



MEMORANDUM

TO: Eastern Illinois University; Grow Your Own Chicago-Lake County; Peoria Public Schools District 150; Southern Illinois University Carbondale

FROM: Liza Pappas, Ph.D., Executive Director, Grow Your Own Illinois

DATE: April 19, 2024

RE: Request for Proposals: Fiscal Year 2025 Grow Your Own Continuation Grants

Grow Your Own Illinois anticipates receiving a Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) appropriation for the Grow Your Own Initiative and is seeking proposals for continuation grants from current implementation and continuation grant recipients.

The required documents for review and submission are:

- Application for FY25 GYO Continuation Grant
- Attachment 1 – Consortium Partners
- Attachment 2 – Consortium Partner Roles and Responsibilities
- Attachment 3 – Grant Proposal – Narrative
- Excel Worksheet of tables from the Grant Proposal
- Uniform Grant Budget Template (available [here](#))

You should also review the following attachments:

- Attachment 4 – Additional Grant and Application Detail (Informational Only)
- Attachment 5 – Additional Guidance for Planning Grant Applicants (Informational Only)
- Attachment 6 – Anticipated Review Timeline

Grant Period: The grant period will be from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

Application Deadline: The application deadline is **5 pm June 3, 2024**

Submitting Your Proposal: The proposal materials may be submitted via email to Dr. Roey Ahram at rahram@gyo-il.org or mailed to Grow Your Own Illinois, 1901 W. Carroll Avenue, Suite 201 A, Chicago, IL 60618

Please note that funding is contingent upon a timely and successful completion grant and subject to the availability of sufficient funds being appropriated or otherwise made available to GYO-IL by the State.

Contact Person: For more information on this application, contact Dr. Ahram at rahram@gyo-il.org.



Consortium Partners

Please identify your fiscal agent and provide a list of partners in your consortium. This list should include an organization from each of the following categories (23 Ill. Adm. Code 1085.20):

- (a) at least one **4-year institution of higher education** with an Illinois accredited teacher education program;
- (b) at least one **educational organization** (school district or group of schools) in your targeted geographic region that is able to offer opportunities for candidates to complete pre-student teaching clinical experiences in hard-to-staff schools or positions in this targeted geographic region; and
- (c) at least one **community organization** in the targeted geographic region.

You may also include a 2-year institution of higher education, school employee union, or regional office of education in your planning.

List your consortium partners in the space below and provide their contact information on the following pages. If you have more than six partners, please append additional pages with their information.

PARTNER TYPE	PARTNERS
4-year institution(s) of higher education	
Educational organization(s)	
Community organization(s)	
Additional organizations: 2-year institution of higher education	

PARTNER

Organization Name
Organization Address

Street address

City *State* *Zip + 4*

Primary Contact Name
Primary Contact Title
Telephone Number
Email Address
Website (if available)

PARTNER

Organization Name
Organization Address

Street address

City *State* *Zip + 4*

Primary Contact Name
Primary Contact Title
Telephone Number
Email Address
Website (if available)

PARTNER

Organization Name
Organization Address

Street address

City *State* *Zip + 4*

Primary Contact Name
Primary Contact Title
Telephone Number
Email Address
Website (if available)



Consortium Partner Roles and Responsibilities

Please note that consortium partners must meet to plan and implement key facets of your program (e.g., candidate recruitment, academic support, cohort meetings, and wraparound services).

For each partner in your consortium (“Consortium Partners”), please provide a written agreement detailing their roles and responsibilities regarding the following:

- A) Recruiting, selecting, and assessing candidates
- B) Establishing support systems and the specific roles of each partner in providing those supports (this may include, but shall not be limited to, tutoring, mentoring, leading professional development workshops, placement supports, etc.);
- C) Measuring the progress and success of individual candidates;
- D) Meeting quarterly to make improvements based on the results of internal and external evaluations; and
- E) Assessing the success of the overall partnership.

The partner and the fiscal agent must sign this written agreement and include it in the proposal.



Grant Proposal – Narrative

Please answer the following questions about your Grow Your Own IL (GYO) program. In your responses, address each bullet point to the best of your ability. Additionally, complete the tables in the separate Excel sheet provided.

I. Meeting Local Teacher Needs

GYO programs are focused on the twin goals of increasing teacher racial diversity and supporting locally grown and community-connected teachers to meet the needs of local school communities

What are the current educational needs in your region, and how will your GYO program (current and expanded) meet those needs?

