

**GROW YOUR OWN TEACHER EDUCATION INITIATIVE  
FISCAL YEAR 2014 ALLOCATION**

**Submitted for:** Action.

**Summary:** This item requests approval of the allocation of grants to the 12 consortia participating in the Grow Your Own Teacher Education (GYO) Initiative. The goal of the GYO Initiative is to recruit and prepare parent and community leaders and paraeducators statewide to become effective teachers in: 1) hard-to-staff schools serving a substantial percentage of low-income students, and 2) hard-to-staff teaching positions in schools serving a substantial percentage of low-income students.

The GYO Act was passed in 2004 and received its first funding in fiscal year 2006 from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). In FY2011 the GYO program was transferred to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE).

The GYO program had a successful year. Teacher graduates increased from 32 to 81, or by 153 percent, between 2011 and 2012. The appropriation amount was increased from \$1 million in FY2013 to \$1.5 million in FY2014, or 50 percent.

**Action Requested:** That the Illinois Board of Higher Education approves \$1.5 million for administration, evaluation, and support of the GYO program including \$1,374,797 to 12 GYO consortia for Fiscal Year 2014 as detailed in Table 1.



STATE OF ILLINOIS  
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**GROW YOUR OWN TEACHER EDUCATION INITIATIVE  
FISCAL YEAR 2014 ALLOCATION**

**Background**

This item requests approval of the allocation of grants to the 12 consortia participating in the Grow Your Own Teacher Education (GYO) Initiative. The goal of the GYO Initiative is to recruit and prepare parent and community leaders and paraeducators statewide to become effective teachers 1) in hard-to-staff schools serving a substantial percentage of low-income students, and 2) in hard-to-staff teaching positions in schools serving a substantial percentage of low-income students.

The GYO Act was passed in 2004 and received its first funding in fiscal year 2006 from the ISBE. Since 2006, consortia in communities across the state have provided support to local community members who desire to become teachers in hard-to-staff neighborhood schools. Consortia are comprised of community organizations, school districts, community colleges, and four-year institutions of higher education.

In FY2011 the GYO program was transferred to the IBHE. There are currently 157 active teacher candidates enrolled in the GYO program. Candidates may receive up to \$25,000 for college expenses in the form of loans which are forgiven if a graduate completes five years of service in a qualifying school. Candidates also may receive transportation assistance, tutoring, technology assistance and, if necessary, child care support. The consortia and their members are permitted to use grant funds to offset their costs of providing services to the teacher candidates.

**GYO Candidate Statistics**

Listed in the table below are statistics about the GYO candidates.

Race/ethnicity	African American 49%; Latino 36%
Employment	Employed full-time, 72% part-time, 14%
Gender	Female, 78%; male 22%
Active in schools	Work in schools, 53%; parent volunteers/leaders, 44%
Age	Two-thirds are between 30-50 years old
Family status	76% have dependents
Family income	Over half have family incomes below \$30,000

**FY2014 Goals and Accomplishments**

The ultimate goal of this grant project is to increase student achievement and ensure student success in some of our state's neediest schools. The IBHE developed and refined the *Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success*. One of the major findings in the State

during the development of the *Public Agenda* was that one Illinois is affluent, well educated, and economically dynamic with a seemingly bright future. The other Illinois struggles to make ends meet, lags in educational attainment, and is economically stagnant. Separating these two states is a prosperity gap that is wide and growing. As a result, the IBHE is partnering with the GYO Initiative as one approach to addressing this prosperity gap especially in targeted schools.

### **IBHE Steps Implemented to Improve the Program**

Since receiving this program from ISBE in 2011, the IBHE has implemented several new policies to improve the outcome of graduating teachers to teach in hard-to-teach school districts across Illinois.

- Rewriting Program Rules
  - Revised rule changes made to strengthen accountability
  - Fiscal Agent must be an institution of higher education
  - Clearly defined Roles and Responsibilities section added
- Contracted with the Illinois State University (ISU) Center for the Study of Education Policy to:
  - Evaluate the program
  - Perform site visits
  - Write an evaluation report with recommendations for improvement to the program (link provided)  
<http://www.ibhe.org/Grants/grantPrg/GYO.htm>

The ISU Center has been used by IBHE for the past nine years for the NCLB program, the Center is recognized by the US Department of Education for their innovative evaluation procedures.

