Eligibility
Am I eligible to apply?
This grant was funded to improve services to students with severe disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder (ASD), in Hawaii. The grant priority is to target those areas that are rural, remote and disadvantaged.

You are eligible to apply if you
1. have a Hawaii teaching license
2. have a cumulative grade point average in your last degree program of 3.0
3. are currently teaching student with severe disabilities, including ASD
4. have a commitment to serve this population of students
5. have two years of classroom teaching experience

To determine if you are in the priority group, ask yourself these questions:
6. Is your school rural?
7. Is your school remote?
8. Is your school disadvantaged?
9. Do you live in the area in which your school is located?
To check your answer against the grant definitions, click on the highlighted words above.

What is the selection criteria?
If you meet eligibility criteria, 1-5 above, you can apply. We will be considering your entire application packet, which includes:

(a) Office of Graduate Education application,
(b) your written statement of objectives (what you plan to accomplish as a result of earning your Masters in Special Education with an emphasis in severe/ASD),
(c) three letters of recommendation (prefer letters from your school administrators and other educators that know your prior experience and ability), and
(d) an interview (can be conducted via Skype or other distance technology).

To meet the intent of the grant, we are giving priority consideration to those in the target group who meet some or all of criteria identified in questions 6-9 above.

How many people can be in the cohort?
The grant will fund 15 candidates in the cohort. An additional 5 candidates will be selected to participate in the grant program of study based on their own funding. Each cohort will have a total of up to 20 candidates. The first cohort begins
Spring 2016 and the second cohort begins in Spring 2018.

How do I know if my school serves a disadvantaged population?
Please refer to Title I school listing. Priority will be given to schools that have a majority (over 50%) of low-income students.

Do you have to be a special education teacher to apply?
The grant is intended to support the training of classroom teachers. You do not have to have a special education degree to apply. It is intended to train teachers who are currently teaching students with these disabilities as their primary teaching assignment who could benefit from additional training.

Funding

How does the payback for years of service work?
Candidates are required to provide 2 years of service to students with these disabilities for each year of grant funding given, totaling 4 years of service as the payback. Your second year in the program can count towards the payback, thereby requiring three additional years of service after completion of the program.

Do you have to remain as a special education classroom teacher during the payback period, or can you take another positions (ie. Autism resource teacher, SSC...)?
As long as you are providing some type of educational service that supports these students, it is counted toward your payback. If you have a life altering circumstance, like the birth of a child, you can request several additional years to complete your 4-year payback. In addition the payback can be completed anywhere in the United States. However, we are looking for people who plan to stay in Hawaii and continuing teaching within the state.

Program

What is the timeline? How many classes per semester?
The program will take 2 years to complete. There will be 2 courses each semester, with an additional 2 courses for two summers.

When are the classes offered? Can I manage this program with my family/life?
Classes are online, with some online synchronous class sessions each semester. All synchronous class sessions will be held between the hours of 4 pm to 8:30 pm, and will each never be more than 2 ½ hours. There will not be more than 2 synchronous sessions per week throughout the entire program. Some semesters require that you attend two
face-to-face classes on the campus at UH Manoa on Saturdays during the semester. A travel stipend of $175.00 is provided to offset your costs, but may not cover your entire costs. Summer courses do not have a face-to-face component.

**What is the Plan B project about?**
The candidates Plan B is a culminating scholarly project that is related to teaching this population of students. It is done collaboratively with the approval and support of an advisor.

**What is the background of this project?**
The United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs is committed to providing federal monies across the nation in the form of grants to improve the educational outcomes of students with disabilities. Yearly they select areas that have shortages of trained personnel across the nation and distribute a call for proposals to address personnel development in the shortage areas. This grant was written in response to a call for proposals for preparing personnel to serve school-age children with low-incidence disabilities, specifically those with severe learning and behavioral challenges, including autism spectrum disorder. Federal grant funding is highly competitive and we are grateful that the reviewers found our proposal to be strong and worthy of receiving funding. Their selection of our proposal has made it possible to offer this MEd program with adequate funding to provide the cost of tuition and additional stipend funding to assist with the costs of technology access, etc. to our Ho‘olako Project candidates.

**Application**

**What are the steps needed in order to apply?**

1. **Graduate System Application Form:** [http://manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/content/submitting-your-application](http://manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/content/submitting-your-application)
2. **Ho’olako Project Interest Form:** [http://goo.gl/forms/5vkcj6y0KG](http://goo.gl/forms/5vkcj6y0KG)
3. **Transcripts:** If not from a UH institution, have ALL other transcripts sent to:
   Office of Graduate Education
   2540 Maile Way
   Spalding 354
   Honolulu, HI 96822
4. **3 Letters of Recommendation** (preferably from your administrators & colleagues)
   & **Statement of Objectives:** (what you plan to accomplish as a result of earning your Masters in Special Education)
   Send to:
   Department of Special Education
   1776 University Avenue, Wist 120
   Honolulu, HI 96822