**General information (Copy from NOFO and guidance)**

**Frequently Asked Questions/Answers**

* **What are the requirements for a paraeducator to be in the teacher model? How is it possible to meet that requirement?**
  + The candidates entering the para to teacher pathway model must be certified as paraeducators by the BoEE.  [The certification requirements](https://educateiowa.gov/pk-12/learner-supports/paraeducators) may be completed through any Iowa approved paraeducator preparation program([Chapter 80](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/DOCS/ACO/GNAC/iacpdf(4-2-03)/iac/281iac/28180/28180.pdf) & [Chapter 24](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/iac/rule/07-05-2017.282.24.4.pdf)).

* **What are the requirements for the high school/adults to paraeducator (teacher aide I) model? How is it possible to meet that requirement?**
  + The students have to be 16 or older, working toward completion of a high school diploma/equivalency to enter the program. However, completion of the high school diploma/equivalency is required prior to earning a paraeducator certification. In the meanwhile, students can serve as a paraeducator/apprentice/aide.  Students entering the program under the age of 18 must have parental consent and the consent form on file with IWD.

* **What is the estimate of how long each of the pathways will take to complete?**
* Approximate length of the para model is two years, and the approximate length of the teacher model is three years.

* **Would other staff in the school qualify to participate in the paraeducator model?**
  + Yes, however, they will have to serve as a paraeducator during the program and meet the minimum hour requirements set by the Department of Labor and Iowa Workforce Development, in addition to higher education requirements as far as field placement and student teaching.

* **Can we hire a long-term sub and have that person go through this project to become a teacher?**
  + No, the candidates in this program need to serve as a paraeducator during the program.

* **Who designs the RTI (Related Technical/Training Instruction) for the school district?**
  + All RTI and OJT/OJL (on-the-job training or on-the-job learning) have to be based on the Registered Apprenticeship (RA) standards and designed by colleges/institutions of higher education with support from school districts (any substantial changes to the curriculum need to be approved by BoEE, IDoE). Qualified instructors or cooperating teachers need to facilitate RTI, and OJT/OJL as determined in Chapter 79, by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and other regional accreditor requirements. The Office of Apprenticeship has supplied IWD with the Industry recognized OJL outlines.

* **Will the district pay for registration and then get reimbursed?**
* All expenses associated with the program(s) will be the responsibility of the school district/awarded sponsor.  Expenses are paid on a quarterly reimbursement basis.

* **What happens if a student fails the course(s)/does not meet the grade requirements? In that case, are the districts still eligible for reimbursement? Can the student retake classes and be reimbursed?**
* There is an annual maximum dollar amount per apprentice, as well as a maximum for the program.  Tuition fees are paid regardless of candidate performance, and the district will be reimbursed for expenses incurred.

* **What happens if a high school apprentice were to drop out of their school?**
* They can generally still take community college courses and work towards the paraeducator credentials/certification including high school equivalency. To be eligible for the program, the apprentice must be employed by the district, which may be contingent on their enrollment, so if the apprentice drops out of school, the district might choose to also drop that apprentice from the apprenticeship program.  The qualifications to be an apprentice are outlined in the Registered Apprenticeship standards.  If the standards say the apprentice must have a high school diploma or be enrolled in high school, if they drop out of school they would be canceled out of the program.

* **Will the college still be reimbursed tuition and other apprentice costs if the student drops out of school?**
  + This would be addressed in the agreement (MOU) between the school district and the college.

* **Paraeducator preparation options currently can be credit or noncredit. Does the community college/college or university need to offer a credit option for the candidate/district to be qualified for reimbursement?**
* The reimbursement may be provided for tuition leading to the paraeducator certification if the high school student is enrolled in the high school to paraeducator model and the provided coursework is taken through a community college or four-year college/university.

* **Are there any reporting requirements for the grant purpose from Institutions of Higher Education (IHC)? How is that communicated with them?**
  + Specific reporting requirements (including those pertaining to IHE) are included within the contract agreement.  Awarded districts will be responsible for communicating with their IHE partner to ensure all reporting requirements listed in the agreement are met.

* **Are apprentices restricted to attending only programs through colleges identified as training providers in the application?**
  + Apprentices are restricted to attending only programs through colleges or universities that have an MOU in place with the school district.

* **Is the paraeducator certification a requirement in order for the apprentice to be included in the para to teacher model?**
  + Yes, a candidate must have a paraeducator certification in order to be fully included in the para to teacher model.

* **How quickly can schools expect to be reimbursed for expenses (wages and tuition/fees)?**
  + Consortium reimbursements will be processed on a quarterly basis and are dependent on the completion of all consortium data reporting requirements and paperwork.  Once the submission is approved, consortium reimbursements will be processed as quickly as possible.

* **Will the Department of Education be approving all RTI outlines prior to the development of the Registered Apprenticeship Standards?**
* Yes, DE and BoEE will review the submitted outlines shared with them by the school districts/colleges for compliance with program approval requirements Ch 79 IDoE, Ch 13/14 BoEE.  In order to be authorized, the program standards will need to be approved by the Iowa Board of Education if they are modified or adapted to meet the grant requirements.

* **Will the TPRA grant cover courses offered through an AEA?**
  + No, the grant does not cover courses taken through the AEA. (Expenses incurred by coursework taken through the AEA to complete the paraeducator certification may be provided separately directly from the DE)

* **Can a person be eligible for the apprenticeship opportunity if they plan to pursue a master’s degree that leads to initial teaching licensing?**
  + Graduate degrees questions and considerations should be directed to the RA team at IWD at [registeredapprenticeship@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:registeredapprenticeship@iwd.iowa.gov).  Please include your full name, school district and RTI provider (higher ed partner).

* **What is the deadline for FAFSA filing?**
  + Check with your higher education partner(s) regarding deadlines for priority FASFA filing.

* **What is the process for someone wanting to join an apprenticeship next year or any time after the initial cohorts begin in fall 2022? Is that possible?**
  + Participants can begin their apprenticeship at any time, but they will only be eligible to receive grant funds for the grant period. As a reminder, funds would need to be drawn down by June 30, 2024. School districts, sponsors, apprentices or others will need to cover the remaining wages, tuition or other expenses thereafter.
* **Is the student teaching requirement waived if you participate in this program?**
  + The student teaching requirements 79.15 (1-9) have not been waived; however, components of the requirement may be satisfied through the participation in this program.   This apprenticeship program provides the opportunity to accelerate the process for candidates, leading to the completion of a degree and teaching licenses due to the extensive on the job training experience.