



## **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Teacher Apprenticeship Grant**

### **Information Sheet**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) researched teacher apprenticeships with assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL); the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO); and various additional partners, including educator preparations programs at institutions of higher education (IHEs) and the National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR). These partnerships enabled ISBE to develop a plan to support IHEs as they create and implement teacher apprenticeships.

ISBE also partnered specifically with DCEO to release a [Job Training and Economic Development -- Teachers Apprenticeship Program Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#). This \$2 million grant will go to selected applicants to plan and administer teacher apprenticeship pilots for paraprofessionals working toward a Learning Behavior Specialist I (LBSI) Professional Educator License (PEL). This document will outline the roles of each entity and display the timeline of events and deadlines aligned to grant requirements and expectations.

#### **Roles**

**ISBE** is responsible for assisting grantees during the planning period to answer program proposal-specific questions or address needs. The ISBE preparation team will provide a review and feedback to the institution prior to presentation of the program during a State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board (SEPLB) meeting. Contact the preparation team for more information on the [program approval process and licensure requirements](#).

**DCEO** will serve as the grant administrator. The grantee should submit all documentation and seek technical grant support from DCEO.

**NCTR** is a national organization dedicated to developing, supporting, and accelerating the impact of teacher residency programs. NCTR will support grantees during the planning period in the design process. Grantees can reach out to their NCTR contact if they have teacher apprenticeship questions specific to the development of the program.

#### **NCTR's support includes:**

**Institutes:** Institutes are structured meeting times where NCTR consultants introduce [NCTR's Levers for Equitable Teacher Residencies](#), support design teams in unpacking the Lever Practices (or program artifacts), and provide implementation examples across [NCTR's Network](#).

**Consulting:** Consulting sessions are meetings during which NCTR consultants facilitate and support design teams in drafting artifacts and practices. These meetings also serve as a space for feedback on residency/apprenticeship design and a place for problem-solving. Consulting sessions typically happen after each Institute.



**Asynchronous Support:** Asynchronous support can be provided if feedback is requested, or questions arise as design teams develop artifacts for their program in between Institutes and consulting sessions.

Institutes and consulting sessions are most impactful when a design team is assembled and in regular attendance. Design teams are groups of people empowered to make decisions in their respective organizations and work with NCTR consultants to create Lever Practices (or program artifacts) needed to design and launch a residency/apprenticeship program.

**DOL** has an Office of Apprenticeship that promotes and oversees quality, accessible registered apprenticeship opportunities for workers seeking higher-skilled, higher-paying jobs and engages employers seeking to build a qualified, diverse, and inclusive workforce. Grantees can consult their DOL-appointed apprenticeship and training representative if they have apprenticeship-specific questions.

**IHEs** will receive funding to plan and implement the Teacher Apprenticeship Pilot Program with support from NCTR and ISBE. The IHEs will serve as the apprenticeship's sponsor, working directly with DOL, and will report data to DCEO, ISBE, and DOL.

### Requirements for Planning and Implementation

The grant has been awarded to grantees for two years with opportunities to renew for another year. The first year or partial year shall be a planning period. Program participants must complete licensure requirements and be entitled to licensure by September 30, 2026.

The planning period started August 1, 2024. Grantees will participate in a design academy offered by NCTR during the planning period and meet the grant requirements listed below unless the grantee has already completed the requirement during the planning period; however, grantees should provide an updated copy if any requirement is updated while the design academy is in session. Grantees must:

- Submit a new program proposal to offer a new LBSI apprenticeship program. ISBE and the SEPLB must approve such a proposal. Programs that want to begin implementation on August 1, 2025, will need to seek and receive program approval at the SEPLB meeting in May 2025.
- Develop partnerships for the program and provide copies of memorandums of understanding to ISBE.
- Provide minutes from all planning meetings that list meeting objectives and a summary of topics that are discussed and decisions that are made (part of quarterly progress reports).
- Submit a copy of any program participant agreement form templates that participants must complete.

An apprenticeship program implementation plan must include:

- A description of the recruitment and selection process used to select and enroll participants in the program.
- A list of all applicants for the program, including their education level and years of experience as a paraprofessional.
- Program accessibility and services that will be offered.



