

TITLE: Consideration of a License Exception for the Hawaii Department of Education BridgeUSA J-1 Visa Program Candidates from the Philippines

The Hawaii Teacher Standards Board (HTSB) shall make an exception and grant a Provisional License to the Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE) BridgeUSA J-1 teachers recruited from the Philippines to teach in HIDOE schools. This exception would allow candidates recruited from the Philippines to be issued a Provisional License without meeting HTSB's basic skills and content knowledge requirements outlined in [NBI 21-13](#) and Social Security Number requirements outlined in [NBI 21-24 Revised](#).

After employment has ended with HIDOE, the licensee shall surrender their license immediately, and HIDOE shall report to HTSB at the end of employment.

The HIDOE shall meet the following requirements prior to their BridgeUSA recruited candidates working with students:

- Candidates hired by the HIDOE through the BridgeUSA J-1 Visa Program must submit to HTSB an initial *Conditional Offer of Employment* provided by HIDOE's Teacher Recruitment Unit.
- Candidates hired for this program must submit to HTSB an official National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) evaluated transcripts that show:
 - Course-by-course evaluation
 - Possession of a bachelor's degree equivalent from a non-US institution
 - Completion of a State-approved teacher, librarian, or counselor education program equivalent from a non-US institution
- Candidates must submit to HTSB, official documentation verifying a valid teaching license equivalent to HTSB's Provisional License and issued by the Professional Regulatory Board for Professional Teachers of the Republic of the Philippines.
- Candidates must submit to HTSB official passing scores of the *Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers (LEPT)*.
- Candidates must submit to HTSB a National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Clearance that verifies no criminal activity within the Philippines.
- Candidates must submit to HTSB a valid Social Security Card prior to working with students.
- Clear the professional fitness check of the HTSB.

Rationale/Background: BridgeUSA/HIDOE Partnership

- Candidates are required to teach in Hawaii.

- Candidates will enter into a year-to-year limited-term contract with HIDOE.
- Candidates may will receive an initial 3-Year Visa and then two 1-year extensions.
- Candidates will be provided three years of mentoring from HIDOE.
- Candidates may be eligible for certain employment incentives depending on meeting eligibility requirements and/or funding availability (e.g. subject area shortage differentials)
 - \$2,000 - \$3,000, similar to certified educators that relocate to Hawaii.
 - \$3,000-\$8,000 geographic hard to staff
 - \$10,000 Special Education differential
 - Special Education certification will be based on Special Education training in the Philippines.

HIDOE and the BridgeUSA J-1 Visa Program provide an opportunity to recruit highly qualified, trained, and licensed educators from the Philippines to fill hard-to-staff vacancies statewide. HIDOE is experiencing a critical shortage of qualified teachers prior to the start of the school year. To assist in closing this gap, HIDOE has diversified its recruitment strategies and selected an experienced Department of State J-1 Visa Sponsor, Alliance Abroad Group, LLC, to assist with international teacher recruitment from the Philippines. By developing multiple recruitment pipelines, HIDOE can now recruit the most qualified local, national and international educators to help fill critical shortage areas in Hawaii.

To address the educator shortage in Hawaii and through an equity-focused lens, HIDOE is expanding its international recruitment to the Philippines. 22.6% of students - the second largest ethnic group statewide after Native Hawaiian students (23.7%) - identify as Filipino. Yet, only 7.9% of teachers identify as Filipino¹. As Carver-Thomas notes, “Research shows that teachers of color help close achievement gaps for students of color and are highly rated by students of all races—a fact that is all the more relevant in light of persistent gaps between students of color and students from low-income families and their peers who are White or from more affluent families. Unfortunately, although more teachers of color are being recruited across the nation, the pace of increase is slow, and attrition rates are high, leaving growing gaps between the demand for such teachers and the supply.”²

What is the BridgeUSA J-1 Visa Program?

BridgeUSA annually attracts around 300,000 individuals to the U.S. from 200 countries and territories to study in U.S. high schools, universities, and research institutions; build professional networks; enhance English language and intercultural skills and teach in U.S. schools, colleges, and universities.

¹ Hawaii State Department of Education: Office of Strategy, Innovation, and Performance; Assessment and Accountability Branch; Office of Talent Management.

² Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/559.310>

Since its establishment as part of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 (The Fulbright-Hays Act), the program has served as a valuable and

important diplomatic tool of U.S. foreign policy. Its mission – to increase mutual understanding between Americans and people of other countries – remains vital to U.S. national security and building people-to-people connections around the world.

