

Archived Information

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General Questions

- 1. Can those who have received a Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant in the past apply for this new program?**

Yes.

- 2. Who may be the fiscal agent in the grant?**

An eligible applicant must be an “eligible partnership” as defined in section 200 of the Higher Education Act (HEA), as amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act. The fiscal agent of the grant must be one of the required partners. The eligible partnership must decide which of the required partners will be the fiscal agent.

- 3. What is the duration of the awards?**

These are five-year grants.

- 4. How will applications be selected for funding?**

Applications will be evaluated by a three-person review panel and scored according to the program’s selection criteria announced in the Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2009, as published in the Federal Register on May 27, 2009.

- 5. What is the link to the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA)?**

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ315.110.pdf

Provisions governing the Teacher Quality Partnership Grants program are on pages 122 State 326 through 122 Stat 3147.

- 6. What is the connection/relationship between the Specialized Professional Association (SPA) accreditation process via National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and these programs? Must all these programs be in compliance with all elements of the SPA/NCATE key assessments and meet all other criteria?**

There is no connection. NCATE/SPA standards are not applied in this grant program.

7. In evaluating their projects, must eligible partnerships use program an outside evaluator?

No, but grantees must follow the procedures as addressed in their approved applications.

Questions Related to Definitions

High-Need Local Educational Agency:

8. An eligible partnership must include a high-need local educational agency (LEA). What is an LEA?

Local Educational Agency. The HEA, as amended, does not define the term LEA. The Department is using the following definition of the term used in section 9101(26) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA):

(A) IN GENERAL- The term local educational agency means a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or of or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.

(B) ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL AND DIRECTION- The term includes any other public institution or agency having administrative control and direction of a public elementary school or secondary school.

(C) BIA SCHOOLS- The term includes an elementary school or secondary school funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs but only to the extent that including the school makes the school eligible for programs for which specific eligibility is not provided to the school in another provision of law and the school does not have a student population that is smaller than the student population of the local educational agency receiving assistance under this Act with the smallest student population, except that the school shall not be subject to the jurisdiction of any State educational agency other than the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

9. For purposes of determining an LEA's level of poverty, what is the most current Census Bureau data that an eligible partnership must use?

For purposes of determining whether an LEA is "high-need," the most recent Census Bureau data the Secretary has approved are for 2007. The link to the Census Bureau data is <https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/saipe/district.html>.

The Department also has the data on percentages of poverty in each school district in the Census Bureau's tables available on its web site at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/lsl/eligibility.html>.

If an LEA (such as a newly created LEA or a charter school that a State considers to be an LEA) is not included in the Census Bureau database the Department will consider, on a case by case basis, other LEA poverty data provided in the application.

10. How may rural LEAs qualify as high-need LEAs?

LEAs may meet the poverty / rural location (part (A)) definition of "high-need" in one of four ways. Section 200 (10) defines a high-need LEA as "a local educational agency—

- (A)(i) for which not less than 20 percent of the children served by the agency are children from low-income families;
- (ii) that serves not fewer than 10,000 children from low-income families;
- (iii) that meets the eligibility requirements for funding under the Small, Rural School Achievement Program under section 6211(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA);
or
- (iv) that meets the eligibility requirements for funding under the Rural and Low-Income School Program under section 6221(b) of the ESEA;

AND

- (B)(i) for which there is a high percentage of teachers not teaching in the academic subject areas or grade levels in which the teachers were trained to teach; or
- (ii) for which there is a high teacher turnover rate or a high percentage of teachers with emergency, provisional, or temporary certification or licensure."

11. Does an applicant need to meet one of the criteria in each section of the high-need LEA definition?

Yes. For an LEA to be considered "high-need" it must meet one criterion in part (A) (Poverty Data / Rural Location) and one criterion in part (B) (Teacher Need).

12. Must all partnering LEAs be high-need?

Yes, except for qualifying LEAs located in rural areas that would participate in the School Leadership component of the program. (Note: Even if it does not meet the definition of a "high need LEA," a charter school meets the definition in section 5210 of the ESEA and is considered an LEA in the State in which the school is located, the charter school-LEA may also be a partner. However it could only receive support under the Teaching Residency component of the program if it also is a "high-need school")

13. What if an LEA or school that was “high-need” at the time of application subsequently lost this status?

“High-need LEAs” and “high-need schools” that are properly identified in an approved application will retain their status as “high-need” in future project years, and so may continue as eligible partners in the Teacher Quality Partnership project throughout the duration of the project period.

