



Promoting equitable access to language support services
for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

JUNE 2023

December 2023

English Learners/Bilingual Education Announcements

NEW: Training Qualified IEP Interpreters

Training Qualified IEP Interpreters (TQII, pronounced "tiki") is a project funded by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) by our federal IDEA Part B grant and housed at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. This is a modular online [training program](#) for people to be designated as "qualified IEP interpreters" [23 IAC 226.800 (k)]. Experts at the University of Illinois have developed language proficiency tests and training modules in Special Education and in Interpreting to meet this need for the state. This program is a blend of synchronous and asynchronous online training and testing sessions, consisting of these three modules:

1. [Language Proficiency Testing](#) (in English and the target language)
2. [Special Education Terminology](#) and Practices Training and Testing (6 hours)
3. [Interpreter Training and Testing](#) (9 hours)

Registration for the next cohort will open Dec. 11 and will remain open until full. Registration is first come, first served; we cannot guarantee a spot in the program or reserve any spots.

The Special Education module will open Jan. 15, 2024, and must be complete by Jan. 24.

Zoom meetings for the Interpreting course begin Jan. 24. See the [full course schedule](#). See [TQII website](#) for information about allowable language proficiency waivers.

ISBE-Sponsored WIDA Professional Development

WIDA self-paced workshops for fiscal year 2024 are available from now through Aug. 31, 2024. Log in to your WIDA Secure Portal to register for the self-paced workshops. If you do not have a WIDA Secure Portal, please contact sserrano@isbe.net.

Please [register](#) for the virtual facilitated webinars and other professional development offerings that are available.

ASSESSMENT

Alternate ACCESS for ELLS overview Webinar	December 12, 2023 Time: 9-11 a.m.
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Professional Learning Opportunity Links

- [IRC free professional learning opportunities](#)
- [WIDA free professional learning opportunities](#)

Resources to Support You with WIDA AMS in 2023-24

Big changes came to [WIDA AMS for the 2023-24 school year](#). With ACCESS for ELLs testing approaching, here are some resources to help you navigate the new applications and updated menus.

- **Online Help:** This new feature provides step-by-step instructions to help you complete tasks in Import Management, Student Management, and Test Management. Each Online Help section contains an introduction with a side-by-side comparison of old and new terminology. Find Online Help by **selecting the question mark icon** in the upper right corner of the new applications, or [see all the topics in one place](#).
- **Knowledge Articles:** If you're looking for more in-depth explanations to answer your questions about managing users, adding accommodations, ordering test materials or accessing reports, take advantage of knowledge articles compiled by Data Recognition Corp. (DRC). Select **DRC Customer Service > WIDA AMS Knowledge Articles** from the My Applications menu to browse or search for your desired topic.
- **Q&A webinar series:** Take advantage of our ongoing Q&A webinar series to present your questions straight to the experts. WIDA and DRC offer webinars on a variety of topics, from managing students and registrations to technology troubleshooting. View the full list of upcoming and recorded webinars on the [Webinars](#) page in the WIDA Secure Portal.

Still have questions? The WIDA Client Services Center and DRC Customer Service teams are here to support you. Learn more on the [Contact Us](#) page on the WIDA website.

Reminder: WIDA and DRC Q&A Webinars

The recordings for WIDA and DRC Q&A Webinars are posted to the WIDA Secure Portal on the Webinars page within a week of the presentation.

Visiting International Teacher Program

Program Extensions

Visiting International Teachers (VITs) working in your district who are in their third year in the program and have a DS-2019 program end date of June 30, 2024, may be eligible to extend their program for an additional one or two years. Host districts must initiate the request with ISBE, which can then be submitted to the U.S. Department of State beginning in January 2024 and no later than March 15, 2024. Please begin to consider which third-year VITs the district may wish to extend and note there is a fee owed to Department of State of \$367 per each extension request. We have sent out detailed instructions for required documentation to all current VIT host districts, so please email us at exchangeteachers@isbe.net if you did not receive that guidance or with any questions. We will continue to follow up with reminders up until the deadline in March 2024.

2024-25 SY Recruitment

Our recruitment partners in Spain, Poland, Morocco, Mexico, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have been promoting ISBE's VIT program and will soon begin working with us to finalize the 2024-25 VIT candidate cohort for placement in early 2024. Interested school districts who are not already participating in the program should reach out to us at exchangeteachers@isbe.net to learn more and discuss next steps before the winter break. We will be scheduling a meeting in

January 2024 for all VIT host districts before we begin to match new VIT candidates with districts for interviews. Any new districts must have an MOU in place with ISBE by then to be included in the 2024-25 SY interview process.

World Languages

The French Embassy is offering a French Heritage Language Program Grant opportunity to school districts, after-school programs, and community organizations wishing to implement affordable French courses for youth for whom French is a heritage language. Organizations are invited to apply by Dec. 15 for a grant of up to \$30,000. The funds are intended to serve as a catalyst for the development of enriching educational initiatives and initiatives that foster a deep appreciation for the French language and culture in the United States. Detailed information is available on the [French-Heritage Language Program Grant webpage](#).