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## **REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

#2012-08

Elementary and Secondary Education Act  
Title II, Part A

# **Highly Qualified Teachers and Improving Teacher Quality State Grant Program**

**Deadline to Respond:**

**Thursday, October 21, 2011**

**September 2011**

## I. Overview

The State of Delaware Department of Education, (DDOE) seeks eligible partnerships to support innovative and effective professional development that improves teacher content knowledge and teaching skills to help all students achieve to high academic state standards.

The funds through this grant support scientifically-based practices that will improve teaching to increase student achievement in 10 core academic subjects: arts, civics and government, economics, English, geography, history, mathematics, reading or English language arts, science and world languages.

This request for applications (“RFA”) is issued pursuant to 29 Del. C. §§ 6981 and 6982.

The proposed schedule of events subject to the RFA is outlined below:

Public Notice	Date: September 27, 2011
Cut-off Date for Questions:	Date: October 14, 2011
Deadline for Receipt of Applications	Date: October 21, 2011
Notification of Award	Date: October 31, 2011

Each application must be accompanied by a transmittal letter which briefly summarizes the proposing firm's interest in providing the required professional services. The transmittal letter must also clearly state and justify any exceptions to the requirements of the RFP which the applicant may have taken in presenting the proposal. Furthermore, the transmittal letter must attest to the fact that no activity related to this proposal contract will take place outside of the United States. The State of Delaware reserves the right to deny any and all exceptions taken to the RFP requirements.

## **Background of Title II, Part A State Grants**

Title II, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) authorizes the Highly Qualified Teachers and Improving Teacher Quality State Grants program.

The goal of the program is to ensure that all students have highly qualified teachers, teachers with the subject matter knowledge and teaching skills necessary to help all students achieve to high academic standards, regardless of individual learning styles or needs.

The highly qualified teacher definition, a list of the core academic subjects, and options for meeting the HQT requirement are included in Sections F and G of the U.S. Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance document which may be found at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/guidance.doc>. Additional information on HQT can be found in Appendices Sections 3, 4 and 5.

The Delaware Higher Education Office, as the designated State Agency for Higher Education (SAHE), manages the grant selection and oversight for the Title II, Part A funds.

The funds are awarded to eligible partnerships to support innovative and effective professional development that improves teacher content knowledge and teaching skills to help all students achieve to high academic state standards.

The funds through this grant support scientifically-based practices that will improve teaching to increase student achievement in 10 core academic subjects: arts, civics and government, economics, English, geography, history, mathematics, reading or English language arts, science and world languages.

The higher education program component of Title II, Part A provides an opportunity for eligible partnerships comprised of institutions of higher education (IHEs) and high-need districts/charter schools to apply for grants on a competitive basis.

### **High-Need Local Education Agencies (LEAs)**

High-need LEAs are defined as districts/charters:

- That serve not fewer than 10,000 children from families with incomes below the poverty line; **OR**  
For which not less than 20% of the children served by the agency are from families with incomes below the poverty line;  
**AND**
- For which there is a high percentage of teachers not teaching in the academic subjects or grade levels that the teachers were trained to teach; **OR**  
For which there is a high percentage of teachers with emergency, provisional, or temporary certification or licensing.

The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) has identified the following districts/charters as high-needs LEAs:

<b><i>High-Need LEA</i></b>	<b><i>Contact Person</i></b>
Academy of Dover	Noél Rodriguez
Capital School District	Sandy Spangler
East Side Charter School	Lamont Browne
Kuumba Academy Charter School	Sally Maldonaldo
Prestige Academy	Jack Perry
Seaford School District	Steve Garner
Thomas Edison Charter School	Liz Yates
Woodbridge School District	Dave Santore

The eligible districts and charter schools will receive their comprehensive 2011 **highly qualified teacher data**. The data include analyses by school, academic content area, and the equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers relative to student sub-groups (race, low-income, special education status, and English language learner status).

## ELIGIBLE PARTNERSHIPS

The NCLB statute specifies the composition of eligible partnerships for the Title II, Part A SAHE grants. An eligible partnership must include, at a minimum:

- A private or public institution of higher education (IHE) and the division of the institution that prepares teachers and principals;
- An arts and sciences division of an IHE that awards baccalaureate degrees;
- At least one high-need district or charter school as identified above.

