analysis thereof, is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the project and to make subsequent decisions regarding the ongoing improvement of services. Applicants are advised that the project evaluation must be designed to address the data elements listed below and associated costs must not exceed four (4) percent of the total budget. Applicants must provide an evaluation plan that includes a complete description of how the project's effectiveness will be evaluated. The evaluation plan must include a description of how proposed procedures and

instruments will be used to determine the extent to which the project objectives (i.e., deliverables) will be met. Attachment 3 is provided for this portion of the proposal.

At a minimum, the following data elements must be included in the proposed evaluation plan:

- Improvements in student behavioral progress in both school and home environments;
- Suspension and expulsion data;
- Least restrictive environment placement; and
- Family stressors.

Fiscal Information

One grant will be awarded in FY17 in an amount not to exceed \$650,000. The initial and subsequent grant awards will be dependent upon the needs addressed and scope of activities in each year of the grant and the total appropriation for the program. Allowable expenditures include:

- Maintaining support staff and trainers, including salaries, benefit provisions and management;
- Increasing staff by 1.5 FTE from current ISRC staffing, to include vision support with comparable salaries and benefit provisions at the discretion of the Director of ISRC with consultation of the ISBE staff for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing and/or Vision Impaired program area(s).
- Contracting with state and national experts to provide technical assistance trainings and workshops to entities or school personnel in relation to deaf and hard of hearing and/or vision impaired students, with behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges;
- Conference space rental;
- Office space rental, including utilities;
- Office space within the ISRC main rental location for a resource library for over 1200 items for education and training materials to include manuals, software, videos, webinars, and other materials necessary to aid in implementing newly acquired skills;
- Program and office supplies directly related to the purposes of the project;
- Indirect costs that shall not exceed three percent of the amount requested;
- Financial cost of printing business cards, stationary, envelopes, a resource directory and all brochures and flyers;
- Related travel costs (limited to supporting students at therapeutic schools and hospital programs, day school programs, community trainings or services, home and family support or workshop trainings).

For purposes of compliance with Section 511 of P.L. 101-166 (the "Stevens Amendment"), applicants are advised that 100 percent of the funds for this program are derived from federal sources. The total amount of federal funding involved is \$650,000 for FY 17 and not to exceed \$650,000 annually for the four (4) remaining years.

Proposal Format

Each proposal must be submitted in the format outlined below. Please use the following as a checklist in assembling your completed proposal.

- ___ **1. Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance [Cover] Page (Attachment 1):** Include the entity name, address, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail, 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 the proposal.
- ___ **2. Proposal Narrative (Attachment 2; limited to 10 pages):** Follow the specifications found under "Narrative Requirements" below beginning on page six (6).
- ___ **3. Evaluation Design (Attachment 3):** Describe the evaluation procedures and instruments to be used to determine the extent to which project objectives will have been met, following the specifications found under "Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals."

- ___ 4. **Federal Budget Summary (Attachment 4):** Must be submitted on the form provided and signed by the official authorized to submit the proposal.
- ___ 5. **Budget Summary Breakdown (Attachment 5):** Must include descriptions of the anticipated expenditures, correlated to the line items set forth on the Budget Summary. Must include subcontract information, if applicable (see item 6 of the document titled *"Certification and Assurances, and Standard Terms of the Grant,"* attachment 7).
- ___ 6. **Program Specific Terms of the Grant (Attachment 6):** Must be signed by the official legally authorized to submit the proposal and to bind the applicant to its terms.
- ___ 7. **Certifications and Assurances (Attachment 7):** Each applicant is required to submit the certification forms attached. These must be signed by the official legally authorized to submit the proposal and to bind the applicant to its contents.
- ___ 8. **Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion (Attachment 8)**
- ___ 9. **Certificate Regarding Lobbying and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (Attachment 9 – 9c)**
- ___ 10. **GEPA 427 – Notice to All Applicants (Attachment 10)**
- ___ 11. **GEPA 442 Assurances – Federal Funded Grants (Attachment 11)**
- ___ 12. **Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) (Attachment 12)**

Proposal Narrative Requirements

All activities are meant to build the capacity of Illinois school districts to serve the needs of students who are deaf and hard of hearing and/or visually impaired *and* who exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges. The proposed plan must demonstrate a sound approach to carrying out the project. Of great importance is the extent to which the overall plan has a strong likelihood of fulfilling the Background and Program Specifications of the RFP.

