

Braille, Reading, Assessment, Independent Living, Low Vision, Learning Media and Educational Services for Children and Youth in Under Served Areas (Project BRAILLE-USA)

US Department of Education, Office of Special Education & Rehabilitative Services
Start date 01/01/07
End date 12/31/10

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Purpose: This project will continue and expand its national distance education program to prepare teachers of children with blindness and visual impairments, allowing individuals who do not have access to a traditional training model the opportunity to access quality training, and thus help alleviate state and national shortages of qualified staff. The project will provide students with: (a) \$1,500 summer living stipend; (b) minimum \$10,000 grant to each qualified student toward tuition and fees; (c) resident tuition for students residing within the 14 state Western regional Graduate Program consortium; (d) on site faculty supervision of practicum and internship placements; (e) Oregon initial licensure as a Teacher of children with visual impairments, or an endorsement upon a current teaching license.

Method: The program begins with an eight week summer session on campus for orientation, 15 credit hours of class work, at which time students return home to their community to complete 45 credit hours of coursework via web-based instruction, with practicum and internships developed locally. Project BRAILLE - USA focuses upon accepting students from any US state or territory where access to a traditional university program is not available, although priority is given to students within the Western Regional Graduate Program consortium. Through a specific collaborative partnership with the state of Idaho, matching funds from the Idaho state Department of Education will be used to provide supplementary support and training for Idaho residents in the program. The program is designed to meet all CEC Common Core and Visual Impairment standards and to meet NCLB standards for 'highly qualified.'