The education division and arts and sciences division may be housed within the same IHE, but both must be included in the partnership.

Educators in low-performing schools that are not located in a high need district/charter school may participate in a SAHE project as long as a high need district/charter school is a principal partner. Low performing charter schools or schools in districts that do not meet the definition of high need may be additional partners and their teachers and principals may participate in the project.

Once established as a high need partner school in a SAHE grant, the district/ charter school may continue to be considered “high need” for the duration of the grant award without regard to subsequent changes in the district/charter school’s reported poverty rate.

An eligible partnership, as previously defined, may also include these allowable partners:

- another district/school/charter school
- a community college
- an educational service agency
- a nonprofit educational organization
- another IHE (either the division of arts and sciences within that IHE and/or the division that prepares teachers and principals)

- a nonprofit cultural organization
- an entity carrying out a pre-kindergarten program
- a teacher organization
- a principal organization
- a business

The Higher Education Office will award funds to a maximum of two eligible partnerships.

The NCLB legislation requires that the Delaware Higher Education Office, in its role as the SAHE, must ensure that the eligible partnerships are equitably distributed by geographic area within Delaware or that eligible partnerships in all geographic areas within Delaware are served through the grants.

## **II. Scope of Services**

### **PURPOSE OF THE STATE AGENCY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (SAHE) HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS AND IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY STATE GRANT PROGRAM**

The intent of the SAHE grants under NCLB is to support projects that:

- Provide long-term, sustained, high-quality professional development for Delaware's teachers.
- Provide access to highly qualified teachers in high-need districts/charter schools.
- Result in change of teacher practice and/or teachers' content knowledge that increases student achievement in the classroom.
- Strengthen collaboration between faculties of institutions of higher education and among the other members of the partnership.
- Are sustainable after Title II funds are no longer available to support the effort.
- Use research-based activities focused on closing the achievement gap between traditionally advantaged and disadvantaged student populations. The research cited should be considered current by the profession and published within the past five years.

### **FOCUS OF ELIGIBLE PARTNERSHIPS**

The focus of ESEA is on scientifically-based methods to improve teacher quality, school accountability, and core content knowledge leading to increased student achievement.

Overall, the focus of the grants is to improve teaching and student learning and achievement.

The Higher Education Office's Title II, Part A SAHE grant program will meet these priorities by funding high quality professional development activities that will:

- Improve teaching of the ESEA core academic areas to all students so that they all achieve to high academic standards.
- Increase teacher content knowledge in the ESEA core academic areas of the arts, civics and government, economics, English, geography, history, mathematics, reading or English language arts, science and world languages.
  - The professional development activities in the ESEA core academic subjects may also include highly qualified **paraeducators** and, if appropriate, **principals** so that they have content knowledge in the academic areas that the teachers teach (including knowledge of computer-related technology to enhance student learning).
  - Additionally, the professional development activities may focus on **instructional leadership skills for principals** to help them work most effectively with teachers to help students achieve in the NCLB core academic subjects.
- Enhance teacher/principal/highly qualified paraeducator awareness of the Delaware Content Standards and statewide assessments to improve instructional planning, decision-making, teaching, and student academic achievement.
- **Increase the number of highly qualified teachers in the 10 core academic areas.**

All professional development in the SAHE grants must be sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused; be based on scientifically-based research; and be **aligned with the National Staff Development Council Standards**.

#### PRIORITIES FOR FUNDING

The No Child Left Behind, Title II, Part A *Improving Teacher Quality State Grants* provides the flexibility to use funds creatively to address challenges to teacher quality, whether they concern teacher preparation and qualifications of new teachers, recruitment and hiring, induction and mentoring, professional development, teacher retention, or the need for more capable principals and assistant principals to serve as effective school leaders. This year, additional priority will be given to proposals which focus on helping teachers meet the Higher Education Office's priority of building a culture of college- and career-readiness in every Delaware school K-12. More specifically, proposals that address helping teachers provide more rigorous advanced coursework for high-need or low-achieving students (e.g. AP courses and STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics] courses that incorporate project-, inquiry- or design-based contextual learning opportunities and flexible grouping) will be given special consideration.

