

Mississippi CEEDAR Mini-Grant Opportunity

Mississippi CEEDAR Mini-Grant Opportunity Developing Special Education Teacher Apprenticeship Pathways

Mississippi continues to prioritize the development of a strong and sustainable educator workforce, particularly in areas of persistent need such as special education. Teacher apprenticeship provides an opportunity to strengthen the special education teacher pipeline by creating accessible, high-quality pathways that allow individuals to earn an undergraduate degree and teaching credential while gaining meaningful, job-embedded experience in schools.

The Mississippi Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) State Leadership Team, in collaboration with the Mississippi State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), invites applications from Mississippi Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) and their partnering school districts to support the development of undergraduate special education teacher apprenticeship pathways.

This mini-grant opportunity will provide seed funding to EPP–district partnerships to engage in the planning, development, and initial implementation activities necessary to establish a high-quality apprenticeship pathway leading to preparation and licensure as a special education teacher.

Apprenticeship sponsorship will be centralized through the Central Sponsor supported by the Mississippi SPDG. Mini-grant recipients will work collaboratively with the Central Sponsor to ensure that the developing pathway aligns with the requirements and processes of the statewide apprenticeship structure.

In addition, the Mississippi CEEDAR Apprenticeship Team will provide technical assistance (TA) to awarded EPP–district partnerships throughout the development process. TA will be tailored to the needs of each partnership and may include support related to program design, partnership development, curriculum and clinical alignment, apprenticeship competencies, implementation planning, and sustainability.

Priorities

This opportunity is intended to provide seed funding to Mississippi EPPs and their district partners to develop sustainable undergraduate apprenticeship pathways that increase access to preparation and expand the pipeline of well-prepared special education teachers.



Proposed projects must demonstrate a commitment to the following priorities:

- 1. Develop an undergraduate special education teacher apprenticeship pathway.**
The proposed work should result in a clearly defined pathway through which apprentices can complete an undergraduate educator preparation program leading to special education teacher licensure.
- 2. Establish a strong EPP–district partnership.**
Applications must be submitted through a partnership between an EPP and at least one Mississippi school district. The EPP and district should collaboratively design the apprenticeship pathway to address both preparation requirements and local workforce needs.
- 3. Create a high-quality, job-embedded preparation experience.**
The apprenticeship pathway should integrate academic coursework with structured, progressively responsible school-based experiences that allow apprentices to develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to effectively serve students with disabilities.
- 4. Align the apprenticeship pathway with existing EPP requirements and systems.**
Projects should identify how the apprenticeship will be embedded within or connected to the EPP's existing undergraduate special education program, including coursework, clinical experiences, candidate assessment, and licensure requirements.
- 5. Coordinate with the Central Sponsor.**
Awarded partnerships will work with the Central Sponsor supported through the Mississippi SPDG to ensure alignment with the centralized apprenticeship sponsorship structure and associated requirements.
- 6. Plan for sustainability and scalability.**
Partnerships should consider how the apprenticeship pathway can be sustained beyond the mini-grant period and how the partnership might support additional apprentices in future cohorts.

Possible Development Activities

Mini-grant funds may support activities associated with the design and development of the apprenticeship pathway. Activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Mapping the proposed apprenticeship pathway from entry through undergraduate degree completion and licensure.



- Reviewing and revising coursework or program sequences to accommodate apprentices.
- Aligning academic coursework, clinical experiences, and apprenticeship competencies.
- Developing structures for job-embedded learning and progressively responsible clinical experiences.
- Developing or revising candidate assessments, observation tools, or competency-based measures.
- Establishing roles and responsibilities for the EPP, district, mentors, and apprentices.
- Developing mentor selection, preparation, and support structures.
- Identifying recruitment and selection processes for future apprentices.
- Developing advising and candidate-support structures.
- Identifying barriers related to admissions, enrollment, scheduling, tuition, clinical experiences, or degree completion and developing strategies to address them.
- Participating in planning and technical assistance activities with the Mississippi CEEDAR Apprenticeship Team and Central Sponsor.
- Developing an implementation plan for launching the apprenticeship pathway.
- Developing a sustainability plan for supporting future apprenticeship cohorts.

Requirements

To receive funding, applicants must agree to the following:

1. EPP–District Partnership

Each application must include an eligible Mississippi Educator Preparation Program and at least one partnering Mississippi school district. Both partners must identify a lead who will participate in the development process.

2. Development of an Undergraduate Special Education Apprenticeship Pathway

The partnership will develop a clearly articulated undergraduate pathway leading to preparation and licensure as a special education teacher. The pathway should identify the relationship among academic coursework, school-based employment and clinical experiences, apprenticeship requirements, degree completion, and licensure.



