

Other than statutory and regulatory requirements included in the document, the contents of this guidance do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

**Rescinded: This document has been formally rescinded by the Department and remains available on the web for historical purposes only.**

## FY 2020 Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) Competition Frequently Asked Questions<sup>1</sup>

Applicants are reminded that the [FY 20 TQP Notice Inviting Applications](#) (NIA) published in the *Federal Register* on May 18, 2020 is the for the funding opportunity. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the NIA in its entirety as it may answer questions that may not be found in this FAQ document.

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<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this guidance is to provide information about the FY 2020 Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) Program competition. This guidance does not impose any requirements beyond those in the TQP program statute (20 U.S.C. §§1021—1022h), the Notice Inviting Applications (NIA), 34 CFR part 75, 2 CFR part 200, or other applicable regulations. The Department will provide additional or updated program guidance, as necessary, on its TQP program web site: <http://innovation.ed.gov/what-we-do/teacher-quality/teacher-quality-partnership/>. If you have further questions that are not answered here or have comments regarding this guidance, please email [TQPartnership@ed.gov](mailto:TQPartnership@ed.gov).

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## Eligibility Questions

### 1. May an eligible partnership apply under the Absolute Priority to expand or enhance an existing teaching residency program that an Institution of Higher Education (IHE) partner (partner institution) is already implementing?

Yes. However, the partner institution’s existing teaching residency program must conform to the requirements specified in section 202(e) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA) and the definition of “teaching residency program” in HEA section 200(22). If its current teaching residency program does not meet the requirements in HEA section 202(e) or definition for a teaching residency program in HEA section 200(22), then the applicant must demonstrate how their TQP project would modify the teaching residency program so that it would meet the requirement in 202(e) and the definition in 200(22).

Please also note the TQP program has a supplement not supplant requirement (HEA section 202(k)). Therefore, TQP funds may be used to expand or enhance capacity of existing teaching residency programs, but the grant may not be used to pay for services currently provided with other funds.

### 2. How might an IHE partner document that it has a school or department of arts and sciences within such partner institution?

An eligible partnership can demonstrate that an IHE’s (partner institution’s) school or department of arts and sciences is a partner in several ways. For example:

- The partnership could include in the application written confirmation from the dean or other officials of the school or department of arts and sciences that it is a partner.
- The application could include documentation of active representation in the eligible partnership of one or more faculty members from that school of arts and sciences, along with confirmation from the faculty member(s) that: (1) the faculty member(s) represents the school of arts and science; and (2) as the project proceeds, the faculty member(s) will work in close consultation with the school’s chair and academic dean to ensure that teaching residents benefit from any subject matter content.

In addition, if a partner institution does not have a school or department of arts and sciences, the eligible partnership may include an additional partner institution that does—provided that the eligible partnership application and project management plan clarify how the multiple partner institutions, teacher preparation program(s), and school or department of arts and sciences will work together to promote the success of the TQP project.

### 3. May two-year IHEs be considered partner institutions?

Yes. Two-year IHEs may be partner institutions as long as: (1) they have a formal articulation agreement for a dual program with a four-year IHE participating in the eligible partnership; and (2) the four-year IHE has a teacher preparation program that meets the definition of “partner institution.” See the definition of “partner institution” in HEA section 200(17).

**4. How does an eligible applicant determine that its high-need local educational agency (LEA) has at least 20 percent of, or at least 10,000 “children from low-income families”?**

HEA section 200(2) defines the phrase “children from low-income families” as described in section 1124(c)(1)(A) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA). That ESEA provision requires use of the most recent poverty data issued by the United States Census Bureau. These data may be found in the following links:

- For Census Bureau information: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saipe.html>

If the Census Bureau data do not include poverty data for a particular LEA, such as a charter school with LEA status, a newly created LEA, or a Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) funded school, the eligible partnership should include in its application documentation that supports the conclusion that the level of its students’ family poverty is comparable to 20 percent of, or at least 10,000 children from low income families. The Department will review these submissions on a case-by-case basis.

**5. Are all schools within the high-need LEA eligible to receive project services?**

No. Only “high-need” schools may receive project services. In addition, teaching residency program participants must teach in a “high-need school” of the high-need LEA in order to meet their service requirement. A high-need school, as defined in HEA section 200(11), includes elementary schools that have at least 60 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) and middle or high schools that have at least 45 percent of students eligible for FRPL. Alternatively, a school is considered a “high-need school” if it is ranked in the highest quartile of schools of children from low-income families. See the definition of “high-need school” in HEA section 200(11).

