**Section 70.20 Eligible Applicants**

a) An eligible applicant for the Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Assistance Grant shall be a partnership consisting of:

1) One or more educational entities serving elementary and secondary schools (e.g., school districts, private schools, Regional Offices of Education) and/or one or more community-based organizations that provide early childhood education programs or related services, such as technical assistance or professional development, to early childhood programs and practitioners; and

2) One or more four-year institutions of higher education with an accredited teacher preparation program for early childhood education.

b) The partnership shall designate one entity to serve as the administrative agent for the grant.

c) Preference for funding shall be provided to eligible applicants whose programs target individuals, as defined in Section 70.10(a), who are:

1) from a bilingual or minority background and already possess bachelor's degrees and need only to complete coursework necessary for receipt of the professional educator license endorsed for early childhood education; or

2) willing to work in State-funded preschool programs in geographic areas experiencing a shortage of teachers who hold professional educator licenses endorsed for early childhood education. A shortage area is defined as one in which State-funded preschool education programs operating in that area are unable to enroll additional students in their programs due to a lack of properly licensed teachers or the State Board of Education is unable to fund additional programs to meet the need of a particular area for preschool education due to a lack of properly licensed teachers.

(Source: Amended at 40 Ill. Reg. 2202, effective January 13, 2016)