



Education Workforce Investment: Upskilling Paraprofessionals Program Round 2 Request for Proposals

I. Background and Purpose

Governor Hochul recently announced a \$350 million investment in workforce development across New York State, creating the Office of Strategic Workforce Development (OSWD) to apply a new approach to workforce development – one that engages local experts to identify growing industries in need of workers, with a focus on creating opportunities for all New Yorkers. The \$350M investment in workforce development provides funding for programs across four focus areas, including education, as New York State seeks to rebuild its teacher workforce – through recruiting and retaining teachers throughout the state to resolve the ongoing teacher shortage.

On behalf of the State of New York and in partnership with OSWD, the State University of New York (SUNY) is administering this RFP that seeks proposals from qualified Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) to expand existing programs or to develop and implement new programs that recruit and support teaching assistants/paraprofessionals in obtaining Initial teacher certification through a registered baccalaureate-level teacher education program. Priority will be given to programs designed around principles of equity that meet one or more of the following criteria: address the need for bilingual educators, focus on recruitment of underrepresented or underserved candidates (e.g. first generation, veterans, AmeriCorps alum, overcoming adversity), partner with high-needs school districts, create pipeline programs that partner with community colleges, expand access via part-time scheduling, and address certification shortage areas identified by the New York State Education Department.

II. Types of Programs and Funding Levels

There are two funding tiers available. Applicants should select the funding tier that best suits their project based on the descriptions below. Duplicate projects submitted at multiple funding tiers will not be funded.

- **Tier I: Development Grants:** 5-year grants; up to \$2.75 million/grant for projects that advance access by paraprofessionals through the development and initial implementation of **new**, baccalaureate-level teacher education programs. At least 75% of funds must be used to support part-time tuition (equivalent to the rate set for the State University of New York), fees, and books for participating candidates. Partner district(s) or BOCES required; must agree to pair candidates with professional mentors.

- **Tier II: Expansion Grants:** 5-year grants; up to \$3 million/grant for projects that advance access by paraprofessionals through expansion of existing baccalaureate-level teacher education programs. At least 75% of funds must be used to support part-time tuition (equivalent to the rate set for the State University of New York), fees, and books for participating candidates. Partner district(s) or BOCES required; must agree to pair candidates with professional mentors.

All awards are subject to funding availability.

III. Project Requirements

Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) are encouraged to respond to this RFP within the following guidelines:

- IHEs must be public (SUNY or CUNY) colleges or universities with existing educator preparation programs registered with the New York State Education Department (NYSED).
- The IHE must be accredited by an institutional accrediting agency recognized for this purpose by the United States Department of Education and in good standing.
- The IHE's existing Educator Preparation Programs (EPP) must be accredited by an acceptable professional education accrediting association, meaning an organization that is approved by NYSED and is recognized by the United States Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and be in good standing.
- Only one application per IHE will be accepted.
- To implement this grant program, one or more NYS public school districts or BOCES must also be partnered in a formal agreement with the IHE. Applications that do not include an agreement signed by all required partners will not be reviewed for consideration.
- Proposals may include partnerships with other public IHEs, including community colleges.
- Proposals must include funds to support tuition assistance (minimum equivalent to the rate set for the State University of New York), fees, and books for participating candidates. **Priority** will be given to proposals whose models provide full funding for candidates for the duration of their participation.
- Participating candidates must hold valid NYS certification as a Teaching Assistant or be enrolled in a program leading to NYS certification as a Teaching Assistant.
- Proposals must outline strategies for data collection, analysis, and action.
- Program Metrics – Required program metrics will be defined by Empire State Development (ESD) and OSWD and grantees must report data using an online case management system defined by ESD (e.g., One Stop Operating System (OSOS)). Data include, but are not limited to,
 - Number of participants and rate of program completion
 - Credentials earned
 - Job placement rate within a set time
 - Participant earnings pre- and post-placement
 - Participant demographics
 - Retention rate for new educators under grant funds
 - Pass rate on the applicable NYS Teacher Certification Examinations

Additional details regarding data reporting will be provided upon award. Institutions will be required to work with SUNY to complete proper steps to obtain authorization for FERPA disclosure.

- As part of the progress monitoring, awardees must provide a quarterly progress report to receive grant payments. Details of reporting requirements are forthcoming.
- If necessary, research projects related to this RFP should begin IRB processes as soon as practicable. All published work remains the intellectual property of the awardee but must acknowledge the funding source in any publication.