Proposals must include the following elements:

- ✓ Collaboration among colleges of education and colleges of arts/sciences

- ✓ High-needs schools are targeted for partnerships (as identified by the DOE)
- ✓ LEA's needs assessments—a copy of the needs assessment and explanation of how the proposed project will address the identified need must be included
- ✓ Identification of faculty members or permanent staff members with a background and expertise in core academic areas, as project director or co-directors and instructional staff
- ✓ An evaluation component grounded in scientifically-based research on the project content and delivery method.

Priority will be given to the projects that include one or more of the following elements:

- ✓ Address the particular needs of high-need or low-achieving students
- ✓ Address the needs of teachers, paraprofessionals and principals to help high-need or low-achieving students
- ✓ Provide focused content area knowledge and pedagogical skills for teachers that will lead to advanced student achievement in AP courses in any of the 10 recognized ESEA content areas or any STEM-related course
- ✓ Focus on improving the percentage of highly-qualified teachers in AP content areas or any STEM-related areas through Praxis preparation, coursework for endorsement for provisionally certified or out-of-field teachers
- ✓ Continue to develop and/or disseminate demonstrated models of success through partnerships with high-need schools
- ✓ Encourage teacher and administrator participation in all stages of the project (i.e., pre-planning, implementation and evaluation, etc.)

#### **FISCAL AGENT**

Each partnership must have a fiscal agent. The IHE or primary IHE (if more than one is a partner) will serve as the fiscal agent.

The fiscal agent submits the grant proposal and, if the grant is funded, is also responsible for submitting project reports, budget updates, and other information as required.

The fiscal agent will receive the grant payments from the Delaware Higher Education Office.

#### **SPECIAL RULE REGARDING FUNDING**

Section 2132(c) of the No Child Left Behind Legislation requires that no single participant in an eligible partnership (that is, no single high-need district/charter school, no single IHE and its division that prepares teachers and principals, no single school of arts and sciences, and no other single partner) may “use” more than 50% of the grant. This provision focuses not on which partner receives the funds but in which partner directly benefits from them.

## **LENGTH OF AWARDS**

Funding will be granted for a single program period in FY 2011-2012. Funding for a second year will be contingent upon continued federal funding. However, if program requirements change as a result of reauthorization during the support period, the awardee may be required to submit a proposal to detail how the project will meet new requirements.

All funded initiatives, regardless of duration, will be expected to complete annual reporting requirements. Multiple-year funding requests are contingent upon the continued funding from the federal government. In addition, multi-year grant continuation is based on the effective managing of the grant-supported activities, compliance with NCLB requirements, and proper fiscal control and accountability over funds received.

## **FUNDING OUT**

Any agreement is contingent upon funding. Failure to obtain funding, continued funding or approval to encumber funds shall cause the agreement to be null and void without penalty, with payment due and required for actual services rendered up to the date of cancellation of the agreement.

## **SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS**

To be considered, all proposals must be submitted in writing and respond to the items outlined in this request. DDOE reserves the right to reject any non-responsive or non-conforming proposal. Each proposal must be submitted with 6 paper copies as well as one electronic copy in Microsoft Word format.

Proposals must be typed, double-spaced, one-sided, using no smaller than 12-point type. All pages must be numbered and legible. The total number of pages of the proposal shall not exceed twenty (20) pages, including cover pages and appendices.

All properly sealed and marked proposals must be received by **3pm EST** on October 21, 2011. The outside of the proposal package must be clearly labeled "RFP # DOE - 2012-08. Highly Qualified Teachers." The proposals may be delivered by Express Delivery (e.g., FedEx, UPS, etc.), US Mail, or by hand to:

Emily Falcon, Director  
Financial Reform Resources  
Delaware Department of Education  
401 Federal Street, Suite 2  
Room 252  
Dover, DE 19901

Proposals from ineligible applicants and incomplete proposals or late submissions will not be reviewed. Questions may be addressed to Maureen Laffey at [mlaffey@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:mlaffey@doe.k12.de.us) or at 302.577.5240.