3. Coordination with the Central Sponsor

Awardees will coordinate with the Central Sponsor funded through the Mississippi SPDG. The Central Sponsor will provide the centralized sponsorship structure for participating apprenticeship programs. Awardees will work with the Central Sponsor to meet applicable apprenticeship requirements and establish the structures necessary for implementation.

4. Participation in CEEDAR Technical Assistance

Awardees will participate in technical assistance provided by the Mississippi CEEDAR Apprenticeship Team. Technical assistance will support EPPs and districts as they design and develop their apprenticeship pathway and address implementation challenges.

5. Documentation and Progress Reporting

Awardees will provide brief progress updates documenting:

- Activities completed;
- Milestones reached;
- Challenges or barriers identified;
- Decisions made by the EPP–district partnership;
- Technical assistance needs; and
- Progress toward implementation.

6. Submission of Apprenticeship Development Artifacts

At the conclusion of the grant period, partnerships will submit artifacts documenting the developed apprenticeship pathway. These *may* include:

- Apprenticeship pathway/program map;
- Coursework and clinical experience sequence;
- Competency crosswalk;
- EPP–district roles and responsibilities;
- Mentor structure;
- Apprentice recruitment and selection plan;
- Candidate support plan;
- Implementation timeline; and
- Sustainability plan.

Final deliverables will be determined collaboratively with the Mississippi CEEDAR Apprenticeship Team based on the developmental stage and needs of each awarded partnership.



Technical Assistance and Support

This mini-grant is designed as more than a funding opportunity. Awarded EPP–district partnerships will participate in a supported development process involving both the Mississippi CEEDAR Apprenticeship Team and the SPDG-supported Central Sponsor.

The Mississippi CEEDAR Apprenticeship Team will provide individualized and cross-partnership technical assistance to support program design and development. Technical assistance may include consultation, facilitated planning, resource sharing, review of program materials, problem solving, and opportunities for participating partnerships to learn from one another.

The Central Sponsor will support partnerships in understanding and meeting apprenticeship requirements and will serve as the centralized sponsor for apprenticeship programs developed through this initiative.

Together, these supports are intended to reduce the burden on individual EPPs and districts while helping Mississippi build a coordinated and sustainable approach to special education teacher apprenticeships.

Award Information

Number of awards: Up to 5

Award amount: Up to \$5,000

Funds are intended to support the development of the apprenticeship pathway and may be used for allowable expenses associated with planning, program development, collaboration, and implementation preparation.

Timeline

Application opens: September 8

Applications due: Oct 15

Notification of award: Nov 1

Project period:

CEEDAR will provide technical assistance and funding support during the 2026–27 project year in collaboration with the Mississippi State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). The SPDG will extend technical assistance support through 2028 to support continued implementation and sustainability.



Proposal Application

Please provide contact information for all partners on this application, adding lines as necessary.

Name of Institution of Higher Education: _____

Name of Faculty Lead: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Name of Partnering Local Education Agency: _____

Name of Local Lead: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Amount Requested: _____

Proposed Project: Please provide a narrative description that includes the following (no more than three pages, double spaced, 12pt Font).

- Project purpose
- Rationale (e.g., how will this project build capacity for partnerships in induction?)
- Activities and/or deliverables and their associated timeline (Note: Funded activities for development must conclude by August 31, 2027, implementation and sustainability activities can go through 2028).
- Evaluation plans (e.g., evidence of curricular changes and changes in educator knowledge and/or practice)

Project Personnel: Please include names and titles of any faculty, district staff, or graduate students who will be involved and indicate their role in the project.

Budget: Please include a detailed budget showing how the requested funds will be used and a narrative with an explanation.



Category	Associated Costs	Timeline and Narrative
Salaries/Faculty Time		
Consultants		
<i>Fees and days worked</i>		
Travel		
Meeting Expenses		
Materials/Supplies		
Publication and Printing Costs		
Communications		
Other		
<i>Total Costs</i>		

Budget Narrative:

Contact to receive funds:

CEEDAR State Funds Guidance



Allowable	Not Allowable
• Travel • Meeting Expenses (to include costs of meals, transportation, rental of facilities, hotel fees, speakers' fees, and other items incidental to such meetings) • Salaries and Fringe Benefits/Honoraria • Consultants • Communications • Materials and Supplies • Publications and Printing	• Equipment and Other Capital Expenditures • Building and Equipment Rental • Utilities • Capital Maintenance and Repair • Donations and Contributions* • Lobbying* • Entertainment* • Alcoholic Beverages* • Indirect Costs (unless otherwise directed by state policy)

* Unallowable per OMB Circulars A-21 and A-87

Please submit completed applications to Nichole Spalding: nspalding@coe.ufl.edu