14. Can every school in the LEA be served by the project?

The schools eligible to be served by the project depend on what components the partnership is participating in. The statute requires that the faculty at the partner institution to work through the term of the grant with classroom teachers in high need schools

For the teaching residency program, participants must teach in a high-need school to meet their service requirement.

The pre-baccalaureate program must provide clinical experiences in high need schools. However the program’s induction program is not limited to teachers in high-need schools. Those who complete the pre-baccalaureate program are not required to teach in high-need schools.

The school leadership program requires only the clinical experience to be in high-need schools.

15. Are charter schools eligible to be partners in the eligible partnership?

Yes. Charter schools that do not have LEA status may be--

- i. A required partner if the school meets the definition of a high-need school in section 200(11), and
- ii. An optional partner if, while not a high-need school, it is a charter school as defined in section 5210 of the ESEA.

16. May private or parochial schools be partners in the eligible partnership?

No.

Early Childhood Education (ECE):

17. How is high-need early childhood defined?

Please see the definition for “high-need early childhood education program” in Section 200(9) of Title II of the HEA, as amended, which defines the term as “an early childhood education program serving children from low-income families that is located within the geographic area served by a high-need LEA.” The statute does not define a particular age group for “early childhood.”

Institutes of Higher Education (IHE):

18. May an IHE, which only awards graduate degrees, be an eligible partner?

Yes, an institution of higher education, which only awards graduate degrees, could be an eligible partner if it meets the definition of “partner institution” (see Section 200(17) of Title II of HEA, as amended. Although these IHEs can be an eligible partner it is important to note that the partnership presumably could not implement a pre-baccalaureate program.

19. May two-year IHEs be partners in this competition?

Yes. Please see the definition of “partner institution” in section 200 (17) of the statute. Two-year IHEs may be partner institutions so long as they have a formal articulation agreement for a dual program with a 4-year IHE and that teacher preparation program meets the requirements in the definition of “partner institution.”

20. Do IHEs that apply for funding need to be accredited by NCATE?

No. Please see the definition of “partner institution” in section 200 (17) of the statute for the requirements for an eligible institution of higher education.

21. May any college within the partnering IHE fulfill the “college of arts and sciences” required component?

We encourage applicants to read paragraph (A) in the definition of “arts and sciences” in section 200(1) of the statute. The definition clarifies that the term “arts and sciences” when referring to an organizational unit of an IHE means any academic unit of the IHE that offers one or more academic majors in disciplines or content areas corresponding to the academic subject matter areas in which teachers provide instruction.

22. May an eligible partnership include more than one partner institution, including a multiple campus university system, provided that each institution of higher education meets the definition of that term in section 200((17)?

Yes, eligible partnerships may include one or more partner institutions including multiple campus university systems. The applicant must declare what entity from that multiple campus system would be the fiscal agent (if the IHE was chosen as the fiscal agent in the partnership) and the other entities would be considered optional partners under the definition “partner institution.”

Program Specifics:

23. Does the TQP program statute specify who is to participate in the induction program that a project provides for either the Pre-Baccalaureate program or the Teaching Residency program?

The definition of “induction program” in Section 200 of Title II of HEA, as amended, does not address how participants are to be selected. The Pre-Baccalaureate program statute requires the grantee to create an induction program for new teachers. While one may presume that all new teachers employed by the partner “high-need LEA” (or at least its participating “high-need schools”) would benefit from this induction program, the statute does not speak to which new teachers would receive support from the TQP program induction activities.

The Teaching Residency program requires the project to provide an induction program for all participants in that program. (The selection of participants for the Teaching Residency program is governed by section 202(e)(2)(B) of the statute.)

24. The definition of the term “induction program” in section 200 (14) of the statute requires that the formalized program of support and professional development for new teachers include, among other things, application of empirically-based practice and “scientifically valid” research on instructional practices. What does the term “scientifically valid” mean?

The statute defines “scientifically valid research” as research that “includes applied research, basic research, and field-initiated research in which the rationale, design, and interpretation are soundly developed in accordance with principles of scientific research.” The definition of “principles of scientific research” can be found in Sec. 200(18) of the HEA.

25. The Pre-Baccalaureate Teacher Preparation program has required induction program component (section 202(d)(6) of the statute) that focuses on literacy training. How is the term “literacy” defined?

The HEA does not define “literacy” so eligible partnerships may define the term as they believe is reasonable in the context of the projects they are proposing. Please bear in mind that the statute also contains other references to “literacy.” Applicants need to define the term “literacy” consistently with regard to each of these different TQP program requirements.