## **PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA FOR REVIEWING PROPOSALS**

Proposals will be reviewed and rated by a selection committee comprised of individuals with system-wide perspectives on K-16 education and those with knowledge and experiences in various NCLB content areas.

A total of 100 points may be awarded to each proposal. The maximum possible points for each criterion are based on the following:

Identification of Local Need	15 points
Goals of the Project	20 points
Description of the Project Activities	20 points
Evaluation Plan	20 points
Role of Key Project Personnel	10 points
Adequacy of Resources and Cost Effectiveness	15 points

## **FORMAT FOR PROPOSALS**

Each proposal must include the following five (5) parts and two (2) appendices:

Part One	Cover page
Part Two	Project Abstract
Part Three	Proposal Narrative (Needs Assessment, Project Goals, Activities, Key Personnel)
Part Four	Evaluation Plan
Part Five	Budget Narrative
Appendix A	Statement of Assurances (with signatures)
Appendix B	Key Project Personnel

Additional appendices may be added according to the need of the proposal.

Following are detailed instructions for preparing each part of the proposal:

### **Part One: Cover Page**

The Cover Page should include the following information: the title of the proposal, name of requesting IHE, project directors and contact information, names of partnering high-needs LEAs, targeted grade levels and/or content areas; total amount requested; date of proposal.

### **Part Two: Project Abstract**

The project abstract should be limited to one page, summarizing the project's goals, objectives, activities, target populations(s), and expected number of participants.

### **Part Three: Proposal Narrative (Needs Assessment, Project Goals, Activities, Key Personnel)**

*LEA Needs Assessment.* (15 points) Identify and describe the specific need for enhancement of content knowledge and improvement in pedagogical skills of teachers in the proposed content area(s). Explain how the needs of the participating high-needs LEAs were determined and describe and include a summary of the needs assessment instrument, which cannot be an interest survey. Applicants should use information such as student achievement data, information about numbers of teachers who lack full licensure and/or certification, assessments by administrators and mentor teachers who evaluate teacher and student performance, teacher self-evaluations and information on gaps from pre-service and past in-service professional learning experiences in specific core content areas. Do not provide summaries of needs from national studies and reports; proposed authors and reviewers presumably are aware of these issues.

*Project Goals.* (20 points) Describe how the project will meet the criteria and purposes set forth in this document. Provide a clearly stated list of goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely.

*Project Activities.* (20 points) Describe project activities and how they relate to the achievement of the goals and objectives. Details should be provided concerning the type of activities planned, the schedule and time allotment for those activities, and the responsible instructional staff. A description should also be provided of follow-up activities; evidence is sought that the project will foster professional development that is of high quality and of sufficient duration and intensity to have a positive, lasting effect on classroom instruction and student achievement. Professional development activities should be clearly aligned with the National Staff Development Council Standards.

*Role of Key Project Personnel.* (10 points) Describe the respective roles of each project director and identify other key personnel (including instructional staff) who will carry out project activities. Specify the time commitment of each to this project and to other duties, in terms of percentage of time. The project director's presence at and personal involvement in grant-supported activities is strongly encouraged. Also include any special qualifications or experiences in providing professional development activities for teachers (especially information that does not appear on the information provided in Appendix B). The proposal may also include a description of any special features and institutional strengths for the proposed activities and can include, but is not limited to, curricula, innovative teaching techniques, facilities, and experience with similar projects.

### **Part Four: Evaluation Plan**

*Evaluation of Impact.* (20 points) Each proposal must have a formal evaluation plan that consists of two parts and must adequately measure achievement of the goals and effectiveness of activities. First, a formal evaluation must be undertaken which is directly related to the project's stated goals and objectives. This evaluation must be rigorous and comprehensive in its identification of outcomes and in its objective determination of the project's effectiveness in accomplishing its goals and objectives. Use of an objective external evaluator is encouraged. Although the staff implementing the grant activities will work with the evaluator(s), a self-evaluation is not acceptable. The evaluator(s) may be from another division of the IHE; however, the proposal applicant(s) must provide sufficient assurances that the evaluation will be conducted in a neutral, non-

biased, and objective way and consistent with the Program Evaluation Standards of the Joint Committee on Standards for Education Evaluation.