- In Table 1 and Table 2, identify districts with “hard-to-staff” schools and “hard-to-staff” positions (as defined by 23 Ill. Adm. Code 1085.20) where your GYO program intends to place graduates.¹
- Explain how your GYO Program will help address local teacher staffing needs in the geographic regions listed in Table 1 (e.g., how you are working with districts with high rates of unfilled positions, how your program addresses hard-to-staff positions).

What is your plan to recruit additional candidates to current cohorts or create new cohorts in FY25?

- In Table 3, please provide an overview of current and planned cohorts. List the number of current candidates who will continue, a projected number of graduates, and the number of candidates you plan to recruit in the FY25 grant period. Disaggregate by region/county/cohort and licensure area.
- Describe your process for recruiting and vetting new candidates, including recruitment strategies, proposed number of events/activities, timeline, etc.). In your response, please:
 - Describe how your consortium plans and works together to recruit and select racially diverse, locally grown, and community-connected teacher candidates. Detail the roles specific partners (from Attachment 1) will play in recruiting and selecting candidates.
 - Discuss your selection criteria for prospective candidates, including how you determine their eligibility status as paraeducators, parents, community leaders, or non-traditional candidates. Provide copies of your application materials (including requirements, essay questions, etc.) and applicant evaluation criteria or rubric.
 - Explain how your recruitment and selection efforts address GYO’s twin goals of increasing teacher racial diversity and supporting locally grown and community-connected teachers.

¹ See “Illinois Report Card Data” (<https://www.isbe.net/pages/illinois-state-report-card-data.aspx>) for school and district data. See “Unfilled Positions” <https://www.isbe.net/unfilledpositions> for information about teacher vacancies.

Table 1. Targeted Hard-to-Staff Schools and Districts in Your Geographic Region

Regions/Countries	Districts with Hard-to-Staff Schools	STUDENTS									TEACHERS	
		# Enrollment	% Low Income ²	% White	% Black or African American	% Hispanic or Latino	% Asian	% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	% American Indian or Alaska Native	% Two or More Races	Teacher Retention Rate	# of Teacher Vacancies
	[ADD ROWS AS NEEDED]											

Table 2. Targeted Hard-to-Staff Positions in Your Geographic Region

Regions/Countries	Positions in Your Defined Geographic Target Area	Estimated number of vacancies	Will your program prepare candidates who can fill these vacancies? (Yes/No)
	Special Education		
	STEM		
	Bilingual		
	Elementary		
	Other: _____		

Table 3. Current and New Candidates

Regions/Countries/Cohorts	Areas of licensure	Number of current candidates	Planned number of graduates in FY25	Projected number of new candidates in FY25
	<i>Total</i>			

² "Low Income" is defined as the percentage of students, at this school, eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches

II. Program Information

GYO programs prepare community-connected candidates in accredited degree programs in teaching, through which graduates meet the requirements to secure an initial teaching license. GYO programs provide candidates with a range of supports so they can maintain their class schedules and thrive in their programs.

What is the role and responsibility of each institutional member in your consortium and how do you make decisions together?

- In Table 4, list the partners from Attachment 1, briefly describe their roles and responsibilities in your consortium, and the resources (monetary and non-monetary) each will devote to your GYO program to help recruit, select, support, monitor, and place teacher candidates. (You may synthesize and add to the information from the “Consortium Partner Roles and Responsibilities” written agreements.)
- Describe how the ways in which your consortium partners plan and work together on recruiting, supporting, and retaining racially diverse and locally grown and community-connected teacher candidates to achieve your program goals (e.g., meetings, governance structure). Please note *that* consortium partners must meet quarterly to plan and implement key facets of *your* program (e.g., candidate recruitment, academic support, cohort meetings, wraparound support) and make improvements based on the results of internal and external evaluations.

How will your GYO program ensure each candidate secures an Illinois initial teaching license/certificate?