- A description of the coursework, prior learning, and on-the-job learning to be used for participants in the bachelor's degree program and the licensure-only program.
- Location, credit hours, and start times of each course that is included in the programs.
- Cost per service to be provided, including total cost per participant.
- Cost of tuition for program participants compared to regular cost of tuition.
- A description of the process they undertook to receive approval for a reduced tuition rate for program participants.
- A description of any out-of-pocket expense's participants shall be responsible for during the program.
- Specification of length of program/projected timelines for completion. (Must be provided for both the bachelor's degree and licensure-only pathways.)
- A description of how the applicant will assess participant prior learning and award credit for such learning. Specify any caps on credits to be earned.
- A description of the competencies to be mastered in the program, including the sequence for mastery and any associated timelines.
- A description of how an applicant will assess participant mastery in identified competencies.
- A description of wage increases or stipends that shall be provided upon mastery of competencies and how the increases will be awarded (e.g., stipends, wages, bonuses, etc.).
- A description of a sustainability plan pertaining to how the program will continue to function or grow once grant funds are exhausted.
- A description of any contingencies attached to program participation, such as committing to teach full time for a specific number of years in the partner district upon program completion or any terms by which grant funds must be repaid (e.g., if a participant drops out of the program or does not fulfill their full-time teaching obligation).
- A description of the methods the applicant and its partners will use to determine successful program completion and readiness to receive a PEL.
- A description of other criteria pertaining to the program's structure and content as set forth by ISBE and DCEO on the program implementation plan template.

*Applicants are encouraged to be innovative in their programs' development and design.*

Additionally, the Job Training and Economic Development program will keep track of outcomes utilizing the Illinois workNet system or other reporting system. These metrics will inform DCEO of the efficiency and effectiveness of employment and training services provided under this NOFO. Outcome metrics include, but are not limited to the following:

- Competencies gained and wage increases/stipends earned.
- Reduction of special education vacancy rates in districts where program completers are hired.
- Adherence to criteria specified in the implementation plan.
- Alignment with criteria pertaining to the program's structure and content as set forth by ISBE and DCEO on the program implementation plan template.
- Realistic sustainability plan.



The apprenticeship program must be registered with DOL and meet the requirements to be approved as a registered apprenticeship with DOL upon the pilot's completion.

### **Reporting and Support**

- In addition to reports required through DCEO, the following reports shall be completed and submitted to the Illinois State Board of Education using a template provided by ISBE:
- Quarterly progress reports:
  - An end-of-year report will be due at the conclusion of each fiscal year.
  - An implementation plan is due prior to commencement of program activities. Continued funding will be contingent on the implementation plan and its alignment to grant criteria. The implementation plan shall be submitted in a format provided by DCEO and ISBE and shall include the criteria listed previously in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, plus additional criteria set forth by DCEO and ISBE. If the implementation period is extended through May 30, 2025, the implementation plan shall be due January 1, 2026. Funds allocated for the implementation period of the grant will be released upon approval of the implementation plan and based on reimbursement.
- One final report will be due at the grant's end.

As a condition of the grant, successful applicants must:

- Participate in a community of practice (along with other grantees) throughout the grant term.
- Agree to present and speak about their program at up to two ISBE-sanctioned events, such as Board meetings and events to promote teacher apprenticeships, per fiscal year.
- Agree to participate in the development of a teacher apprenticeship best practices training for other aspiring educator preparation program/Local Education Agency partners.
- Agree to participate in focus groups throughout the grant period to help determine criteria ISBE shall use to develop its state teacher apprenticeship model.
- Agree to attend other meetings and convenings as set forth by DCEO or ISBE for the grant purposes.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **1. Who will provide review and feedback on program proposals?**

ISBE's Educator Effectiveness Department preparation team is responsible for the program proposal process. The institution should reach out to its ISBE preparation team liaison for any questions on the program proposal process. If an institution representative is not sure who their designated ISBE liaison is, the institution can reach out to [preparation@isbe.net](mailto:preparation@isbe.net).



### **3. Who is the grant administrator?**

DCEO is the grant administrator. Grantees can contact Shannon Hampton at [shannon.b.hampton@illinois.gov](mailto:shannon.b.hampton@illinois.gov) if they have grant-specific questions.

### **4. Who will support grantees in designing their programs?**

- NCTR will support grantees with the design process and can answer questions related to program design. Grantees can contact Director of Programs Krystian Palmero at [kpalmerno@nctresidencies.org](mailto:kpalmerno@nctresidencies.org) and Director of Programs Allyson Williams Eubanks at [aeubanks@nctresidencies.org](mailto:aeubanks@nctresidencies.org).

### **5. Who can grantees contact for apprenticeship-specific questions?**

The grantee should contact their DOL-appointed apprenticeship and training representative.

### **Key Deadlines and Timeline**

**August 1, 2024 - July 31, 2025:** Planning period.

**October 1, 2024:** Quarterly progress reports begin.

**August 1, 2025 - July 31, 2026:** Implementation period.

**September 30, 2026:** Final Report is due. Program participants must complete all licensure requirements.

**June 30, 2025, and June 30, 2026:** End-of-year report due at the end of each fiscal year.