Second, the evaluation plan must include a formal assessment of the project's impact on classroom instruction and student achievement in the school year following the project. Exact numbers of teacher participants and the number of students impacted by each teacher will need to be included. In order to assist project directors in carrying out this part of the evaluation, a standardized survey or participating teachers has been developed by the DDOE which must be administered either at the last session of the follow-up activities. This survey will be provided to grantees shortly after the awards are granted. Project directors will be required to collect and tally information from these surveys and to submit a written summary of the results as part of their final project report. Evaluation plans that provide other effective ways of measuring the project's impact on classroom instruction and student achievement are especially welcomed.

## **Part Five: Budget Narrative**

*Adequacy of Resources and Cost Effectiveness. (15 points)*

All proposals must include the budget information called for on the **required budget form that should be attached to this section in an Excel spreadsheet**. The budget should address the following:

- Personnel costs
- Supplies, materials, equipment
- Travel
- District/charter participant stipends
- Indirect costs (up to 8%)
- Institutional fund match and other support
- Evaluation
- The budget must be in an Excel spreadsheet

A narrative should accompany the budget explaining in detail the number of anticipated participants and how the funds will be used to meet the goals and objectives of the proposal. Careful attention should be given to the following instructions and information:

*Direct costs.* These costs should be detailed to the major object level of expenditure and should align to the proposal's goals and objectives.

*Indirect costs.* For the NCLB Program, IHEs are allowed to request indirect cost recovery of up to eight percent (8%) of total direct costs. For example, an institution requesting \$35,000 to support project activities may add a line item for indirect costs of \$2,800, making the total request \$37,800.

*Matching funds.* All support from the sponsoring institution of higher education, local school district or other agency should be listed as matching funds.

*Cooperating Institutions or Organizations.* Institutions or organizations that cooperate in joint projects must submit one single combined budget. The individual amounts budgeted for each cooperating institution or organization should be noted. Only one of the collaborating partners may be designated as the fiscal agent. Subcontracts to participating LEAs are not allowed.

The budget and narrative must also be consistent with the 50% “special rule” which states that no partner may use more than half of the funds.

### **Appendix A: Statement of Assurances**

Letters of intent to partner from each participating institution must be provided with signatures:

- Letter of endorsement for the grant proposal.
- Signed by the president (or designee) of the IHE.
- The letter must state that the division preparing teachers/principals **and** the division of arts and sciences are both active participants in the proposed grant.
- A letter is required from each participating IHE in the partnership
- A memorandum of agreement or a statement of the intent to participate in the proposed grant activities from each LEA is required. These memoranda or statements of intent should not be general form letters generated by the IHE.
- This cooperative agreement includes the specific responsibilities and roles of each of the partners.

### **Appendix B: Key Project Personnel**

Provide an up-to-date curriculum vitae for each project director and for other key project personnel, including the principal instructional staff and any external evaluator.

## **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

All partnerships will submit quarterly invoices with a progress report toward the grant outcomes. Additionally, each partnership will also complete the annual reporting requirements.

A narrative report and a detailed quantitative report will be required annually to provide information and data needed for program monitoring and for compliance with federal reporting mandates. Included with the report should be copies of materials developed with grant funds. **Specific information about report content and format will be provided in a timely fashion to grant recipients.**

The Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education provides this general guidance about record keeping and reports. Grantees and subgrantees must keep records that fully show:

- the amount of funds under the grant or subgrant,
- how the grantee or subgrantee uses the funds,
- the total cost of project activities,
- the share of the cost provided from other sources, and
- other records to facilitate an effective audit.

In addition, all grantees and subgrantees are required to keep records to show their compliance with program requirements. Record keeping should permit an “audit trail” that

clearly documents that all funds were used for activities that were reasonable, allowable, and allocable to the program [EDGAR Sections 76.730 and 76.731].