26. Is a focus on ECE a required component?

No, early childhood education is not a required component of the program.

Questions related to the Application

27. Where in the application does an applicant address the competitive preference priorities?

All priorities should be addressed in the Competitive Preference Priorities section of the application.

28. Must applicants describe their proposed multiyear project activities and provide a multiyear budget?

Yes. Section 75.112(b) of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) requires that applications include “a narrative that describes how and when, in each budget period of the project, the applicant plans to meet each objective of the project.” For funded projects, the Department will use this information both for purposes of monitoring and providing assistance, and for determining, if on the basis of its annual performance report and other information, a grantee has made substantial progress toward meeting the approved application goals and objectives and thereby, under section 75.253 of EDGAR, may receive a continuation award.

Applicants for new awards also must provide a proposed budget using form ED 524 and a detailed budget justification or narrative for all budget years of the proposed project, not just the first year. Before awarding a grant for the initial budget year, the Department will determine the size of award a grant recipient will receive for each year of the project (assuming availability of appropriations and that the grantee’s receipt of a continuation award for future years is warranted). See sections 75.117, 75.232, and 75.253 of EDGAR.

In their proposed budget, applicants should include costs for two people to attend an annual project directors meeting in Washington, DC.

29. Will partner institutions be expected to prepare a certain minimum number of teachers each year in order to be eligible for these grants?

No. However, please note that applicants are required to identify the number of individuals they will prepare each year, and are responsible for meeting those goals.

30. May projects propose to support new teachers in induction programs for more than the two years that the law requires?

Yes. The statute requires that projects implement induction programs for at least two years. Grant funds may be used to support induction programs that are longer than two years if such programs are described in the approved application.

31. May an entity be a partner in more than one application?

Yes. Partners within an eligible partnership may apply for or participate in more than one grant, but the same partnership may receive no more than one grant during a project's five-year period.

Pre-Baccalaureate Programs

32. Section 202(b)(7) requires each application to contain certain information about the proposed, minimum two-year induction program for new teachers. Must an applicant that would have participants complete the teacher preparation program in year 4 or 5 of the project describe how these new teachers would receive these induction activities after the project period?

In order to provide the required induction programs to all teacher residents, grantees will be expected to describe how they plan to provide induction support to those teacher candidates beyond the life of the grant. In both the case of the pre-baccalaureate program and the teaching residency program, induction occurs after the candidate completes the program and becomes the teacher of record. The induction program must encompass at least the first two years of teaching.

33. Are post-baccalaureate programs eligible to apply for this program?

The statute provides that the program is one to improve the "pre-baccalaureate" preparation of teachers. The law does not permit eligible partnerships to use funds to improve an IHE's post-baccalaureate teacher preparation program.

Teaching Residency Programs

34. What participants are eligible to enroll in the Teaching Residency Programs?

Section 202 (e)(2)(B)(i) in the statute outlines eligible participants for this program component.

35. How are participants selected for the Teaching Residency Programs?

Section 202 (e)(2)(B)(iii) in the statute outlines how participants will be selected for this program component.

36. What is the minimum number of residents who must be in each cohort?

There is no minimum. The statute does not specify the number of teachers required in each cohort.

37. Can this project be used to expand a current program to a 5-year master's program?

Yes, if the proposed master's degree program requires rigorous academic coursework as a component of a teaching residency program as defined by the statute, including having the teaching residency program operate in the last year of the master's degree program.

38. Is it allowable to prepare 5 separate cohorts of teachers in a teaching residency program?

Yes. The statute does not specify how many cohorts of residents should be prepared within the grant period. Please note that if an applicant proposes to recruit and prepare candidates in years 4 and 5 of the grant, it will be expected to describe in its application its commitment to providing the required minimum two-year induction support beyond the 5-year grant period.

39. May a teaching residency masters program be longer than one year?

Yes. But TQP program funds may only be used for the last, one-year period of that program. In that period, grantees must implement the teaching residency program, which must culminate in issuance of the master's degree (and participants' receipt of full certification and status of highly qualified teachers.

40. What is the number of hours per day or per week that teaching residents must spend in the classroom while they are in the program?

This is determined by the project design prepared by the eligible partnership. The statute does not specify a specific number of hours per day/week that the resident must spend in the classroom. Residents are expected to teach alongside a mentor teacher (who is the teacher-of-record) for a full academic year.