By submission of an application in response to this solicitation, Applicants agree with the above Project Requirements section (Section III) of this RFP.

IV. Proposal Criteria

To be considered, a proposal must include the following components.

1. Completed Online Application with Executive summary – complete [online application](#) including a brief summary of the proposed program and intended outcomes.
2. Technical Proposal (not to exceed 7 pages)
 - Program plan and design – The program narrative must include objectives, description of program design and proposed activities planned to meet those objectives, timeline, and expected outcomes. The narrative must describe curricular elements, including integration with clinical experiences, explain how the program will work to attract and retain a diverse pool of candidates, and describe how the program will engage candidates in practices that address diversity, equity and inclusion. It must include a research-based rationale for why the proposed program will achieve the expected outcomes as well as a description of the capacity of the institution and its partners to lead the program. Tier 2 proposals must also include evidence of the success of the existing upskilling program(s) to be expanded. The roles and responsibilities of the IHE and partnering school district(s), and other partners as applicable, must be clearly defined and a copy of the agreement(s) must be appended to the application. (36 points)
 - Evaluation plan that describes how the program will be assessed and how assessment outcomes will inform program refinement. (12 points)
 - Sustainability plan that describes how the program will be sustained post-award. (9 points)
3. Budget
 - Budget narrative/cost proposal (not to exceed 2 pages)
 - The budget narrative must include sufficient detail to allow reviewers to understand what the funds will be used for and the relationship between the proposed expenditures and program activities and objectives. It must explain why the proposed expenditures are appropriate, reasonable, and necessary to support the program activities and objectives. If applicable, the narrative must describe any anticipated cost of attendance for candidate expenses not covered by program funds. (12 points)
 - 5-year Detailed Budget Attachment – complete the fillable template provided (9 points)
4. Signed partnership agreement with NYS public school district or BOCES.

V. Use of Funds

All proposed expenditures must be reasonable, necessary, and clearly related to the purposes and activities of the proposed alternative teacher certification program as described above.

1. Allowable costs
 - At least 75% of funds must directly support teacher candidates. Candidate support can include:
 - Tuition support for enrolled candidates
 - Books and fees mandatory for participation
 - Travel funds to clinical sites
 - Candidate stipends

- Dependent Care Costs. Temporary dependent care costs (a dependent is defined in 26 USC 152) above and beyond regular dependent care that directly results from participation in this program. (Eligible costs are those not payable by other sources.)
 - Program administration costs cannot exceed 25% and may include:
 - Salary recovery for personnel administering program (IHE or P-12)
 - Staff supplies, travel, recruitment/outreach, and conference/meeting costs
 - Indirect costs are allowable at 5%
 - Cost sharing is not required
2. Restrictions on the Use of Funds
- Purchase of equipment
 - Entertainment
 - Any other costs deemed inappropriate by SUNY and that do not meet the intent of the RFP

Note: Awarded projects will be processed as sub-contracts by the Research Foundation for SUNY.

After SUNY issues an award letter, the award must go through a subcontract development and execution process with the Research Foundation for SUNY (RF) who acts as the fiscal steward and administrator of the funding from NYSDOL. Therefore, if an Applicant chooses a project start date that begins prior to subcontract execution, the Applicant will be operating at risk for any activities performed prior to the date of final execution of the subcontract.

Subcontracts resulting from this solicitation will be awarded for a period of up to 5 years. Applicants must be able to begin projects on the RF start date and include only programming opportunities that can be reasonably accomplished within a 5-year time period, or less. Under extenuating circumstances, limited no-cost extensions may be approved at SUNY's discretion. All activities funded by the subcontract must end on or before the end date of the subcontract and any activities that occur after the contract end date are not eligible for reimbursement under the subcontract. Start dates can not be deferred.

VI. Proposal Evaluation

A structured rubric will be used to score proposals (see Appendix A). The evaluation instrument will align with the requirements, outline, and point values specified in this RFP. Each proposal will be evaluated and scored by at least two reviewers, with the scores averaged to determine a final average score. An application must receive a final average score of at least 47 points (the minimum scoring threshold) on the combined technical and budget sections of the proposal to be considered for funding. An additional review will be performed if there is a difference of 10 points or more between the initial reviewers' scores. In cases where an additional review is necessary, the two closest scores will be averaged to obtain the final average score. Incomplete applications will not be scored.

Proposals will be ranked statewide highest to lowest, and grants will be awarded to the highest scoring eligible proposals in the statewide ranking until funds are exhausted or there are no fundable applications remaining.