**6. Is there a specific definition for “high percentage” that needs to be used for teachers who are not teaching in the academic subject areas or grade levels in which the teachers were trained to teach, a high teacher turnover rate, or a high percentage of teachers with emergency, provisional, or temporary certification or licensure?**

The Department does not set threshold of what constitutes a high percentage of teachers not teaching in the academic subject areas or grade levels in which the teachers were trained to teach, a high teacher turnover rate, or a high percentage of teachers with emergency, provisional, or temporary certification or licensure. Therefore, eligible applicants should include in their applications documentation to support the conclusion that any LEA they would identify as a high-need LEA has one of these teacher-need characteristics. The Department will review these submissions on a case-by-case basis.

**7. Is a charter school eligible to be a member of an eligible partnership?**

Yes. A charter school may be eligible in one of two ways. First, a charter school is eligible as a required member of the eligible partnership under HEA section 200(6)(A) if it: (1) Is considered an LEA by the State in which it is located; and (2) meets the definition of a high-need LEA in HEA section 200(10). Second, a charter school may be an optional member of the eligible partnership under HEA section 200(6)(B)(x), provided it meets the definition of a high-need school in HEA section 200(11).

If a charter school is considered an LEA in the State in which it is located, the Department strongly recommends the applicant submit documentation that supports that the State considers the charter school an LEA.

**8. May an individual member of an eligible partnership be a partner in more than one application?**

Yes. An individual entity may be a member of more than one TQP grant application but an eligible partnership may not receive a TQP grant more than once in a five-year period (see HEA section 203(a)(2)). The partnership *as a whole* can only be awarded one TQP grant within a five-year period. Therefore, eligible partnerships awarded a grant during the FY 2016, FY 2018 or FY 2019 TQP competitions are ineligible to receive a new grant as those TQP grants were awarded less than five years ago. However, individual entities may be a member of more than one partnership simultaneously.

**9. May FY 2016, FY 2018, or FY 2019 TQP eligible partnership grantees receive a FY 2020 TQP grant?**

No. HEA section 203(a)(2) prohibits an *eligible partnership* from receiving more than one TQP grant award during a five-year period. The FY 2016, FY 2018, or FY 2019 TQP grants were awarded less than five years ago. As noted in Question 10, *individual members* of eligible partnerships that received awards in the FY 2016, FY 2018 or FY 2019 TQP grant competitions are eligible to apply in this competition so long as they apply as members of a different eligible partnership than the one that received an award in the last five years and demonstrate their need for the additional TQP grant consistent with HEA section 203(a)(2).

In addition, the FY 2020 competition includes Competitive Preference Priority #2—Applications from New Potential Grantees. Applicants that have never received a TQP grant, including through membership in a group application submitted in accordance with 34 CFR 75.127-75.129 (i.e. if an applicant was part of a TQP eligible partnership previously), may receive 3 additional competitive preference points in the FY 2020 competition.

**10. How may a current TQP grantee be eligible to participate in the FY 2020 TQP competition?**

In order to be eligible to receive a FY 2020 TQP grant, individual members of an eligible partnership awarded a grant less than five years ago must find all-new partners to form a new eligible partnership (i.e. new partners that are not partners in their current, FY 2016, FY 2018 or FY 2019 TQP grant). See HEA section 203(a)(2). In addition, applicants may not propose projects that provide the same services to the same recipients as those in their existing TQP grants.

**11. How does an individual member of an existing eligible partnership demonstrate the need for another TQP grant?**

HEA section 203(a)(2) does not define how an individual member should demonstrate the need for another TQP grant. Therefore, applicants should use their best judgment in describing why an additional TQP grant is needed. Applications that do not demonstrate the need for an additional TQP grant, consistent with HEA section 203(a)(2), may not be reviewed.

**12. Who may be the fiscal agent or lead applicant for the grant?**

The fiscal agent or lead applicant may be any member of the eligible partnership. The eligible partnership should decide which partner will be the fiscal agent and lead applicant, identify this partner in its application, and enter into an agreement that details the activities that each member of the group plans to perform and binds each member of the group to every statement and assurance made by the applicant in the application. See 34 CFR §§75.127-129, “Group Applications,” for more information.

