

TEACHER DIVERSITY PIPELINE PILOT Q&A

Eligible applicants, partnerships, and MOA

Q1. The link within the RFP to confirm High Need/Resource Capacity status is scrambled. The schools I work with are not listed as a priority or focus school. When I search the NYSED site for the current High Need/RC capacity list, it appears as though Genesee Valley Central School District and Bolivar Richburg Central School District are no longer classified as high-need. Is this correct?

A1. No, the links are working and those 2 districts are High N/RC.

Q2. According to page 2 of the RFP, we can include additional districts in a BOCES-led partnership. Is it okay if some of the additional districts are not high need? If a BOCES is the lead and has an IHE and at least 2 High-Need districts as a partner, can NON-high-need districts also join the partnership?

A2. Yes, as long as the mandatory partner requirements are met, non-high-need districts may join the partnership as “additional partners, such as additional district(s) or BOCES to increase program reach and capacity.” However, consistent with the goals of the program to “increase the diversity of the teaching force in high-need districts and schools” and to “address teacher shortages/needs in high-need districts and high-need schools,” only those proposals that commit to employ at least 15 program completers in high-need schools within high-need districts, as defined in the RFP, can earn the maximum available points for “Commitment to Address Educational Needs” portion of the rubric.

Q3. Are charter schools eligible to apply? Can a charter school network (SUNY) consisting of multiple schools in NYC apply?

A3. No.

Q4. If charter schools or networks are not eligible to apply, may the charter join in as a partner to the NYCDOE?

A4. Yes, as long as the mandatory partner requirements are met, charter schools may join the partnership as “additional partners ... to increase program reach and capacity.” However, consistent with the goals of the program to “increase the diversity of the teaching force in high-need districts and schools” and to “address teacher shortages/needs in high-need districts and high-need schools,” only those proposals that commit to employ at least 15 program completers in high-need schools within high-need districts, as defined in the RFP, can earn the maximum available points for “Commitment to Address Educational Needs” portion of the rubric.

Q5. Is a more limited proposal acceptable?

A5. It is unclear what is meant by this question, but the vision is not for multiple small awards to individual charter schools. The grant is designed to lead to one award for the full amount of funding and the full number of candidates.

Q6. Are 853 Schools eligible to apply for this grant?

A6. No.

Q7. Are 853 Schools eligible partners?

A7. Yes, as long as the mandatory partner requirements are met, 853 Schools may join the partnership as “additional partners ... to increase program reach and capacity.” However, consistent with the goals of the program to “increase the diversity of the teaching force in high-need districts and schools” and to “address teacher shortages/needs in high-need districts and high-need schools,” only those proposals that commit to employ at least 15 program completers in high-need schools within high-need districts, as defined in the RFP, can earn the maximum available points for “Commitment to Address Educational Needs” portion of the rubric.

Q8. We would like clarification on the following grant requirement, “undergraduate teacher preparation program that has been approved by NYSED to prepare teacher candidates and recommend them for certification in the certificate title that is the focus of this grant proposal.” Would a registered combined BA/MAT program that leads to a recommendation for certification at the end of the entire program (i.e., after both degrees have been completed) qualify as an “undergraduate teacher preparation program?”

A8. Yes.

Q9. The RFP specifies that the IHE must be an undergraduate approved teacher education program. Would the State consider allowing the IHE to be a master's level teacher education program if the degree was an initial certification program?

A9. No.

- Q10. If we choose to have additional partners, including additional districts and colleges, must they all sign the MOA? Or, can the MOA simply be signed by the primary or lead district, college and BOCES partners?
- A10. The MOA must be signed by all “required partners” in order for the application to be reviewed. Additional partners beyond those required to form an eligible partnership need not sign the MOA in order for the application to be reviewed. However, in order for points to be awarded on the basis of an additional partner’s role in the program, the application must include clear evidence that the additional partner has committed to that role in the program.
- Q11. Logistically, having one copy of the MOA that all partners sign and initial is difficult. Would it be acceptable if we submitted multiple copies of the same MOA, with original signatures from different partners on each copy? In other words, you would have original signatures/initials from all partners on the MOA, just not all on the same pieces of paper.
- A11. Yes, multiple copies of the same MOA with original signatures from different partners on each copy are acceptable if the documents are otherwise identical.

Candidates

- Q12. The RFP states that at least 15 TAs must be recruited for the program during the grant period (page 9). Must they all be from high-need districts? Or, if we are proposing a BOCES-led consortium, could they be from school districts that are not high-need? If it is okay if we include non-high need districts in our partnership, is it okay if TAs in those districts participate in the program? Or can only TAs in high-need districts be supported through the program?
- A12. It is allowable for TAs from additional partner districts that are not high-need to participate in the program. However, consistent with the goals of the program to “increase the diversity of the teaching force in high-need districts and schools” and to “address teacher shortages/needs in high-need districts and high-need schools,” only those proposals that commit to employ at least 15 program completers in high-need schools within high-need districts, as defined in the RFP, can earn the maximum available points for “Commitment to Address Educational Needs” portion of the rubric.
- Q13. 3 similar questions were received:
- (a) According to the RFP, eligible candidates must have no more than 60 college credits to be eligible. Is there any flexibility in this requirement? Our district has a critical mass of Teaching Assistants who already have bachelor’s degrees, or have accumulated far more than 60 credits, but don’t yet have teacher certification. Given the vast and immediate need for certified teachers in our high-need schools, what is the likelihood the Department would consider

allowing TAs with more than 60 credits to participate in the Teacher Diversity Pipeline program?

