

(a) The Administration annually shall award to eligible applicants tuition assistance for the education of persons to teach in areas of critical shortage.

(b) A recipient of a tuition assistance award shall:

(1) Be a resident of this State;

(2) 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 shortage and be selected by the Administration 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 an undergraduate or graduate degree and be enrolled in or sign a letter of intent to enroll in courses leading to certification to teach in an area of critical shortage and be selected among qualified applicants on a competitive basis based on academic criteria established by the State Board of Education; or

(iii) Persons who are already teachers shall:

1. Have a nomination from the superintendent of schools of the system in which the person teaches or intends to teach; and

2. Enroll as a [full-time] student in courses required for teacher certification in an academic area in which there is a critical shortage of teachers; and

3. Be selected by the Administration on a competitive basis among qualified applicants based on criteria established by the State Board of Education;

(3) Sign a letter of intent as follows:

(i) A nondegreed recipient who is not already a teacher shall be enrolled in or sign a letter of intent to enroll at an eligible institution as a [full-time] student in an undergraduate program necessary for teacher education; or

(ii) A degreed recipient shall enroll in or sign a letter of intent to enroll in courses leading to certification to teach in a field of critical shortage; or

(iii) A recipient who is already a teacher shall sign a letter of intent to enroll at an eligible institution as a [full-time] student in a teacher certification