## **MONITORING**

The U.S. Department of Education requires states to monitor each partnership and provides the following from its *Guidance* document.

The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) govern the administration of subgrants. General requirements for provision of technical assistance, monitoring, assisting in project evaluations (to the extent that they are required), and developing procedures and rules to ensure the proper expenditure of program funds are enumerated in Section 76.772.

Furthermore, Section 80.40(a) requires that States "...monitor grant and subgrant supported activities to assure compliance with applicable Federal requirements and that performance goals are being achieved." Under these provisions, SEAs and SAHEs must monitor subgrantees for compliance with Federal statutes and regulations, applicable State rules and policies, and the approved State and subgrant application.

They are encouraged to conduct a regular, systematic review of all Improving Teacher Quality State Grants activities, using monitoring instruments sufficiently comprehensive to determine that subgrantees comply with program requirements and make progress toward meeting all objectives of their applications. Simply reviewing audit or annual reports is not acceptable. If an SEA or SAHE has reason to believe that a subgrantee is not adequately implementing its projects, it should monitor more carefully and frequently and take action to correct problems.

An SEA or SAHE may monitor in any manner that ensures compliance with program requirements. For some Improving Teacher Quality State Grants requirements, such as a subgrantee's use of program funds in ways that reflect its approved application, the State may find that on-site monitoring is the most suitable method. On-site monitoring should take place as often as necessary to ensure that subgrant activities comply with program requirements.

In addition to on-site visits, either agency may require periodic reports, conduct telephone interviews, hold subgrantee conferences, and use other strategies to promote and ensure adherence to applicable requirements. Whatever the method selected, it is important that it be used systematically and that the results be documented. An SEA and SAHE should maintain a system for reporting problems and recommending corrective actions to subgrantees, and for any follow-up that may be necessary.

A detailed monitoring plan will be sent to all award recipients. However, recipients should expect to provide a schedule of program activities, an interim progress report, participant response forms and a final report including details of all expenditures. One or more

monitoring visits will also be conducted throughout the grant's implementation.

## **PAYMENT SCHEDULE**

Purchase orders will be executed for non-state of Delaware agencies immediately upon awarding of grant. A copy of the purchase order will be mailed to the grant recipient with the Notification of the Grant Award Notice (NOTOG).

The grant recipient agrees to submit reimbursement requests to the Delaware Higher Education Office (DHEC) showing evidence of grant approved expenditures.

Upon receipt of the request, the DHEC will make reimbursement payments. All payment amounts and scheduling are based on the discretion of the DHEC program manager based upon timely submission of expenditure and progress reports. Failure to comply will jeopardize any and all future funding opportunities from DHEC.

## **ADDITIONAL BUDGET AND PERSONNEL INFORMATION**

Grant applications that allocate the majority of funding toward professional development and programming for educators will be viewed most favorably.

- Proposals will be given preference to IHEs that limit indirect costs (8% maximum allowed). IHEs may not charge overhead. Any such requests will be disallowed.
- It is understood that all IHE staff will be employees of the institution receiving the grant; therefore, if applicable, fringe benefits may be provided as part of the institutional support. The intent of the Title II grants is to provide programming for teachers and principals; hence, alternatives to requesting grant funds for fringes are strongly encouraged.
- The use of stipends for program participants ought to be carefully considered and alternative incentives considered, such as waiver of tuition fees, granting college credit, or awarding clock hours toward licensure renewal. Another alternative is to use district or charter school Title II funds to provide stipends.
- Materials and equipment must be relevant to the intent of the program and directly involve teachers/administrators who will be using the materials and equipment in improving instruction.
- Waiving college credit fees is another way for the grant-receiving institution to show support. Requests for course credit processing or related college fees are disallowed.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE TITLE II PART A SAHE GRANTS**

Additional information about the Title II, Part A SAHE Grants may be found in the Non-Regulatory Guidance document on the U.S. Department of Education's web page:  
<http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/guidance.doc>

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

All publications and project materials developed with funding from this grant program must contain a statement that they were developed under Title II of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Additionally, the federal government retains the right for five years to use, as it sees fit, any materials developed with NCLB Program funds.