Alliance Abroad Pre-Screening and Selection Process:

Receiving their J-1 Visa Teacher Designation on March 4, 2009, the Alliance Abroad Group, LLC sponsors over 8,000 BridgeUSA J-1 Visas for 900 businesses and 86 countries annually.

Before HIDOE conducts official interviews with pre-vetted candidates, Alliance Abroad Group completes the following:

- Ensures candidates are in favorable standing through thorough criminal and employment background checks:
 - Have not been suspended, fired, terminated, or asked to resign from employment.
 - Have not separated from the military under conditions other than honorable.
 - Have not been arrested or convicted.
 - Have not had a license suspended, revoked, or denied.
- Alliance Abroad Group, LLC holds an informational seminar in Manila to create a pool of candidates for HIDOE. The seminar focuses on the opportunities for cultural exchange opportunities in Hawaii, information about the U.S. educational system, the features and resources available in Hawaii's schools, and the benefits of teaching in Hawaii.
- Each teacher must successfully complete the Licensure for Professional Teachers (LEPT) and be licensed in the Philippines with a minimum of two years of professional teaching experience, including completion of equivalent student teaching experience.

Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers (LEPT):

To become a licensed professional teacher in the Philippines, individuals must successfully complete an approved teacher preparation program and the Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers (LEPT).

The examination for teachers at the **elementary level** consists of two parts: general education and professional education.

- **General education** refers to core subjects like Filipino, **English**, Math, Science, and Social Science/Studies.
- **Professional education** refers to those related to the teaching profession like Facilitating Learning, Early Childhood and Adolescent Development and Education, Principles of Teaching, Methods and Strategies, Curriculum Development, and the Teaching Profession.

The examination for the **secondary level** consists of three parts: general education, professional education, and field of specialization.

- **General education** refers to core subjects like Filipino, **English**, Math, Science, and Social Science/Studies.

- **Professional education** refers to teaching profession topics like Facilitating Learning, Early Childhood, and Adolescent Development and Education, Principles of Teaching, Methods and Strategies, Curriculum Development, and the Teaching Profession.
- **Field of specialization** refers to the specific discipline that secondary teachers will have to teach, such as English, Biology, Chemistry, Math, Filipino, Social Studies, Music, Art, Physical Education, and Health or MAPEH.

HIDOE affirms that the LEPT’s licensure exams below assess basic skills and content knowledge requirements identified in Praxis examinations:

- Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators is equivalent to **LEPT’s “General Education.”**
- Principles of Learning and Teaching is equivalent to **LEPT’s “Professional Education.”**
- Specific Licensure Areas are equivalent to **LEPT’s “PI - Field of Specialization.”**

Determination of Highly-Qualified/SATEP Complete Educator Workforce:

J-1 Applicants must be deemed a SATEP completer, as verified by their transcripts/NACES evaluation, to be considered for employment:

- J-1 Applicants obtain their NACES Member Evaluation from the International Evaluation Services of the Center for Applied Research (IESCAREE)
- IESCAREE is a member of NACES
- IESCAREE evaluations provide the institution’s accreditation status as well as a course-by-course academic listing
- IESCAREE evaluations provide a U.S. equivalency statement that verifies the degree, major, and conferral date (month/year). All of the Center’s recommended ranges of U.S. equivalencies are based on the general guidelines of the U.S. National Council for the Evaluation of Foreign Educational Credentials.
- IESCAREE evaluations provide verbiage in the U.S equivalency narrative that verifies the applicant’s completion of a teacher training program as well as the subject area in which they were teacher-trained

Department J-1 Cadre:

In January 2021, the HIDOE hired ten BridgeUSA Educators J-1 Educators in areas of high need, including Special Education, Science, and Elementary/General Education. **All educators have scored effective or highly effective by school administration on their yearly Educator Effectiveness System (EES) evaluation.**

	Initial Hire Date	School	Licensure
Teacher 1	1/4/21	Lanai High & Elem	Elem K-6

Teacher 2	7/28/21	Waimea Canyon MS	Science 6-12
Teacher 3	7/28/21	Ilima Inter	Sped K-6
Teacher 4	7/28/21	Ahrens Elem	Sped K-12
Teacher 5	1/4/21	Lanai High & Elem	Sped K-6
Teacher 6	8/3/21	Lanai High & Elem	Sped K-6
Teacher 7	1/4/21	Lanai High & Elem	Elem K-6
Teacher 8	1/4/21	Nanakuli High & Inter	Science 6-12
Teacher 9	7/28/21	Ahrens Elem	Sped K-6
Teacher 10	7/28/21	Ilima Inter	Sped K-12

Submitted by: Branden Kawazoe

Referred to: Teacher Standards Committee