We anticipate granting approximately five awards.

VII. Proposal Submission

Proposals, in legible and searchable PDF format, must be submitted via the [online application](#) no later than 5:00 p.m. by the deadline for submission of proposals. SUNY takes no responsibility for any third-party error in the delivery of applications (i.e., technology issues, power outages, etc.). All forms and links can be found at <https://www.suny.edu/workforcedevelopment/education/>.

VIII. Questions Regarding this RFP

All questions should be submitted via email to EdWorkforceInvest-Upskilling@suny.edu. Questions regarding the RFP will be accepted through January 9, 2025. No telephone inquiries will be accepted. Answers to questions will be posted on the [SUNY Education Workforce Investment webpage](#) on or about January 27, 2025.

IX. Schedule of Dates

December 9, 2024	RFP Distribution
January 9, 2025	Deadline for Questions to be Submitted for Q&A
January 27, 2025	Q&A Posted
March 31, 2025	Proposal Deadline
April 2025	Proposal Review
May 23, 2025	Award Notification Target

Every effort will be made to follow these timeline targets. However, award notification may vary.

X. Reservation Clauses

SUNY, in order to serve the best interests of NYS, reserves the right to:

- Make no award;
- Postpone or cancel this RFP upon notification to all Applicants;
- Amend the specifications of this RFP after release with appropriate notice to all Applicants;
- Request Applicants present supplemental information clarifying their application, either in writing or in formal presentation. Applicants failing to respond to these requests during the time allotted may be eliminated from funding consideration;
- Correct mathematical errors in any application;
- Negotiate with selected Applicant prior to contract award; and
- Rescind the award of any grantee unable or unwilling to meet obligations of the award. No Applicant will have any rights against SUNY arising from such negotiations.

Appendix A: Workforce Development – Upskilling Grant Application Scoring Rubric

Section	Criteria	Exceeds Requirement 3	Meets Requirement 2	Partially Address Requirement 1	Element Missing 0
Program Plan and Design (36 points)	Objectives	Clearly defined, realistic objectives that align with program activities and are related back to goals of partner school district(s), geographic need, or efforts to diversify the teacher workforce.	Objectives are realistic and align with activities as proposed in the program design.	Objectives included but are not realistic or do not align with activities as proposed in the program design.	No objectives included.
	Program design (x2)	Includes well integrated curricular and clinical elements that engage candidates in practices that address diversity, equity, and inclusion. Design aligned to current research and will expand on existing understanding of preparation practices.	Includes clear description of curricular elements, including integration with clinical experiences and engagement of candidates in practices that address diversity, equity, and inclusion. Design is aligned to current research.	Includes partial description of curricular elements, including integration with clinical experiences, but is not research based and/or design does not engage candidates in practices that address diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Lacks specifics or fails to address curricular/clinical elements and/or is not research based.
	Proposed Activities	Align with program objectives, are feasible within the scope of the project, and are evidence based.	Align with program objectives and are feasible within the scope of the project.	Partially align with program objectives and/or are not feasible given timeline/budget/etc.	Activities not defined.
	Implementation	Includes a comprehensive plan for implementation likely to lead to success with associated milestones and an appropriate team member or collaborative partner identified as responsible. Timeline is realistic and lends itself to sustainability.	Includes a clear implementation plan likely to lead to success with associated milestones and a realistic timeline.	Includes a partial or limited implementation plan and/or timeline.	Project lacks a plan for implementation and/or timeline.
	Institutional Capacity	Includes clear description of the capacity of the institution and its partners to lead the program. Tier 2 proposals also include evidence of successful existing program(s) and rationale for expansion.	Includes clear description of institutional capacity to lead the program. Tier 2 proposals also include evidence of successful existing program(s).	Minimal description of institutional capacity to lead program. Tier 2 proposals provide some evidence of successful existing program(s).	No description of institutional capacity. Tier 2 proposals lack evidence of successful existing program(s).
	Recruitment	Describes with clarity and specificity, planned outreach and strategies to recruit a diverse teacher workforce and plan to	Includes clear recruitment plan with specific strategies to recruit a diverse teacher workforce.	Includes outline of recruitment plan but lacks details or specific strategies for recruiting a diverse teacher workforce.	No recruitment plan described.