- In Table 5, list where your current and prospective GYO Candidates will attend community college or university in FY25 as part of their path to obtaining their initial teacher license/certificate.
- Describe any additional features of your program that are in place to ensure that each candidate secures an Illinois initial teaching license not listed above. This may include data sharing agreements, organizational relationships, articulation agreements between 2- and 4-year institutions, etc.
- Describe how your cohort coordinator(s) (or any person or persons working in the role) will provide direct support and counseling to candidates.
- In Table 6 and Table 7, indicate which supports are available to candidates through your program. Provide a brief description of each support, including how candidates will access it.
- What is the role of cohort meetings in your GYO program? Please include in your response:
 - Describe how cohort meetings add to or expand on available course offerings in candidate’s teacher preparation programs.
 - Identify who leads your cohort meetings.
 - Describe how you set the agenda and topics for your cohort meetings.
 - How do your cohort meetings align with GYO’s goal of developing community-connected teachers?
 - Will your candidates participate in any professional development outside of their cohort meetings? If so, please describe them.

How will your GYO program ensure that each graduate is successful as a classroom teacher?

- Describe any job placement supports you will provide for graduating candidates.
- Describe your plans to provide support for graduates during their first two years of teaching.
 - What are your goals for supporting recent graduates?
 - Describe key activities your program will implement to support recent graduates, including coaching, group meetings, mentoring, or other activities.
 - In Table 7, provide detailed information about the expected number of graduates who will receive coaching, group meetings, mentoring, or other support.

- Describe any additional mentoring supports for new teachers offered through the district, union, or regional education office and how you will coordinate with them to support graduates in their new teacher positions.

What are your policies and procedures related to exiting (non-graduating) candidates?

- Describe your procedures for the following situations:
 - A candidate who fails to make an adequate rate of progress as specified in 23 Ill. Adm. Code 1085.80(b)
 - A candidate who is counseled out of the program

Table 4. Consortium Partners

Partner Organizations	Categories of Support - Check all that apply			Description of Roles and Responsibilities
Name	Recruit & select candidates	Provide direct candidate support	Support overall programmatic improvement	Description of each partner's roles and responsibilities in the consortium: List any resources (monetary and non-monetary) the partner(s) will devote to the consortium to help recruit, select, support, monitor, and place teacher candidates.
[ADD ROWS AS NEEDED]				

Table 5. Higher Education Institutions

Community Colleges, Colleges, or Universities	Total Number of Current GYO Teacher Candidates	Projected Number of New GYO Teacher Candidates in FY25
[ADD ROWS AS NEEDED]		

Table 6. Candidate Supports

Supports	Provided by program (Y/N)	Description of support and how candidates will access it	Provider	Estimated number of candidates served
Childcare				
Transportation				
Tutoring				
Test Preparation				
Technology & Technology Support				
Developmental courses				
Academic advisement				
Mentoring				
Other:				
<i>[ADD ROWS AS NEEDED]</i>				

Table 7. Graduate Supports

Supports	Provided by program (Y/N)	Description of support and how candidates will access it	Provider	Estimated number of graduates served
Job Placement				
Coaching				
Meetings				
Mentoring				
Other:				
<i>[ADD ROWS AS NEEDED]</i>				

III. Evaluation and Outcomes

What key results/outcomes have been achieved to date?

- In Table 8, list the objectives and outcomes from the previous grant year (stated in your FY24 proposal) and projected outcomes for the FY25 grant period. You may add additional key objectives as needed.

Table 8. Objectives and Outcomes

Key objective	Proposed Outcomes - FY24	Actual/Projected Outcomes - FY24	Proposed Outcomes - FY25
Number of new candidates			
Number of graduates			
Number of graduates teaching in hard-to-staff schools or hard-to-staff positions (if known)			
Number of cohort meetings			
Number of professional development activities			
<i>[ADD ROWS AS NEEDED]</i>			

IV. Lessons Learned and Moving Forward

We would like to know how your program is making improvements based on your own experiences working with candidates, the data you have collected, and any changes you have made in program operations.

Please detail lessons learned from the FY24 grant period

- Describe any major successes, challenges, and lessons learned in recruiting candidates. What data do you collect to aid your assessment? How have you changed your practices based on lessons learned?
- Describe any major successes, challenges, and lessons learned in supporting and retaining candidates. What data do you collect to aid your assessment? How have you changed your practices based on lessons learned?

Describe how you have responded to reviewer feedback on your FY24 proposal.

Please provide details on any other proposed changes to your program from the previous grant year, including the justification for those changes and the anticipated impact of those changes.

In addition, please identify 2-3 primary program goals you want to achieve in FY25 and why they are important to your consortia and/or candidates.