41. May a resident teacher be in charge of his/her own classroom while the mentor teacher works in another classroom?

No. The definition of a "teaching residency program" (section 200(22)) states that the resident "teaches alongside a mentor teacher, who is the teacher of record." Moreover, under Title I, Part A of the ESEA, all teachers providing instruction in core academic subjects must already be highly qualified. Participants in the teaching residency program are, by definition, not yet highly qualified.

42. May individuals who already have teacher certification in one area participate in the program as a way of getting certified in another area?

No. The definition of a "teaching residency program" in section 200(22) of the statute includes a provision requiring that the program be for "prospective teachers" who do not become fully certified and highly qualified until after they complete the one-year mentored residency component of the program. The intent of this program is thus to bring new teachers into classrooms.

43. Do the subjects identified as "high-need" by the State govern which subjects a teaching residency program may train its participants to teach?

No. By law, an eligible partnership must target their teaching residency programs to high-need subject areas as determined by the needs of the

“high-need LEA” in the partnership. See Section 202(e)(1)(A) of the statute. Thus, how a State may define phrases such as “high-need” or “critical-need fields” is not determinative.

44. How are the shortage areas determined?

High-need subject areas are identified by the eligible partnership and its partner LEA.

45. May a teaching residency program be focused to prepare teachers of English language learners?

Yes, provided this focus is consistent with what the high-need subject areas identified by the partnering “high-need LEA.”

46. What are the requirements for a mentor teacher in the residency program?

Please see section 202(e)(2)(A)(iii) and (iv).

47. May projects provide a stipend to an LEA’s teachers who assume responsibility for mentoring those who complete a pre-baccalaureate teacher preparation program? What about to mentors of participants in teaching residency programs?

For pre-baccalaureate preparation programs, the law permits projects to use program funds to provide stipends or other supplemental compensation, in the form of a bonus, differential, incentive, or performance pay, based on the mentor’s extra skills and responsibilities, to teachers who take on responsibilities for mentoring new teachers who have completed the program.

48. May projects provide stipends or other supplemental compensation to mentors selected to participate in a Teaching Residency Program?

Yes, projects may use program funds to provide stipends or other supplemental compensation, as needed, in the form of a bonus, differential, incentive, or performance pay to mentor-teachers selected to work in the teaching residency program based on their extra skills and responsibilities.

49. Where a teaching residency program relieves a mentor teacher of some of that teacher’s regular teaching responsibilities, may the project use program funds to pay for a replacement teacher to teach the mentor’s class(es)?

Yes, as long as the LEA, under its established policies, would not pay for these kinds of replacement costs in the absence of the TQP project (which therefore would constitute impermissible supplanting of State or local funds). Where use of TQP program award would supplement the LEA’s use of funds, payment for the replacement teacher would constitute a reasonable and necessary cost under the cost principles in Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-87.

50. Where a teaching residency program relieves a mentor teacher of some of that teacher's regular teaching responsibilities, may the project use program funds to pay for a replacement teacher to teach the mentor's class(es)?

Yes, as long as the LEA, under its established policies, would not pay for these kinds of replacement costs in the absence of the TQP project (which therefore would constitute impermissible supplanting of State or local funds). Where use of TQP program award would supplement the LEA's use of funds, payment for the replacement teacher would constitute a reasonable and necessary cost under the cost principles in Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-87.

51. May payment of the participants' "one-year living stipend or salary" be made with either TQP grant funds or with non-Federal funds?

Yes.

52. May participants in a teaching residency be charged tuition?

Yes.

53. How is "living stipend or salary" defined?

The term 'living stipend or salary' is not defined in the statute. Therefore, the applicant would describe in the budget and budget narrative (and perhaps elsewhere in the application) the amount that it proposes to provide as a living stipend or salary to participants to be served under the program.

54. What condition must a Teaching Residency participant meet in order to receive a living stipend or salary during the one-year residency period?

Before receiving the living stipend or salary, a participant must have signed an Agreement to Serve prepared by the eligible partnership and containing (1) the information required by section 202(e)(2)(C)(iii) of the statute, and (2) such other information and assurances and the eligible partnership determines to be necessary. This information includes the participant's promise, after completion of the program, to be a full-time teacher of a "high-need subject" in a high-need school served by the partner high-need LEA for three academic years, or to repay the salary or stipend. Provisions governing the participant's responsibility for providing updating information to the partnership to permit it to confirm whether or not the participant is meeting the service obligation, other relevant terms such as provision for deferral of the service obligation for cause, are addressed in section 202(e)(2)(C)(iv) of the statute.

