



Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
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James T. Meeks
Chairman

Tony Smith, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education

TO: Eligible Applicants

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

DATE: August 12, 2015

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP): New Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program Grant

General Information

Purpose of the RFP: The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) seeks to provide funding via competitive grants to provide support for programs of intensive support and mentoring for new teachers as provided in Article 21A of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/Art. 21A) and ISBE rule governing New Teacher Induction and Mentoring (23 Ill. Adm. Code Section 65).

Eligible Applicants: Eligible applicants include 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), schools operated by a regional office of education, Intermediate Service Center or State agency.

An eligible applicant may also be a partnership of eligible entities, provided that:

- 1) an administrative agent is designated, and the application is signed by the authorized official of each entity that is a participant; and
- 2) the school district or other eligible entity only participates in one proposal for a specific program.

Each application must include a written statement by the authorized representative of the collective bargaining unit, if any, of each entity participating in the proposal that indicates the bargaining unit's concurrence with the proposal submission.

Grant Award: Approximately \$1 million will be available for grants under this program for FY 2016. The amounts of individual grant awards will be determined based upon the total funds appropriated for this initiative and the amounts necessary to fund the top-ranked proposals. The typical grant to be awarded will be \$1,200 per each new teacher served in a program that is approved for funding.

Grant Period: The grant period will begin no sooner than December 1, 2015 and will extend from the execution date of the grant until June 30, 2016. It is the intention of ISBE to provide funding for New Teacher Induction and Mentoring Programs in subsequent years. Continuation funding in the subsequent years for existing grantees will be contingent upon the availability of funds for the program, and evidence presented in renewal proposals that the projects have been implemented in accordance with the approved grant agreements and that the recipients continue to need additional State resources in order to implement their programs. If funds remain available for new programs after all eligible continuation applicants are funded, then a RFP will be issued for new proposals.

Application Deadline: Mail the original and four copies to Dennis Williams, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, Educator Licensure Division, S-306, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001, to ensure receipt no later than September 18, 2015.

Proposals also may be hand-delivered to the following locations, by no later than 4:00 p.m. on September 18, 2015:

Springfield Office
Illinois State Board of Education
Information Center
1st Floor
100 North First Street

Chicago Office
Illinois State Board of Education
Reception Area
Suite 14-300
100 West Randolph Street

Mandatory Informational Webinar: Participation in an informational webinar is required in order to submit a proposal. The informational webinar will be held on August 27, 2015 from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and will provide potential applicants additional information about the RFP and components of New Teacher Induction and Mentoring Programs. Registration for the webinar is available at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3032428149016139522>. The webinar will be archived on the ISBE website http://www.isbe.net/licensure/html/webinar_archive.htm#?col5=open#CollapsiblePanel5 after August 31, 2015 so that applicants may review its contents before submitting their proposals.

Contact Person: For more information on this RFP, contact Dennis Williams at dwilliam@isbe.net or 217-557-6763.

Background

A study by the Illinois Education Research Council at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville showed that 44% of new teachers in Illinois leave their initial school of employment within their first two years of service, and 67% leave their initial school within five years. Up to 30% of teachers leave the profession permanently by the end of their fifth year. The attrition rate for new teachers is even higher in some schools and districts. These repeated vacancies cause school districts to incur significant expenses for recruitment, orientation, and professional development, and have a negative impact on the number and equitable distribution of experienced, effective educators, both within schools of a district and across the state (<http://ierc.siue.edu> 4 IERC 2007-1).

Induction and mentoring programs for new teachers – support services that typically include mentoring, professional development, and formative assessment of teaching practice – have proven to be effective in retaining new teachers and improving their skills and effectiveness.

NOTE: The terms “new teacher” and “beginning teacher” as used in the School Code, ISBE rules and this RFP are interchangeable.