## **Competitive Preference Priorities (CPP) Questions**

**13. Should I address the CPPs in the application narrative, or in some other part of the application?**

Applicants are strongly encouraged to clearly state in the Application Abstract which CPP(s) they intend to address. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to include their CPP response location in the Table

of Contents (TOC) of the application. An applicant's response to the CPP should be a separate response within the application narrative and labeled accordingly. Applicants that do not explicitly state which CPP(s) they are addressing might not receive additional points.

#### **14. How could an applicant address Competitive Preference Priority 1, and how are points assigned?**

Public Law (P.L.) 115-97, commonly known as the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, authorized the designation of Qualified Opportunity Zones (QOZs) to promote economic development and job creation in distressed communities through preferential tax treatment for investors. A list of QOZs is available at [www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/Opportunity-Zones.aspx](http://www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/Opportunity-Zones.aspx); applicants may also determine whether a particular area overlaps with a QOZ using the National Center of Education Statistics' map located at <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/maped/LocaleLookup/>.

As stated in the NIA, an applicant must demonstrate:

The area in which the applicant proposes to provide services overlaps with a Qualified Opportunity Zone, as designated by the Secretary of the Treasury under section 1400Z-1 of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). An applicant must—

- (a) Provide the census tract number of the Qualified Opportunity Zone(s) in which it proposes to provide services; and
- (b) Describe how the applicant will provide services in the Qualified Opportunity Zone(s).

A maximum of 3 additional points may be earned by applicants that address Competitive Preference Priority 1. Points under this Competitive Preference Priority will be assigned depending on verification that the applicant proposes to provide services in a Qualified Opportunity Zone and the overall quality of an applicant's response, including the applicant's description of the services it will provide in the in the Qualified Opportunity Zone.

#### **15. For CPP 1, what does "overlapping" mean?**

The language in CPP 1 in the NIA states that the "applicant must demonstrate that *the area in which the applicant proposes to provide services overlaps*" with an QOZ (emphasis added). So, this means that an LEA may demonstrate this by identifying a TQP high-need school that is located in or that serves students in an area that "overlaps" with a QOZ.

#### **16. Can more than one QOZ be targeted?**

Yes. The CPP on QOZs does not specify how many QOZs applicants should target. Peer reviewers will assess how the applicant describes its proposed project and providing services in a QOZ when determining how many points the application receives for the CPP (up to 3 additional points). Applicants are encouraged to provide detailed information in their applications about the extent of their involvement or overlap in a QOZ when responding to this priority to aid the peer reviewers in their assessment.

#### **17. Do all schools have to be in the QOZ to get full CPP points?**

Not necessarily. As noted above, the non-Federal peer reviewers, not the Department, will make a determination as to the extent to which a proposed project meets CPP 1, up to 3 additional points.

**18. Does the school need to be in the QOZ, or can it exist outside the QOZ but serve students who live within it?**

The school may exist outside the QOZ but serve students who live within it. Applicants are encouraged to provide detailed information in their applications about the extent of their involvement or overlap in an QOZ when responding to this priority to aid the peer reviewers in their assessment.

**19. How could an applicant address Competitive Preference Priority 2 and how are points assigned?**

Applicants that have never received a TQP grant, including through membership in a group application submitted in accordance with 34 CFR 75.127-75.129 (i.e. if an applicant was part of a TQP eligible partnership previously), may receive 3 additional competitive preference points in the FY 2020 competition.

## **Programmatic and General Application Questions**

**20. How might a proposed project develop approaches to remote or distance learning due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic?**

Applicants may choose to propose projects that incorporate remote or distance learning approaches due to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The non-Federal peer reviewers will evaluate the quality and thoughtfulness of any proposed approach using the selection criteria for the FY 2020 TQP competition.

**21. Must an application include a needs assessment?**

Yes. The application must include a needs assessment of all the partners in the eligible partnership with respect to the preparation, ongoing training, professional development, and retention of general education and special education teachers, principals, and, as applicable, early childhood educators. Applicants are strongly encouraged to explicitly identify their needs assessment in Appendix C of the program narrative. See HEA section 202(b)(1).

**22. May individuals who are already certified to teach in one area participate in the teaching residency program as a way of becoming certified in another area?**

No. The definition of a “teaching residency program” in HEA section 200(22) provides that the program is for “prospective teachers.” Moreover, the purpose of the TQP program is to increase the quality of prospective and new teachers and recruit highly qualified individuals, including minorities and individuals from other occupations, into the teaching force. See HEA section 201.