- Developed a new online candidate database system that must be updated quarterly. The database shows credit hours earned, GPA, and other important information about candidate progress.
- Provided financial support to consortia enabling candidates to prepare for the basic skills test. Passing the more difficult basic skills test recently adopted by ISBE has been problematic for GYO candidates.
- Required an audit by an external independent auditor. Each consortium must submit a statement of revenues and expenditures signed by the fiscal agent for the grant.
- IBHE staff has held meetings with each consortia to recommend to consortia that students who do not show adequate academic progress or low GPAs be counseled out of the program.
- Contracted with GYO Illinois to help consortia secure external funding.
- A formal procedure put in place for candidates to request a waiver or deferral.

## FY2014 Award and Evaluation Process

A competitive renewal application was released on June 20, 2013. Award amounts in Table 1 were calculated by the quality of the renewal application based on a consensus score and the number of active candidates. Each renewal application was scored by a team of three external reviewers and scored based on the following criteria.

- **Need for teachers/placement:** How well did the proposal clearly identify that at least a subset of the teachers typically prepared by the lead institution of higher education seeks employment in communities where hard-to-staff schools or positions are located? The proposal projected teacher vacancies in partner districts including staffing trends over the past five years and projected vacancies for the next five years. Letters of intent indicate the districts' willingness to collaborate in offering opportunities for candidates in the GYO program and to place persons graduating from the program in teaching positions.
- **Project Narrative/Objectives:** How well did the proposal:
  - Provide a general overview of your consortia for FY2014 including the intended outcomes;
  - Describe the key project personnel, their qualifications, and their roles and responsibilities;
  - Describe the plans you have in place to assist students who are facing serious challenges in the GYO program (i.e., academic, financial, dispositional, etc.);
  - Describe procedures for counseling out students in light of a 60 percent reduction to the program;
  - Provide projected teacher vacancies in your partner districts including staffing trends over the past five years and projected vacancies for the next five years;
  - Explain how GYO Initiative fills a need as well as draws on potential community assets, based upon a needs assessment.
- **Student Support:** How well did the proposal:
  - Describe the experience of the higher education institution in preparing GYO candidates for teaching in hard-to-staff schools;
  - Describe the consortia's policy for candidates to continue in the program;
  - Describe plans to ensure that candidates take advantage of existing financial aid resources before using the GYO loan funds;
  - Describe the student support services provided to assist candidates in passing the test of academic proficiency;
  - Describe the other student support services (counseling, tutoring, academic advising, etc.) to be offered to candidates throughout the year;
  - Describe plans for testing and qualitative evaluation of candidates' teaching skills to ensure that graduates of the program are prepared for teaching;
  - Describe strategies derived from community advocacy that will help candidates develop tools for working with parents and other community members to garner resources and support for schools and kids.
- **Evaluation Plan:** How well did the evaluation plan describe what measures the consortia will be using, how data will be collected, how the data are analyzed by the consortia members and who will be involved in this analysis? How were evaluation results used by the consortia to improve project outcomes/

- **Budget:** Did the proposal clearly present a cost-effective budget and narrative justification that is consistent with the scope of the proposed objectives and activities? State funds are targeted towards student forgivable loans.
- **Performance Indicators:** The performance indicator information provided indicates the consortia made progress towards the goals and activities throughout the year.
- **Program Sustainability:** The proposal provides convincing evidence of institutional support (monetary and non-monetary) and the potential to sustain efforts of the project.

### Next Steps

In FY2014, the IBHE will continue to contract with an external program evaluator (a statutory mandate) to monitor and provide technical assistance to consortia to improve program outcomes along with administration of the program. In addition, the evaluator will work with IBHE staff to coordinate an annual statewide meeting of all consortia. Consortia and GYO teacher candidates will be surveyed. The results of these surveys will help guide IBHE staff policy changes and improvements to the GYO program for FY2014. An annual statewide learning network meeting will be held to improve program outcomes.

The staff recommends adoption of the following resolution:

*The Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby approves the Fiscal Year 2014 Grow Your Own Teacher Education Initiative Grants as described in this item. The Board authorizes the Executive Director to make pro rata adjustments to consortia grant awards in the event that appropriated funds are reduced or unavailable. The Executive Director is authorized to re-allocate funds between consortia, fund other consortia as necessary, and allocate any remaining funds at the end of the fiscal year.*



