

Louisiana Believes



**Educator Preparation Grants**

**Cohort 2**

**Request for Applications**

**Application Due Date: February 13, 2015**

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## I. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Louisiana students are just as smart and capable as any in America. Louisiana has acted on this belief by raising academic expectations for students. To help students succeed in the classroom and beyond, Louisiana has also raised the bar for teaching excellence, as research has long indicated that quality of classroom teaching is a major factor in increasing student achievement. For this reason, strengthening teacher preparation programs has been a major focus in Louisiana over the last decade. As the work of Louisiana's teachers continues to evolve, preparation must continue to evolve as well to better prepare the next generation of teachers.

To better understand the relationship between teacher preparation practices and the needs of school systems and schools, [the Department surveyed](#) new teachers, the programs preparing them, and the school systems hiring them. The results provided valuable insight into the challenges new teachers, principals, school system leaders, and preparation programs face, and opportunities to address those challenges.

### Opportunities

#### SCHOOL SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT IN PREPARATION PROGRAM

- Meeting workforce needs: Partnerships between school systems and preparation programs should focus on recruiting and selecting academically high-performing candidates who are likely to succeed in the classroom and who meet workforce needs—in terms of quantity, readiness, and certification area.
- Learning through practice: Aspiring teachers need preparation experiences that develop the practical knowledge and skills that lead to success in the classroom. Aspiring teachers need more practice and strong mentors to master essential knowledge and skills.

#### SCHOOL SYSTEM PARTICIPATION IN LICENSURE PROCESS

- Measuring readiness through performance: Teaching is a complex skill that cannot be measured by paper and pencil tests alone. Principals should be involved in making licensure decisions to ensure that teachers are ready for day one in the classroom.

Recruiting and training the next generation of teachers is a school system's first step to ensure that new teachers are classroom ready, every classroom is staffed by an effective teacher, and all students are on a successful path to college and career. Through the [Believe and Prepare: Educator Preparation Grants](#), schools, school systems, and preparation programs have the opportunity to meet these teacher readiness and teacher shortage challenges through grants that support collaboration to develop strong partnerships or school system-based preparation programs.

A successful Believe and Prepare program relies on clearly defined roles for mentor teachers, school and school system leaders, and preparation program faculty, and collaboration that focuses on strengthening preparation experiences and teacher quality. The [Believe and Prepare Implementation Guide](#) describes the actions a school system would take to develop a highly effective Believe and Prepare program and serves as a guide to applicants developing their Believe and Prepare application.

## II. GRANT TIMELINE

Release of Believe and Prepare PK-12 RFA..... December 10, 2014  
*\*An RFA for school systems and preparation programs interested in redesigning early childhood programs will be released in Winter 2015.*

**Deadline to Submit Application ..... February 13, 2015**

Interviews ..... March 16 – 18, 2015

Announcement of Cohort 2 Grantees ..... April 2015

Grant Award Period ..... April 2015 – June 30, 2016

## III. PROGRAM DESIGN

The Department of Education will award up to \$100,000 for pilot programs that develop an “emerging” or “effective” program, as described in the [Believe and Prepare Implementation Guide](#) on pages 5-6 of this application.

**Additionally, Cohort 2 pilots will collaborate** with Cohort 1 and the Department to develop tools, resources, and guides that enable new partnerships’ success:

- Recruitment and selection tools and strategies that meet workforce needs, such as, workforce analysis tools and recruitment plans.
- Mentor selection criteria, training models, and performance evaluation protocols.
- Skill-based certification assessments and protocols for school-leader based certification decisions.

## IV. ELIGIBILITY AND FUNDING

The Department will award up to ten Believe and Prepare grants of up to \$100,000 to any of the following institutions that present a high-quality and innovative plan for a school-based teacher preparation program:

- School system
- Individual school or group of schools
- A partnership between a school system or school(s) and a preparation program

Partnerships can include any number of schools, school systems, and/or new or existing preparation programs. Partnerships should submit one, joint application. Signatories on the application should include the school principal, with superintendent or CEO letter of support; and/or superintendent/CEO; and preparation program head or chair or university campus head or designee, if applicable.

While the lead school or school system on the application will serve as the grant award recipient, the lead school or school system may sub-grant to or contract with a collaborating preparation program.

## V. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed on the below criteria.

- **Teacher Preparation Challenges**
  - Identifies immediate and long-term teacher readiness challenges and/or shortages faced by the school(s) or school system(s)
- **Program Design**
  - Program is designed to meet criteria for an “emerging” or “effective” program, as described in the [Believe and Prepare Implementation Guide](#)
  - School and/or school system leaders play a lead role in program design and implementation
- **Program Evaluation**
  - Application describes tools, resources, and processes that will be created during the time period of the grant
- **Program Sustainability and Expansion Plan**
  - Budget uses grant funds effectively
  - Proposed program includes a plan to sustain and expand the program beyond the grant period

## VI. [BELIEVE AND PREPARE EDUCATOR PREPARATION GRANT APPLICATION TEMPLATE](#)

## VII. QUESTIONS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

See the [Believe and Prepare FAQ](#) for additional information. For answers to other questions not listed in the FAQ, contact [believeandprepare@la.gov](mailto:believeandprepare@la.gov).