**23. What is a teaching resident’s service obligation, and who is responsible for tracking whether, upon completion of their teaching residencies, residents have met it?**

In order to receive the one-year living stipend or salary that eligible partnerships must make available to them, residents must submit an application that includes an agreement to work, immediately upon successful completion of the residency, as a full-time teacher for not less than three years in a high-need school in a high-need LEA in the eligible partnership. The agreement also must specify that a resident who does not fulfill this service obligation must repay these funds to the eligible partnership. See HEA section 202(e)(2)(C)(iii) and (iv) for more information.

Eligible partnerships are responsible for tracking residents’ employment after completing the teaching residency program based on the terms of the repayment agreement, and for requiring residents who do not fulfill their service obligation to repay the living stipend or salary that they received. Eligible

partnerships must then use recovered funds for additional activities consistent with the purposes of the TQP program. All grantees will be expected to submit an annual performance report to the Department documenting their success in addressing the TQP performance measures, including three-year employment retention. This is a measure of the percentage of program completers who were employed by the high-need LEA or early childhood education program for three consecutive years after initial employment.

If a grantee is unable to “carry out additional activities that are consistent with the purposes” of their TQP program, then, consistent with how the Department handles unspent funds, the funds must be returned to the Federal Government.

**24. What is meant by a deferral of the teaching resident’s service obligation on the grounds of “inability to secure employment in a school served by the eligible partnership”?**

A deferral of the teaching resident’s service obligation on the grounds of an “inability to secure employment in a school served by the eligible partnership” (HEA section 202(e)(2)(C)(iv)(II)) may result when the schools served by the eligible partnership are not currently hiring for the teaching resident’s subject area, licensure, or experience.

**25. In teaching residency projects, may payment of the participants’ “one-year living stipend or salary” be made with either TQP grant funds or with non-Federal match funds?**

Yes. The living stipend or salary may be paid with TQP funds, non-Federal match funds, or a combination of the two.

The TQP statute does not define the term “living stipend or salary.” Therefore, the applicant should describe in the budget and budget narrative (and elsewhere in the application, as relevant) a reasonable and necessary amount that it proposes to provide as a living stipend or salary to its teaching residents. This living stipend may be granted for a maximum of one year, as specified by HEA section 202(e)(2)(C)(i).

**26. How are living stipends or salaries categorized for accounting purposes with the partner IHE and teacher residents?**

Applicants should follow the partner institution policy regarding the appropriate tax characterization of the required living stipend or salary for teacher residents.

**27. May grantees use TQP funds to pay student stipends or tuition reduction to project participants? May TQP funds pay the costs of participants’ certification or State testing?**

No. The HEA does not authorize the use of TQP funds for tuition reduction or other student support costs such as fees for certification or State testing.

However, applicants must provide a one-year living stipend or salary consistent with HEA section 202(e)(2)(C)(i) and a participant may choose to use the living stipend for their tuition.

**28. May an applicant seek TQP funding to prepare multiple cohorts of teachers in a teaching residency program?**

Yes. However, if an applicant proposes to recruit and prepare teacher residency candidates during Project Years 4 or 5 of their grant performance period, the Department will expect it to describe in the application how it will provide them with the required minimum two-year induction support,

professional development, and networking opportunities during and after the end of the five-year grant performance period. See HEA section 202(e)(2)(A)(vii) for more information.

**29. What is the required length of the teaching residency program?**

The teaching residency program must be designed so that participants may complete it within 18 months (i.e., the program must be designed so that within an 18-month period, residents may receive the necessary mentoring and instruction and earn a Master’s degree and initial teacher certification or licensure). TQP program funds may only be used to pay for residents’ stipends or salaries for a one-year (12-month) period of that program. See HEA section 200(22) for more information.

**30. What additional teacher resident selection criteria may an applicant include for selecting eligible individuals?**

In addition to the specified criteria, an applicant, consistent with HEA section 202(e)(2)(B)(ii), may include other attributes linked to effective teaching for selecting teacher residents, which may be determined by interviews or performance assessments, as specified by the eligible partnership.

This could, for example, include requiring prospective teacher residents to perform a sample teaching lesson or interviewing with a panel of current teachers, to help select the most appropriate teacher residents for the applicant’s proposed program.

**31. May teacher mentors under the TQP program receive stipends?**

Yes. TQP funds may be used to provide reasonable and necessary stipends or other supplemental compensation to teachers who have taken on additional responsibilities related to mentoring the teaching residents. Supplemental compensation may include bonuses, salary differentials, incentives, or performance pay, based on the mentor teacher’s extra skills and responsibilities.