The proposal narrative must include the information requested below. The narrative must be double-spaced using a 12-point font and one inch margins and may not exceed ten (10) pages.

1. Expertise and Experience:
 - Describe the applicant's expertise and experience in providing services specific to deaf and hard of hearing students and/or visually impaired students, who exhibit behavioral, emotional or mental health challenges; and
 - Describe any previous experience in providing services, performing case coordination, referral, and consultative services to these students.
2. Training and Technical Assistance:
 - Describe the applicant's expertise and experience in providing training and technical assistance to school personnel, parents, hospital personnel, and community members in developing services plans for students; and
 - Describe how the applicant will develop, obtain, and ensure the consistency of screening instruments that might be used as part of the services offered under this grant.
3. Partnerships and Collaboration:
 - Describe how the applicants will develop and maintain a directory of public and private resources, including crisis intervention services and materials;
 - Describe the applicant's knowledge of and the ability to work with the psychiatric hospitals, therapeutic schools, and public programs that may specialize in providing services specific to students who are deaf and hard of hearing and/or visually impaired *and* who exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges; and
 - Describe how the applicant will ensure comprehensive services by monitoring, evaluating, and assessing statewide resources, identifying service gaps, and then developing and delivering pertinent services.
4. Capacity:
 - Describe the applicant's proposed work plan for providing each of the project deliverables as listed in the *Program Specifications* section of this RFP.
 - Discuss the capacity of the applicant to administer the project and the ability to account for the allocation and expenditure of federal grant funds. Specifically address how the proposed staffing structure and identified personnel will contribute to the applicant's capacity to perform the work outlined in this RFP.
 - Additionally, describe how the applicant will establish and maintain a statewide student identification and tracking system, and indicate if any of the applicant's facilities will be used to conduct user trainings. Provide information relative to the location and explain how accessibility to participants statewide will be ensured.
 - Describe how the applicant will evaluate the project as outlined under the *Project Evaluation* section.

Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated in comparison with other proposals received by the Illinois State Board of Education, based upon the criteria below. Proposals will be scored according to the criteria outlined below and ranked by score. The total number of points possible is 100. Final determination for selection will be made by the State Superintendent of Education and will be based upon recommendations resulting from the proposal review process.

1. **Expertise and Experience (40 points):** The proposal demonstrates expertise and experience in providing services specific to deaf and hard of hearing students and/or students with visual impairments who exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges. The proposal includes an explanation of experience in providing services, performing case coordination, processing referrals, and providing consultative services to these students.
2. **Training and Technical Assistance (30 points):** The proposal demonstrates expertise and experience in providing training and technical assistance to school personnel, parents, hospital personnel, and community members; in developing service plans for students; and includes how the applicant will develop, obtain, and ensure the consistency of screening instruments that might be used as part of the services offered under this grant.
3. **Partnership and Collaboration (15 points):** The proposal demonstrates how the applicant will develop and maintain a directory of public and private resources, including crisis intervention services and materials. The proposal includes an explanation about the knowledge of and the ability to work with psychiatric hospitals, therapeutic schools, and public programs that may specialize in providing services specific to deaf and hard of hearing and/or visually impaired students who exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges. The proposal indicates how the applicant will ensure comprehensive services by monitoring, evaluating and assessing statewide resources, identifying service gaps, and the developing and delivering of pertinent services.
4. **Capacity (15 points):** The proposal demonstrates the capacity of the applicant to administer the project, specifically indicating the number of staff to be employed, their responsibilities, and qualifications and how personnel will contribute to the applicant's capacity to perform the work outlined in this RFP. The proposal demonstrates the capability to manage and account for allocations and expenditures of federal grant funds.

The proposal includes how the applicant will establish and maintain a statewide student identification and tracking system, explains any user trainings of the system that will be provided, and indicates if any of the applicant's facilities will be used to conduct user trainings. The proposal also addresses information relative to the facility locations and how accessibility to participants statewide will be ensured. The proposal documents how the applicant will evaluate the project as outlined under the *Project Evaluation* section.

Following the notification of grant awards, an applicant may request copies of reviewer comments by contacting the division responsible for issuing the RFP. (See "Contact Person" under "General Information".)