New teacher induction and mentoring grants support beginning teachers who have fewer than two years of teaching experience and hold one of the following credentials:

1. A professional educator license endorsed for early childhood, elementary, secondary, special K-12, or special preschool-age 21 issued pursuant to Article 21B of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/Art. 21B); or
2. An educator license with stipulations endorsed for provisional educator in early childhood, elementary, secondary, special K-12, or special preschool-age 21 issued under the provisions of Section 21B-35 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/21B-35).

There has not been a State appropriation for new teacher induction and mentoring program grants under Article 21A of the School Code for several years. Approximately \$1 million in funds has been appropriated for FY 2016. Section 21A-25 of the School Code provides that if the statewide appropriation is not sufficient for ISBE to provide \$1200 for every new teacher in a new teacher induction and mentoring program, then ISBE will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit competitive grant applications from eligible entities, and applications will be considered for funding based on the extent to which they meet the criteria set forth in the *Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals* found at Section 65.150 of the ISBE rules and set forth later in this RFP.

Program Specifications

Each applicant wishing to receive a grant for a new teacher induction and mentoring program grant shall develop a plan that:

- 1) Assigns a mentor teacher to each beginning teacher for a period of at least two school years, providing sufficient time for the beginning teacher and mentor to engage in mentoring activities.
- 2) Aligns with the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, content area standards applicable to the respective endorsements of the beginning teachers, and the employing entity's existing local school improvement and professional development plans, if any (see 23 Ill. Adm. Code 20, 21, 24, 26 and 27);
- 3) Incorporates all of the following elements:
 - a) mentoring for beginning teachers that is provided by experienced teachers who have received training to equip them for this role;
 - b) professional development for beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators who have roles in the program;
 - c) formative assessment of beginning teachers' practice with respect to the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards and the content-area standards relevant to their respective fields of assignment; and
 - d) the Illinois Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Beginning Teacher Induction Programs (see Appendix A of Part 65); and
- 4) Provides mentor teachers who demonstrate the best practices in teaching his or her respective field of practice. A mentor teacher may not directly or indirectly participate in the evaluation of a new teacher pursuant to Article 24A of the School Code evaluation procedure of the employing entity.

Each program shall serve no fewer than 10 beginning teachers. If fewer than 10 teachers are proposed to be served, the applicant may either:

- 1) Participate in a beginning teacher induction and mentoring program as part of a joint application; or
- 2) Provide in its application a specific rationale for the reduction that demonstrates that the applicant has sufficient resources, in addition to funding received under this grant, and adequate personnel to continue the program and provide each beginning teacher with adequate attention and support comparable to what would be provided in a larger program.

Each program shall be designed to ensure that each beginning teacher spends no less than 40 hours with the mentor assigned, including both classroom observation of the beginning teacher by the mentor and other interactions between these individuals, and further:

- 1) During a teacher's first year of the program, at least 30 hours of contact between the teacher and mentor shall be face to face, either one on one or in another configuration, and the remaining interactions may be through electronic means, such as web-based applications, telephone or video.
- 2) During a teacher's second year of the program, a minimum of 30 hours of contact is required, of which at least 20 hours shall be face to face.

Each program shall provide for the development of an individual learning plan for each beginning teacher served and for the provision of professional development that is directly related to the needs identified in the individual learning plan.

Each applicant shall collect, evaluate and maintain data specific to program implementation and the program's impact on beginning teachers' performance, using the ISBE induction program standards and continuum (see Appendices A and B of Part 65). The method and process must be specific and consistent with continuous program improvement (please include this information in the Evaluation Design portion of the application).

Each plan shall meet the Illinois Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Beginning Teacher Induction Programs set forth in Appendix A of Part 65 of the ISBE rules, and further amplified in Section 65.150 and the *Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals* of this RFP.

