



GRANT INFORMATION GUIDE

Maryland Elevates Grant: Access, Equity, Progress in Special Education

Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Deadline
October 21, 2022
No later than 5:00 pm EST

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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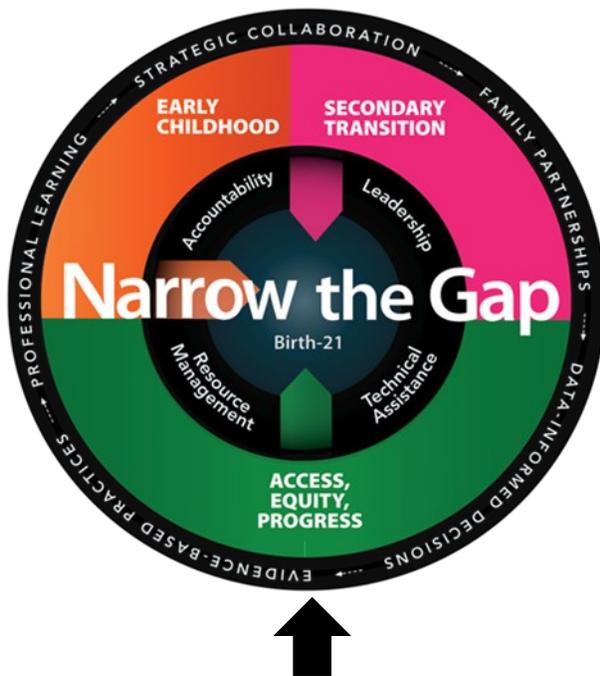
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**Strategic Plan:
Moving Maryland Forward**

The Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services is committed to *Narrow the Gap* between children and youth with disabilities and their non-disabled peers with the implementation of key measures of success and key strategies for implementation, through the use of innovative tools and resources.

Maryland Elevates Grant: Access, Equity, Progress in Special Education



**Access, Equity, Progress:
Implementing an Effective,
Integrated Educational System
with a Continuum of Supports**

The implementation of effective, equitable, and culturally responsive education services resulting in improved opportunities, access, workforce development, leadership, and expectations for children and youth with disabilities, their families, and the professionals serving them.

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Program Description

Children and youth who are identified as having a disability and who are eligible for special education services must, according to federal law, be provided with a “Free and Appropriate Public Education” (FAPE) through special education and related services, supplementary aids and services, program modifications, and supports for personnel in the “Least Restrictive Environment” (LRE).

Both federal and state regulations define special education services as specially designed instruction: adapting the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of a learner with a disability and to ensure access to the general curriculum. [[34 CFR §300.39\(b\)\(3\)](#) and [COMAR 13A.05.01.03 B](#) (71 and 72)], emphasizing the importance and expectation that special education and related services should be delivered in general education settings. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ([IDEA](#)) and Code of Maryland Regulations ([COMAR](#)) further state that children with disabilities may not be removed from general education classes due to the modifications needed to the curriculum.

Based on the October 1, 2021 Snapshot Data Count, Maryland has 109,574 (12.4%) learners ages 3-21 receiving special education and related services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Of these, 71.75% are placed in general education classes for 80% or more of the day (LRE A) and 11.50% are placed in general education classes for 40% or less of the day (LRE C)The gap in English Language Arts proficiency as measured by the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program ([MCAP](#)) state assessment in the fall of 2022 between learners with disabilities and those without disabilities ranged from 19.4 points in fourth grade to 42.2 points in sixth grade. The gap in mathematics proficiency ranged from 9.8 points to 19.4 points in elementary grades, with the lowest performance overall in middle school.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services (DEI/SES) provides leadership, accountability, technical assistance, and resource management to local education agencies (LEA), public agencies (PA), and stakeholders through a seamless, comprehensive, coordinated system of services to children and learners with disabilities, birth through 21, and their families. See the [DEI/SES Strategic Plan - Moving Maryland Forward](#), updated June 2021.

To narrow the opportunity, performance, and achievement gap between learners with disabilities and their peers without disabilities, grants will be awarded under four high-leverage strategies:

Inclusive Instruction	Building Educator Competencies	Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports	Grow-Your-Own (GYO) Programs
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Each key high-leverage strategy is further defined with specific requirements. Applicants must choose at least one of the strategies and provide a description of how planned activities align with the strategy, what products and/or services will be delivered, and the expected impact of the work.

NAME OF GRANT PROGRAM

Maryland Elevates Grant: Access, Equity, Progress in Special Education

PURPOSE

To support the development and implementation of effective, equitable, and culturally responsive education services resulting in increased access to instruction, improved educational achievement and functional outcomes, and reduced gaps between learners with and without disabilities.

Authorization

[Public Law 108-446, Part B of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#)

DISSEMINATION

This Grant Information Guide (GIG) was released on September 19, 2022.

DEADLINE

Proposals are due no later than 5:00 p.m. on October 21, 2022.

GRANT PERIOD

September 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023

FUNDING AMOUNT AVAILABLE

\$750,000

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF GRANTS

5-10

AVERAGE GRANT AMOUNT

\$3,500 - \$250,000

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

The Maryland Elevates Grant: Access, Equity, Progress electronic application can be downloaded [here](#). Download and complete the application. Attach any required appendices. An electronic copy with all required signatures must be uploaded in PDF format to the program's designated email address DEI-SES-grant.submissions@Maryland.gov.