V. Additional Information

Please provide an overview of the experiences and qualifications of key program stakeholders.³

- Please list key program staff (e.g., program director, cohort coordinators, key faculty) affiliated with your GYO program. Provide a brief description of their roles and responsibilities.

Please describe the commitments and dedications of monetary and in-kind resources of each consortium member that will enable the consortium to sustain the program over time with a reduction in the need for GYO state funds.

- How will your consortium continue planning for financial stability during this grant year?
- Summarize any plans for contingency funding if State funding is discontinued or diminished.
- Provide a list of any additional funding supports with an explanation of how funds will help support your GYO program (include in your list in-kind support, additional monies secured for FY25, and potential funding for FY25).

Please outline any activities for FY25 that are not captured above.

³ We encourage programs to review GYO Administrative Rules regarding the Experience and Qualifications of key program stakeholder (Section 1085.60 Experience and Qualifications). Faculty and relevant staff of the institution are knowledgeable regarding the needs of hard-to-staff schools and the specific issues that candidates from non-traditional backgrounds encounter when attempting to complete preparation for teaching careers. The coordinator for the cohort should have experience in education and/or community organizing and in supporting individuals in the collegiate environment and be knowledgeable about group dynamics, support services and cultural issues relevant to the cohort. Community organizations should have a record of success in conducting projects or initiatives with a specific focus on involving parents and others in school improvement, either in the participating schools or schools with similar characteristics.



Additional Grant and Application Detail (Informational Only)

- Grant Period: July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025
- Estimated maximum FY25 grant dollars available: Up to \$3,100,000
- All grantees will be required to sign the State of Illinois uniform grant agreement prior to receiving funds.
- Grantees are required to be registered and approved under the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA). This includes registration and the submission and approval of the Fiscal and Administrative Risk Assessment (ICQ). Information is available via this weblink:
<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/GATA/Grantee/Pages/default.aspxom>
- Grantees will be expected to submit quarterly reports that reflect programmatic and expenditure details of the grant and track and provide the data required by Illinois State Administrative Rules Section 1085.80 Candidates. ***GYO-IL will provide templates. Programs will also have access to GYO-IL's central candidate database.***
- Payments to grantees will be identified in the final grant agreement but are anticipated to be in the following distribution:
 - Initial 25% of grant payment upon signing the grant agreement.
 - 25% of grant funds paid on October 15, 2024, 2025, after receipt and approval of the quarter 1 report.
 - 50% of grant funds paid on January 15, 2025, after receipt and approval of the quarter 2 report.
- Please note that while GYO-IL anticipates issuing award letters before the end of June 2024, issuance of FY25 grant agreements to any grantee is contingent upon GYO-IL finalizing its FY25 agreement with the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Grantees are expected to proceed with their planned operations while awaiting grant agreements for the new grant year.
- The Illinois Board of Higher Education is required by statute to contract with an independent program evaluator. The Illinois Board of Higher Education, in consultation with Grow Your Own Illinois, will contract with an independent evaluator who is responsible for reporting the extent of candidate persistence in:
 - Program enrollment
 - Acceptance as an education major in a four-year institution of higher education
 - Completion of a bachelor's degree in teaching
 - Obtaining a teaching position in a target school or similar school
 - Subsequent effectiveness as a teacher
 - Teaching in a target school or similar
 - The independent evaluator will:
 - Perform monitoring site visits
 - Provide technical assistance to consortia
 - Produce an annual report that includes individual project and overall program data, identification of effective practices, and recommendations for program improvements.

- Additional details on the Grow Your Own grant are available here:
 - [GYO Statute \(110 ILCS 48\)](#)
 - [GYO Administrative Rules Title 23 Section 1085](#)



Additional Guidance for Planning Grant Applicants (Informational Only)

As consortia prepare applications for Fiscal Year 2024 Implementation and Continuation grants, please refer to the following guidance on GYO models and program expectations.

GYO Program Models

GYO programs have followed 1 of 2 models: *academic cohorts* and *blended cohorts*.

- An *academic cohort* model exists when GYO candidates attend the same university and are grouped together based on their area of licensure, take the same classes, and proceed at the same pace through their academic requirements.
- *Blended cohorts* exist when candidates are grouped together on another basis (e.g., geography) and may attend different universities, seek licensure in different areas, and be at different stages of their academic journey.