**32. May TQP funds be used to secure replacement teachers for times when mentor teachers are working on TQP responsibilities outside their classrooms?**

Yes. TQP funds may be used to cover the costs of replacement teachers as long as the LEA, under its established policies, would not pay for these costs in the absence of the TQP project (which therefore would constitute impermissible supplanting of other Federal, State, or local funds).

**33. Is Early Childhood Education (ECE) a required component of the Absolute Priority for TQP projects?**

No. However, applicants that propose to prepare teachers to teach in early childhood education programs must focus their activities on providing project participants with the knowledge and skills they need in early childhood education. See HEA sections 202(b)(6)(E)(i), (b)(6)(K), and (b)(7)(D); HEA sections 200(4), 200(12), 200(17)(B)(iii), and 200(23)(H).

**34. May a paraprofessional participate in a TQP project under this Absolute Priority?**

Paraprofessionals may participate in a TQP grant under this Absolute Priority if the paraprofessional is a recent graduate of a four-year IHE.

**35. What is a “mid-career professional”?**

A mid-career professional is someone in a profession other than teaching who has moved past entry-level but is not nearing the end of his or her career. A mid-career professional entering the teaching profession can bring specialized content knowledge, often in hard-to-staff subjects, into schools for the benefit of students. TQP applicants might consider factors such as the following when designing a teacher preparation program that includes mid-career professionals:

- Skills, certifications, and other professional qualifications;
- Relevance of the professional subject area expertise to the teaching need;
- Years in the profession; and/or
- Supervisory status.

## Evaluation Questions

### **36. What measures should be included in the applicant's evaluation plan?**

Applicants should include both the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) measures found in the FY 2020 NIA and measures that are unique to the applicant's project as part of their evaluation plan. Applicants will report on all these measures annually as part of the annual performance report. Several of the TQP GPRA measures do not yield results in Years 1 and 2. An explanation of how to report on these measures and possible options to reduce the grantee reporting burden will be provided to successful applicants shortly after awards have been made.

### **37. In evaluating TQP projects, must eligible partnerships use an outside evaluator?**

No. Those eligible applicants that wish to use an outside evaluator may also wish to consider selecting the evaluator and identifying it in the application using procedures in 34 CFR §75.135, which allows a contract for data collection, data analysis, evaluation services, or essential services to use the informal, small-purchase procurement procedures in the Uniform Guidance. See 2 CFR §200.320(b).

Whether or not the eligible partnership uses an outside evaluator, the Department strongly recommends that applicants provide a detailed list of responsibilities for the selected evaluator in its application.

## Budget Questions

### **38. What is the limitation on administrative expenses for the grant?**

Per HEA section 203(d), an eligible partnership that receives a grant may use not more than two percent of the funds provided to administer the grant. Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide a detailed budget narrative that explains how their proposed budget adheres to the two percent administrative cost cap. More information on the administrative cap, including a webinar describing the cap, can be found on the TQP program Website.

### **39. How does an eligible partnership determine the amount of indirect costs that it may charge to the TQP grant?**

Under 34 CFR §75.563 and §76.563(c), the indirect cost rate that an eligible applicant may use to charge indirect costs to TQP funds may be no more than eight percent. In addition, because the TQP eligible partnership is a group applicant (see 34 §§CFR 75.127-75.129), under 34 CFR §75.564(e), the eligible partnership must use a restricted indirect cost rate (RICR) that is no greater than the amount of the lead

applicant's RICR if that rate is less than eight percent. Under 34 CFR §75.128(b), the members of the eligible partnership need to enter into an agreement that details the responsibilities of each partner, and this agreement should, among other things, identify how indirect costs will be apportioned among members of the eligible partnership. For more information on indirect costs, see 34 CFR §§75.560-75.561 and §§75.563-75.564.

**40. How may a lead applicant that does not have an RICR obtain one?**

If a lead applicant that does not have an approved RICR would like to obtain one, please email the Department's Indirect Cost Rate Group at [IndirectCostGroup@ed.gov](mailto:IndirectCostGroup@ed.gov) for instructions. The Department will provide direct support if it is the cognizant Federal agency. The cognizant Federal agency is the Federal agency that provides the most direct Federal funding to the lead applicant.

\*Please review the **EED Division Match/Cost Share FAQ** documents for additional information on match/cost share for EED programs.