Further, all grantees must:

- Participate in statewide data collection, as determined by ISBE, to be used to assess the overall effectiveness of induction and mentoring in the State and to understand the effects of intensive induction and mentoring programs on beginning teacher practice and effectiveness.
- Participate in State-provided technical assistance activities and State-developed trainings related to the use of the Illinois Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Beginning Teacher Programs and the Illinois Induction Program Continuum.
- Submit data and information about the new teacher induction and mentoring program to ISBE in a format specified by and according to the timeline set forth by ISBE. The report shall include, at a minimum: an assessment of the grantee's progress towards meeting any locally established goals for the program, as set forth in the approved application; a roster of mentors and beginning teachers that includes the frequency (number of interactions) and duration (number of hours) of contact between each mentor and beginning teacher; information about each beginning teacher's performance evaluation rating awarded pursuant to Section 24A-5 of the School Code and Part 50 of the ISBE rules (Evaluation of Educator Licensed Employees under Articles 24A and 34 of the School Code); the retention status of each beginning teacher during his or her participation and after completion of the program; and the number of beginning teachers and mentors served during the grant period.
- Submit to the ISBE by December 31 of each grant year a final count of the teachers to be served in the new teacher induction and mentoring program for the respective grant period. In instances in which the final count is less than the number of teachers proposed to be served in the approved application, ISBE shall reduce grant proceeds not yet received by an amount equal to the difference between the proposed and actual number of teachers served multiplied by the per teacher amount awarded.

Resource Information: Applicants are encouraged to review the following resources before preparing a proposal:

- Article 21A of the School Code, New Teacher Induction and Mentoring (105 ILCS 5/21A) found at <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs4.asp?DocName=010500050HArt.+21A&ActID=1005&ChapterID=17&SeqStart=143900000&SeqEnd=144700000>;
- All sections and subsections, as well as Appendices A and B, to Part 65 of the ISBE Administrative Rules – New Teacher Induction and Mentoring (23 Ill. Adm. Code Part 65) found at <http://www.isbe.net/rules/archive/pdfs/65ARK.pdf>; and
- Resources on the website of the Illinois New Teacher Collaborative (INTC) found at <http://intc.education.illinois.edu/resources/>.

Fiscal Information

Approximately \$1 million in funds will be available for grants under the New Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program for FY 2016. Grant awards will be for \$1200 per each new teacher served.

Grant funds may be used for costs directly related to implementation of the program, including:

- Mentor teacher compensation,
- Professional development for mentor teachers and new teachers, and administrators who have roles in the program,

- Improvement of instructional services. Activities which are designed for assisting instructional staff in planning, developing, and evaluating the instructional process. (Release time and the cost of substitute teachers, curriculum and instruction development, stipends, travel),
- Program coordination and evaluation,
- Technical assistance,
- Supplies and materials (Related assessments and materials, software, and textbooks), and
- Other services or activities necessary for implementation of the program.

An eligible applicant may contract with one or more institutions of higher education, professional associations, regional offices of education, or not-for-profit providers of educational services to assist in implementing the program.

Proposal Format and Sequence

Each proposal must be submitted using the format and sequence outlined below. Incomplete proposals will not be considered.

Proposal Format: Submit an original and four copies of the proposal. Each proposal must be submitted according to the following specifications for format:

- Pages must be 8.5" x 11" with print on one side only and 1" margins on the top, bottom, and both sides of the paper;
- Text in the proposal narrative must be typed and double spaced;
- Font must be 11 points or larger;
- Pages must be consecutively numbered;
- Page headers that identify the applicant (i.e., Region-County-District-Type Code, district name, and school name respectively) on the proposal narratives and appendices must be included;
- Proposals submitted with spiral binding or in binders will not be accepted. Binder clips are accepted; and
- All grant forms must be completed electronically, preferably by utilizing the PDF format that ISBE uses to create grant forms. Handwritten grant forms will not be accepted.

Sequence for Assembling Proposal: Please use the following as a checklist in assembling your completed proposal.