Both are valid models for GYO funding. If you need guidance on answering a question based on your consortium model, please email Roey Ahram at rahram@gyo-il.org.

Minimum Expectations for GYO-IL Programs

A complete set of minimum expectations for GYO programs can be found in the Illinois Administrative Rules, Sections [1085.60 \(Implementation Grants\)](#) and [1085.70 \(Continuations Grants\)](#), and are captured in the Grant Application.

Please ensure the grant application addresses the following:

- 1) Cohort coordinator
 - a. Illinois Administrative Rules require a cohort coordinator who provides direct support for candidates (Section 1085.25 Roles and Responsibilities.) Consortia must show evidence in their application and budget that they have a plan in place to address this requirement. While this requirement is universal, consortia may address it differently based on their local circumstances. Smaller programs may use the same staff person to direct the program and provide candidate support. Larger programs or programs that cover multiple cohorts may use multiple staff.
 - b. GYO-IL does not recommend using an existing faculty member or advisor without clearly indicating how that person is providing support beyond what is available to all teacher candidates. Illinois law prohibits universities from using GYO funds to pay for services available to all students – it is only to be used for providing additional support to GYO students.
- 2) Monthly cohort meetings
 - a. Illinois Administrative Rules require that GYO programs hold monthly cohort meetings. Cohort meetings provide the opportunity to elicit candidate feedback about the program, educate

candidates on and evaluate the support provided to complete the program, build relationships beyond what is possible in a university classroom setting, and provide opportunities for preservice learning that prepares candidates for the specific local issues found in the hard-to-staff schools targeted by the consortium.

3) Forgivable loans

- a. Illinois State Law and Administrative Rules require GYO programs to offer forgivable loans for tuition, fees, and books and provides specific conditions for these loans' forgiveness, waiver, or deferral. Starting in 2021, all GYO candidates must have a signed agreement indicating that they understand that they have an obligation to teach for five years in a hard-to-staff school or position and that if they do not meet this obligation, they must repay the loans.
- b. GYO-IL will provide draft language and further guidance in the coming months. Consortia are welcome to include this requirement in current candidate agreements.

4) Graduate support

- a. Illinois Administrative Rule (Section 1085.60) allows GYO programs to plan to extend support to graduates for at least their first 2 years of teaching. This includes activities and services such as mentoring (if the district does not already offer a teacher mentoring program) and group meetings of GYO graduates. If the district offers a teacher mentoring program, the consortium should work with the existing district mentoring program to provide mentoring support to the new teacher.
- b. GYO-IL is particularly interested in programs that provide coaching and mentoring support to recent graduates. We define "coaching" as having a trained individual work with teachers to improve the quality of their lessons and increase their capacity to be effective educators. We define "mentoring" as establishing one-to-one support of a less experienced teacher (mentee) by a more experienced teacher (mentor) to facilitate the mentee's induction into the culture of the teaching and their school. The role of a coach and mentor may overlap.

5) External funding

- a. Illinois Administrative Rule (Section 1085.60) requires consortia to have plans to sustain their programs if State funding is diminished. Additionally, the Illinois State law authorizing GYO programs requires that consortia develop plans to supplement state funding with other sources to ensure the program's long-term viability.
- b. GYO programs should be aware that funding for activities not directly related to forming and supporting GYO cohorts (and their participating candidates) could be limited.

6) Branding/Co-Branding

- a. In the course of implementing the funded program or project, it may be necessary to describe GYO-IL and its programs and reference or utilize the brand name and logo of GYO-IL. GYO-IL will issue guidance on branding.



Anticipated Review Timeline (Informational Only)

Activity	Dates
RFP Release	April 19, 2024
Proposals due	June 3, 2024
Proposal review	June 3-12, 2024
Discussions with program directors	June 13-26, 2024
Award letters detailing the award amount, any modifications to the proposal, and reviewer feedback.	June 28, 2024

This timeline is contingent on the following:

1. GYO-IL receiving complete proposals
2. The approval of funds by the Illinois General Assembly.

Please note that while GYO-IL anticipates issuing award letters before the end of June 2024, issuance of FY25 grant agreements to any grantee is contingent upon GYO-IL finalizing its FY25 agreement with the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Grantees are expected to proceed with their planned operations while awaiting grant agreements for the new grant year.