55. Who is responsible for tracking the residents' 3-year service obligation?

The partnership.

School Leadership Programs

56. May an applicant apply solely to the School Leadership component?

No, an eligible applicant may address the Leadership component only if it also addresses either the Pre-Baccalaureate Teacher Preparation component and/or the Teaching Residency component.

57. Who is eligible to participate in a project's School leadership program?

Any individual is eligible if he or she is (1) enrolled in or is preparing to enroll in an institution of higher education, and (2) is a (i) recent graduate of an institution of higher education; (ii) mid-career professional from outside the field of education with strong content knowledge or a record of professional accomplishment; (iii) current teacher who is interested in becoming a school leader; or (iv) current school leader who is interested in becoming a superintendent. The individual; also must submit an application to the eligible partnership containing such information as the partnership may require. See section 202(f)(2) of the statute.

58. Eligible partnerships may apply to supplement their other TQP program activities with funding for a School Leadership program to benefit either the high-need LEA(s) in the eligible partnership or one or more LEAs "located in a rural area". How is "an LEA located in a rural area" defined?

The Department has determined that any LEA that is located in a rural area for purposes of the Small Rural School Achievement program (Section 6211(b) of the ESEA) or the Rural Low Income Schools program (Section 6221(b) of the ESEA) is located in a rural area for purposes of the School Leadership program. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) has established locale codes based on geographic location, and assigned codes to all LEAs. LEAs with codes 31, 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43, are rural districts for purposes of either or both of these programs. (Codes 41-43 correspond with former locale codes 7 and 8 used to determine eligibility for the Small Rural School Achievement program; while codes 31-33 correspond to former locale code 6, which an LEA that is rural for purposes of the Rural Low Income Schools program may also have. Any LEA assigned any of these six locale codes is an "LEA located in a rural area" for purposes of the TQP School Leadership program.

Prospective applicants may determine whether a particular LEA has one of these six locale codes by referring to the following Web site:

<http://www.nces@ed.gov>, and using the following procedures:

- a. From the options listed across the top of this web page, select "School, & College Library Search."
- b. From the menu that appears, select "Search for School Districts."
- c. On the "Search for Public School Districts" page, type in the LEA or school district name (do not include phrases like "School District" or "

“Public Schools” that follow the name), and the State in which it is located. Then select “Search.”

d. From the list of LEAs shown, select the appropriate LEA. On the “District Information” page, the NCES locale code for the district is shown under the subheading “District Details”, next to “Locale.”

59. What are the requirements for the Leadership Program?

Please see Section 202(f) of the HEA, as amended.

Budget and related Questions

60. Is there a matching requirement?

Yes, this program requires a 100% match from the eligible partnership. This is described in Section 203 (c)(1) of the statute. Additionally the statute allows for the Secretary to waive all or part of the matching requirement as described in Section 203(c)(2) of the statute.

61. Does the 2% limitation on administrative expenses refer to just the fiscal agent of the grant or to all TQP grant funds used in the partnership?

The statute imposes a two percent (2%) limitation on the amount of administrative costs that a grantee (or any other entity) may charge to program funds. The Department does not have a standard definition of “administrative costs.” Therefore, applicants should use their own agency’s fiscal rules and procedures to determine what proposed costs are attributable to this category of costs and to adhere to the cost limitation

62. What are examples of initiatives for increasing early childhood pay that would be acceptable?

Matters such as these are left to the discretion, creativity, and institutional capabilities of the partner(s) who would hire the early childhood educators trained through the pre-baccalaureate program.

63. May all grantees, regardless of who is the fiscal agent, charge indirect costs on their TQP program grant. In what amount? And may a grantee claim as match any portion of its indirect costs that it does not charge to its TQP program grant award?

All grantees are entitled to charge indirect costs (for institutions of higher education, the cost principles in Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21 refers to these as Facilities and Administration (F&A) costs). However, because the program has a supplement, not supplant, requirement, all grantees and other recipients of TQP program funds must calculate the amount of their allowable indirect costs through use a “restricted indirect cost rate” that is the lesser of eight (8) percent or the grantee’s approved retraced indirect cost rate. See section 75.563 of the Education Department General

Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), and section 76.564(c) of EDGAR incorporated by reference).

64. May State Fiscal Stabilization Funds provided under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) be used for the non-federal match for this program?

No, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) does not authorize the use of State Fiscal Stabilization Funds for non-federal match. ARRA funds may not count as non-federal funds for purpose of the Teacher Quality Partnership program's match requirement.