- ___ 1. **Cover Page (Attachment 1):** Must be signed by the school district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal. If the applicant is a joint partnership, the superintendent of each participating district and the officials authorized by all other participating entities are required to sign the cover page, and the entity that will serve as the administrative and fiscal agent must be designated.
- ___ 2. **Proposal Abstract (Attachment 2; not to exceed one page):** Briefly describe the overall scope and nature of the project.
- ___ 3. **Proposal Narrative (limit the proposal narrative to no more than 25 pages; include any charts, tables, or graphs within the narrative, rather than as attachments):**
 - Provide a narrative response to each of the criteria enumerated in the *Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals* section of this RFP, in the order presented;

- As part of the narrative, address each of the requirements set forth in the *Program Specifications* section of this RFP; and
 - Identify each school in which the induction and mentoring program will be conducted, and the number of beginning teachers and mentors involved.
- ___ 4. **Objectives and Activities (Attachment 3):** Use the form provided to list the objectives and activities of the proposed project in a time-specific format.
- ___ 5. **Evaluation Design (limit to no more than three pages):** Describe the data and information to be collected, and the method and process to be used to evaluate data specific to program implementation and the program's impact on beginning teachers' performance. Describe the benchmarks or measures for determining progress toward achievement of program goals and objectives. Programs must align to the ISBE induction program standards and continuum (see Appendices A and B of Part 65). The data, measures, method and process must be specific and consistent with continuous program improvement. Include a system for tracking the continued service and performance of teachers served after the program ends, so that longitudinal data can be compiled and evaluated.
- ___ 6. **Budget Summary and Payment Schedule (Attachment 4):** The form provided must be signed and submitted by the district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal. 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 Breakdown (Attachment 5):** This section must include descriptions of the anticipated expenditures, correlated to the line items set forth on the Budget Summary. It must include subcontract information, if applicable (see item 6 of the document titled "Certification and Assurances, and Standard Terms of the Grant," Attachment 6).
- ___ 8. **Certifications and Assurances (Attachments 6 and 7):** Each applicant, ***including each entity that is participating in a joint application***, is required to submit the certification forms attached ("Certification and Assurances, and Standard Terms of the Grant" and "Program-Specific Terms of the Grant"). These must be signed by the official legally authorized to submit the proposal and to bind the applicant to its contents.
- ___ 9. **Required Statement(s) of Concurrence:** Include the required Written Statement(s) by the authorized representative of the collective bargaining unit, if any, of each participating entity concurring with the submission of the proposal.
- ___ 10. **Letters of Support, if any (not a requirement).**

Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals

All applications will be read, reviewed and scored by three impartial readers who have been selected for their expertise and experience with educator recruitment and retention, new teacher induction and mentoring, and grants management. Scores will be averaged to ensure inter-rater reliability. Any portions of a proposal that exceed the page limitations specified under "Proposal Format and Sequence" will not be considered in the competitive review process. Proposals will be rank ordered, and recommendations will be made accordingly to the State Superintendent of Education for funding. ISBE staff will negotiate all final budget allocations.

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".)

ISBE will use the following criteria for evaluating proposals. Proposals may receive a maximum of 100 points.

Applications will be evaluated to determine the extent to which each meets the criteria set forth below.

- a) Program Goals and Design and Resources (20 points)

- 1) The proposal articulates goals for the program that focus on the improvement of beginning teacher practice, retention and student achievement, as well as the continuous improvement of the program.
- 2) The proposal articulates the requirements for beginning teachers to successfully complete the program.
- 3) The proposal contains a plan for effective communication among all stakeholders.
- 4) The proposal articulates how the program is aligned with school and district improvement plans, other teaching effectiveness initiatives and other professional learning opportunities.
- 5) The proposal identifies and allocates adequate resources to ensure the successful implementation of the program design.
- 6) The proposal provides for specific practices and policies, such as reduced course load for mentors, reduced course load for beginning teachers, release time, substitute pay, mentor stipends and access to resources that will permit the participants in the program to devote the time necessary to reach the goals of the program.

b) Induction Program Leadership, Administration and Support (15 points)

- 1) The proposal identifies the individuals who will lead the program and clearly delineates their roles in planning, implementing, evaluating and refining the program. The roles and responsibilities of the program leaders are appropriate for the scope and complexity of the proposed program.
- 2) The proposal includes strategies that will be used in providing oversight for the program to permit ongoing analysis of its effectiveness, allow for necessary programmatic modifications and provide communication with all stakeholders.
- 3) The proposal identifies how the induction program leadership will encourage and facilitate communication and collaboration among all stakeholders to ensure support of the program.