		evaluate effectiveness of those strategies.			
	Expected Outcomes	Outcomes identified, address all project objectives, and are easily assessed.	Outcomes identified and address project objectives.	Outcomes identified but have limited relationship to project objectives.	No expected outcomes are provided.
	Partnership (x2)	Project demonstrates true collaboration between IHE, school district/BOCES, and community or industry partners. The expected contribution of each collaborator is clearly defined. The collaborative efforts will ensure sustainability of the project.	Collaboration with school district/BOCES an integral part of project. Roles and responsibilities are clearly stated for collaborative team members. The project's success is dependent on the entire team's efforts.	Demonstrates a limited collaborative effort with school district/BOCES. Roles and responsibilities not clearly stated for collaborative team members.	Project does not indicate collaboration between IHE and school district/BOCES.
	Innovation	Strong potential to improve teacher recruitment/preparation based on cited research; approach created for the specific context in which it will be applied. Novel approach rarely or never seen in the context.	Potential to improve teacher recruitment/preparation based on cited research; created with consideration of the context in which approach will be applied. An approach only sometimes seen in the context.	Limited potential to improve teacher recruitment/preparation based on cited research; and/or created with no consideration of the context in which approach will be applied; an approach commonly seen in the context.	Indicators of innovation are not provided.
	Impact	Yearly candidate support maximized (>12 candidates) to impact local area shortages.	An average number of candidates (9-12) supported per year to help impact local shortages.	Few (less than 8) candidates supported per year.	Number of candidates supported not discussed.
Evaluation Plan (12 points)	Data Collection (x2)	Plan provides detailed and logical approach to assess degree to which outcomes are met. Plan is aligned with program activities and data collection maximized.	Plan provides logical approach to assess degree to which outcomes are met.	Plan provides an outline of approach to monitor progress towards outcomes but lacks detail to evaluate effectiveness.	No plan for how outcomes will be measured and/or approach unusable.
	Use of Assessment Outcomes (x2)	Plan provides detailed approach for how data will be used to inform program refinement including decisions around student supports, funding, and sustainability.	Plan provides an approach for how data will be used to inform program refinement and decision making.	Plan provides an outline of approach to use data to inform program changes but lacks detail to evaluate effectiveness.	No plan to use assessment data to inform program changes/future decisions or plan unclear.
Sustainability Plan (9 points)	(x3)	Includes clear plan to sustain the collaboration beyond the grant period including commitment to support candidates beyond the grant period.	Includes clear plan to sustain the collaboration beyond the grant period.	Includes limited plan for sustainability and/or sustainability is reliant on additional grant funding.	Project lacks a plan for sustainability or is a one-time event.

Budget (12 points)	Usage of Funds (x2)	Budget narrative is comprehensive with details on expenditures and how they relate to project activities, overall objectives, and program sustainability.	Budget narrative includes information on expenditures and how they relate to project activities and overall objectives.	Budget narrative includes list of items but fails to provide information linking expenditures to program activities/objectives.	Budget narrative missing or unrelated to project activities/objectives.
	Reasonableness (x2)	Budget narrative clearly justifies how all proposed grant expenditures are reasonable, necessary, and appropriate to support program activities and objectives. All candidate costs covered by proposed funds.	Budget narrative justifies how proposed grant expenditures are reasonable, necessary, and appropriate to support program activities and objectives. Any additional candidate costs explained.	Budget narrative provides some justification for proposed expenditures and/or some aspects of the proposed budget may not be reasonable, necessary, or appropriate to support program activities and objectives.	Budget narrative provides little or no justification for proposed expenditures or many aspects of budget are not reasonable, necessary, or appropriate.
Budget Worksheet (9 points)	x3	Full detail is provided for all 4 years of implementation. All expenses allowable and overall proposed funding amount within scope of grant Tier.	Full detail is provided for all 4 years of implementation. Most expenses allowable and some revisions may be necessary. Overall proposed funding amount within scope of grant Tier.	-----	Worksheet not included or incomplete.
Total Score Possible	78 points				

Priority Areas:

Priority will be given to programs designed around principles of equity that meet one or more of the following criteria:	Meets Criteria 1	Does not Meet Criteria 0
Address the need for bilingual educators		
Focus on recruitment of underrepresented or underserved candidates		
Partner with high-needs school districts		
Creates pipeline programs that partner with community colleges		
Expand access via part-time scheduling		
Address certification shortage areas identified by the New York State Education Department.		
Total Score Possible	6 points	

Required Elements (proposals will not be scored without inclusion of the following):

	Meets Criteria (scored)	Does not Meet Criteria (not scored)
Signed attestation and executive summary		
Accreditation by an acceptable professional education accrediting association		
Signed school district/BOCES partnership agreement		