

NCLB Act Paraprofessionals Questions & Answers Section

Title I Part A (hereafter referred to as Title I) – Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged - brings into the Florida Department of Education \$476,520,104, most of which is distributed to school districts to meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

1. How is the date of hiring determined?

The date of hiring is the date the paraprofessional is first hired to work in the district as a paraprofessional. The initial employment does not have to have been in a program supported with Title I funds. To meet the designation of “existing” paraprofessional, the individual must have been hired on or before January 8, 2002, in a paraprofessional position.

2. What constitutes two years of study at an institution of higher education?

The law does not define two years of study. A school district may choose to use a measure that equates to the standard number of credits for full-time study for a community college or four-year institution on a semester system for at least four semesters.

3. What is the definition of an instructional paraprofessional pursuant to NCLB?

Paraprofessionals in Florida schools provide a wide array of crucial services that assist in increasing student learning and in the daily operations of programs. Under NCLB, an instructional paraprofessional is one that provides instructional support services in a schoolwide Title I program or in a targeted assistance program supported by Title I funds and, therefore, must meet the qualification requirements of NCLB. The paraprofessional qualification requirements are to be met by a Title I employee providing instructional support services regardless of the position title established or assigned by the district.

4. Do the paraprofessional qualification requirements apply to paraprofessionals working in charter schools?

Yes, the qualification requirements apply if the paraprofessional is providing instructional support services in a Title I schoolwide program or in a targeted assistance program and is paid with Title I funds.

5. How does a school and school district demonstrate compliance with the new paraprofessional requirements?

Each principal of a school operating either a Title I schoolwide or targeted assistance program shall attest annually in writing as to whether the school is in compliance with the qualification requirements for paraprofessionals. Copies of the attestation shall be maintained at the main school district office and at the school site and shall be available to the public upon request.

6. May a district purchase a test for paraprofessionals with Title I funds?

Yes.

7. Is it permissible to use Title I funds to pay community college tuition for existing paraprofessionals in order to help them meet the new requirements?

Yes. The Title I five percent set-aside may be used to pay tuition for existing paraprofessionals to meet the new requirements.

If the district has local or state funds earmarked for reimbursing paraprofessionals who are pursuing an AA degree, existing paraprofessionals who work with Title I students should have their equal share from that source before Title I funds may be used. If no local or state funds are available for that purpose or after Title I schools have received their share of available district funds, Title I funds may be used to assist eligible paraprofessionals to earn the AA degree.

8. Do the paraprofessional requirements apply to non-district paid individuals or volunteers who provide tutoring services to children in Title I Schools?

If the individuals are not considered employees of the local educational agencies (school districts), the paraprofessional qualification requirements do not apply to them.

9. Are paraprofessionals working in a pre-k program required to meet the new requirements of NCLB?

Yes, if the paraprofessional is working in a pre-k program supported with Title I funds. No, if the pre-k program is exclusively supported with funds other than Title I, Part A.

10. Do paraprofessionals in a program funded by Title I Part D dollars have to meet the new requirements of NCLB?

If the paraprofessionals are paid with funds under Title I, Part D, the paraprofessional qualification requirements do not apply.

11. What happens to non-Title I paraprofessionals if their school becomes a schoolwide project in the future? Do they have four years from the date their school qualifies or until January 2006 like all other Title I paraprofessionals?

All paraprofessionals in such new Title I schoolwide programs who were hired before January 8, 2002, will be considered existing paraprofessionals. They will have four years from January 8, 2002, to satisfy the new requirements. All paraprofessionals in that school who were hired after January 8, 2002, will be considered new paraprofessionals. It is therefore, imperative that a school make provisions to have its paraprofessionals ready during the one-year planning prior to becoming a Title I schoolwide school.