c) Site Administrator's Roles and Responsibilities (15 points)

- 1) The detailed description of the role and responsibilities of the program's site administrator (e.g., principal) suggests that each administrator will have ongoing participation in and provide leadership for the program so as to engender positive teaching and learning conditions for beginning teachers.
- 2) The proposal presents a plan for professional development for site administrators that provides a minimum of at least four hours of training specific to the site administrator's role in understanding, designing and implementing high-quality beginning teacher induction programs.

d) Mentor Selection, Assignment, Training and Ongoing Development (20 points)

- 1) The proposal describes a comprehensive strategy for recruiting teachers who are suited to the role of mentor.
- 2) The proposal describes the criteria for mentor selection, which shall include at least the following:

- A) A record of the mentor's effective teaching practice and professional conduct, including at least three years of teaching experience and a performance evaluation rating of "proficient" or "excellent" from each of the mentor's last two performance evaluations conducted pursuant to Section 24A-5 of the School Code and 23 Ill. Adm. Code 50 (Evaluation of Educator Licensed Employees under Articles 24A and 34 of the School Code);
 - B) Demonstrated commitment of the mentor to his or her own professional growth and learning, including the ability to be reflective and articulate about his or her teaching practice;
 - C) Ability of the mentor to relate and communicate effectively with colleagues;
 - D) The mentor's professional commitment to improving the induction of beginning teachers; and
 - E) Knowledge of effective professional development for beginning teachers and effective adult learning strategies.
- 3) The proposal describes the foundational training for mentors, which shall include or incorporate at least the following topics:
- A) Adult learning theory and/or instruction relative to the implementation of the Standards for Professional Learning (2011) published by Learning Forward, (see <http://www.learningforward.org/standards/index.cfm>)
 - B) Foundations of mentoring;
 - C) Formative assessment;
 - D) Coaching and observation strategies; and
 - E) Analysis of student work and data.
- 4) The proposal provides a plan for mentor training that is ongoing, with at least monthly opportunities for mentors to interact with other mentors via a mentor learning community to build mentors' skills through problem-solving and reflection so that they can better assist beginning teachers in the development of their teaching skills and professional practices. The sessions will enable participating mentors to share experiences and strengthen their ability to employ mentoring tools, protocols and formative assessment to support mentoring effectiveness.
- 5) The proposal provides a detailed description of the process to be used for assessment of mentor practice and mentor accountability.
- e) Beginning Teacher Development and Formative Assessment (15 points)
- 1) The proposal describes plans for the timely orientation of the beginning teachers to the induction program before the start of their teaching assignments and for a formal network to provide novice colleagues with at least quarterly learning opportunities and ongoing support.
 - 2) The proposal provides for the professional development of beginning teachers, which includes at least the development of an individual learning plan for each beginning teacher served and for the provision of professional development that is directly related to the needs identified in the individual learning plan.

- 3) The proposal clearly articulates a method for the formative assessment of beginning teachers' practice and describes how that information will be used in the individual learning plan.
- 4) The proposal includes quarterly plans for incorporating issues of pedagogy, classroom management and content knowledge into professional development for beginning teachers and for ensuring alignment of this material with the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, the participants' specific identified needs and local instructional priorities.
- 5) The program is designed to afford at least one opportunity during each semester to observe teaching practices modeled by experienced teachers and discuss selected aspects of teaching practice with these teachers.

f) Program Impact and Implementation (Evaluation) (15 points)

- 1) The proposal identifies information to be collected and reported on the performance and retention of beginning teachers that will add to an understanding of the effects of more intensive induction programs as compared to the results of more typical models.
- 2) The evaluation is designed to assess the effectiveness of particular initiatives or components of the program and will likely produce data that can be used to improve the program.
- 3) The applicant identifies a method for tracking the continued service of the teachers served after the project ends so that longitudinal data can be compiled.