- (b) We have so many eager teacher assistants who are interested in this opportunity but have more than 60 credits. Is there any way to include them?
- (c) This is a great grant. However, the teacher assistants who are interested have about 70 earned credits and truly want to take advantage of this grant. Therefore, could you respectfully increase the number of earned credits to 70? This would also allow for many of our community members who have 70 credits to be hired as teachers from the community. This would be a win-win.

A13. No. The purpose of the grant is to spur the development of an innovative model program to draw into the pipeline individuals who currently lack the resources and academic preparation necessary to become teachers, and provide them the extended supports they need to be successful. Individuals who have already earned more than 60 credits are likely to be further along in the pipeline and thus require less extensive recruitment and academic support, on average. For these reasons, the Department determined that only TAs with up to 60 college credits may be supported by this funding. However, the partners may use other funding sources to serve TAs with more than 60 credits alongside eligible candidates.

Q14. We recognize the goal is to recruit and help teacher aides and teaching assistants from groups that have been historically underrepresented in the teaching profession, as stated on page 9 of the RFP. Must all participating TAs served during the grant period be from one of those historically underrepresented groups? Is it okay if we strive to recruit those TAs, but some in the group of 15 supported are not? If 15 are, is it okay if we also serve additional TAs who are not from those groups?

A14. Being from a historically underrepresented group is not an eligibility criterion for participating TAs. However, proposals will earn points both for the strength of their plan to recruit and serve individuals who have been historically underrepresented in the teaching profession, and for providing strong evidence that they have a successful record of preparing, mentoring, and retaining educators from non-traditional backgrounds.

Q15. Besides targeting TAs and Aides, can funding from this grant also be used to target diverse HS students to encourage them to enter into the field of teacher education/ preparation?

A15. No, recruitment paid for with this funding may only target eligible TAs. However, the partners may use other funding sources to recruit high school students alongside their recruitment of eligible TAs.

Q16. What will happen if a teacher participant drops out of the program due to a catastrophic life event, such as the loss or incapacitation of a family member?

A16. A minimum of 15 candidates are expected to successfully complete the teacher preparation program by the end of the grant term and become certified to teach in New York State. Payments *may* be pro-rated if the program is not meeting targets for enrollment and completion, for example, if a participant exits the program for any reason. Therefore, programs are encouraged to over-enroll to allow for attrition, as illustrated in the sample completed Budget Narrative Table on page 23 of the RFP.

Budget and Allowable Expenses

Q17. Do we have to use the funding evenly over the five years? Or can the amount used vary by year?

A17. There is no requirement to use the funding evenly over the five years. The budget may vary from year to year.

Q18. Can we use some of the grant funding for BOCES services? And if so, would that amount be exempt from the M/WBE calculation?

A18. A partnership may choose to use some of the grant funding for BOCES services related to the purpose of this program. That amount is not excludable from the M/WBE calculation. Note, however, that if the lead applicant is a BOCES, their staff salaries are excluded from the M/WBE calculation.

Q19. May "cost of offering classes at convenient times and locations" be interpreted a "cost of classes", which would then be read as "free classes" to the TAs?

A19. Yes, grant funding may be used to provide free classes to the TAs, provided that it is neither supplanting funding for pre-existing, substantially similar programming nor duplicating services currently provided.

Q20. May "stipends, costs of subs, or other payments or benefits..." be interpreted as paying the TAs the equivalent of (or more than) what it would cost for them to complete a degree independently?

A21. Yes.

Q21. We are wondering if this funding source can pay for the college coursework, and not just the fringes, in order to provide further incentive for the TAs to pursue a degree.

A22. Yes.

Program design elements

Q22. How confident is NYSED that the Board of Regents will agree to amend program registration regulations? We want to strive to be innovative, but we're also concerned that our ideas may ultimately be rejected by the Board of Regents.

A22. The Department is committed to exploring innovative options that support efforts to encourage TAs to become teachers. The Department is confident that the Board will support necessary changes to program registration requirements, if a strong rationale is provided.

Q23. Does the Department expect that at least 15 participants will have *completed* all requirements for teacher certification within the 5-year project period, or just that they will have made substantial progress?

A23. A minimum of 15 candidates are expected to have successfully completed the teacher preparation program by the end of the 5-year grant term and, soon thereafter, to take the remaining required steps to become certified to teach in New York State.

Q24. The RFP states that TAs must commit to serve in a public school in New York state for three years immediately following program completion (page 9). Is it required that they work for a high-need district those three years?

A24. No, that is not a grant requirement.

Q25. Do they need to stay working in the district where they were previously a TA, or can they leave their original district and go to a non-high need district?

A25. Program completers may leave their original district and go to a non-high-need district if permitted to do so by the terms of their employment agreement.

Q26. Since you call you this a 'pilot program,' is the intent that the program we propose would be replicated at other districts in the future?

A26. Yes.

Q27. Is the intent to grow our program to include/serve other districts in the future?

A27. That would be consistent with the Department's vision for this program, but it is not required.