

(6) "Nondegreed recipient" means a recipient of a tuition assistance grant awarded under this section who does not possess an undergraduate or graduate degree in an area of critical shortage.

(7) "Public school" means a school in the public elementary and secondary education system in this State.

(8) "Service obligation" means to teach in the State in an area of geographic or critical shortage in a public school.

(9) "Teacher recipient" means a recipient of a tuition assistance grant awarded under this section employed or certified as a teacher in a field which is not an area of critical shortage.

(10) "Tuition assistance" means any funds provided for the cost of basic instructional charges, fees, room, board, or other related educational expenses.

(b) (1) Economic Development Student Assistance Grants to be known as the Sharon Christa McAuliffe Memorial Teacher Education Award may be awarded as teacher education tuition assistance grants.

(2) The Office shall award annually to eligible applicants tuition assistance grants for the education of persons to teach in areas of critical or geographic shortage.

(3) The recipient of a teacher education tuition assistance grant shall use the award at an eligible institution.

(4) The State Board of Education may adopt rules and regulations to determine academic criteria for selection of tuition assistance recipients from eligible applicants.

(c) A recipient of a tuition assistance grant shall:

(1) Qualify as follows:

(i) Have earned 60 credits of undergraduate collegiate education and be enrolled in or sign a letter of intent to enroll in a program leading to certification to teach in an area of critical or geographic shortage and be selected by the Office on a competitive basis among qualified applicants based on academic criteria, not limited to standardized tests, established by the State Board of Education; [or]

(ii) Have EARNED an undergraduate or graduate degree ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1, 1986, and be enrolled in or sign a letter of intent to enroll in courses leading to certification to teach in an area of critical or geographic shortage and be selected among qualified applicants on a competitive basis based on academic criteria established by the State Board of Education; [or]

(iii) HAVE EARNED AN UNDERGRADUATE OR GRADUATE DEGREE ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 1985, AND BE ENROLLED IN OR SIGN A LETTER OF INTENT TO ENROLL IN COURSES LEADING TO CERTIFICATION TO TEACH IN AN AREA OF CRITICAL OR GEOGRAPHIC SHORTAGE AND BE SELECTED AMONG QUALIFIED