STATE RESPONSIBILITIES

The MSDE is responsible for providing required information, data, documentation, and technical assistance to facilitate the grantee's performance of the work and will provide such additional assistance as requested.

PROGRAM CONTACT

Alicia Palmer, Section Chief, Resource Management and Monitoring Branch
Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services
(410) 767-0946
Alicia.Palmer@Maryland.gov

Eligibility

This funding opportunity is designed for non-profit organizations, community-based partners, and Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs). Priority will be given to exceptional applications that address more than one high-leverage strategy.

Notes:

Recipients of federal funds are required to register and maintain active status on the federal government's System for Award Management ([SAM](#)) website. Active status will ensure that the applicant has been assigned a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

A Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification ([W-9 Form](#)) is completed for first time applicants and/or grantees requiring a change of address or contact information.

It is required that applicants attend a general information session.

Use of Funds

Funds may be used for:

- Tuition and fees
- Salaries, wages, and stipends
- Supplies and materials
- Technology and equipment
- Partnerships, project management, consulting, technical assistance

Funds may not be used for:

- Construction of temporary or permanent structures
- Food or meals
- Renting or maintaining building space
- Supplementing salaries and/or stipends during the regular workday

Getting Started

Learn

- ❖ Read this document in its entirety as it provides a comprehensive overview of the grant's purpose, opportunities, process, and timeline. Continue to monitor the [Maryland Elevates webpage](#) for more information and updates.
- ❖ Explore the links to additional resources and readings identified as “Inspiration from the Field” for each of the grant strategies
- ❖ Learn more by attending live information sessions which will be recorded and posted online for asynchronous viewing.

Consider

- ❖ Assess the access, equity, and progress needs to be addressed by reviewing the high-leverage strategies and Focus Areas identified in this grant.
- ❖ Identify how you could support one or more of the Focus Areas.
- ❖ Plan to use grant funds to inspire and initiate activities and programs that will move secondary transition forward in Maryland.

Collaborate

- ❖ Identify your primary point of contact and key collaborators.
- ❖ Build-in opportunities to gather input from key stakeholders.
- ❖ Utilize your Access, Equity, Progress Liaisons to pressure test grant ideas, gain new insights, and refine grant plans.

Apply

- ❖ Attend the General Information Session. (Required)
- ❖ Submit the online grant application. (Required)

NAVIGATING COMPETITIVE AND NON-COMPETITIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Maryland Elevates is comprised of two types of grant program opportunities across the high-leverage strategies within: competitive grants and non-competitive grants. Each grant program in Elevates has an icon, indicating whether the grant program is competitive or non-competitive.



Competitive Grants – These are grants for which any eligible applicant may apply and be considered for award



Non-Competitive Grants – These are grant programs that reflect expanded investment in existing MSDE programs. Consequently, program awards are only available to the identified organization.

High-Leverage Strategies

Model for Inclusive Instruction

Overview: Applicants will create a partnership with at least three Local Education Agencies (LEAs) having a diverse demographic representation and consideration of current LRE data (LRE A participation rate less than or equal to the State average of 71.75% and/or LEAs having an LRE C participation rate greater than or equal to the State average of 11.50%) to develop a systemic model for school transformation that results in collaborative practices delivered within an integrated, tiered model of interventions and supports, available to each and every learner in the school community. This work will result in improved membership, participation, and learning for children/youth who experience, or are at risk for, marginalization, segregated placement, or removals from general education settings. Federal guidance defining FAPE and LRE has made clear that:

- All children and youth with disabilities should participate in the general education curriculum, including learners who take the alternate assessment, with annual goals that are aligned with their grade level general education standards. (See 2015 [Dear Colleague Letter](#)).
- The placement of learners with disabilities is expected to be in the school and class the child would attend if they did not have a disability, unless the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) requires another placement after full consideration of the range of supplementary aids and services that could be offered in the general education class (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] of 2004, and Code of Maryland Regulations [[COMAR 13A.05.01](#)]).



Requirements: Applicants will develop a proven model for systemic change in order to increase inclusive placements, reduce removals from general education, and narrow the achievement gap for learners with disabilities. **Key activities for initial implementation must include:**

- District-level action planning to promote coherence in work to address equity, inclusion, diversity, significant disproportionality, and a structured approach to tiered interventions and supports for all learners in the LEA.
- Commitment of a district partner through all aspects of district-school technical assistance, support, professional learning, etc. to support district and school-based teams.
- Engagement of schools in a feeder pattern that agree to participate in the systemic change process to demonstrate school-wide inclusion, collaborative instruction and interventions, and implementation of the organizational structures that lead to improved learner outcomes. This model will be used to create demonstration sites that are replicable and sustainable across Maryland.
- School-level action planning based on a variety of data on learner access and outcomes, staff knowledge and beliefs, and qualitative assessment of inclusive practices to identify initial steps for change (e.g., collaboration, adapting curriculum, master scheduling, family engagement, etc.).
- District-wide and targeted site-based professional learning with job-embedded coaching for implementing evidence-based general and special education instruction, intervention, and personalized learner supports.
- Demonstration of evidence-based practices that lead to inclusive experiences, including:

- Individual child- and family-centered planning process for including children and youth with intensive support needs.
- Educator collaborative methods (tools and strategies) and adaptations of the curriculum for diverse learners in general education lessons.
- Organizational school structures (use of collaborative planning time, scheduling students in natural proportions, master scheduling that includes time for interventions).
- Administrator practices that lead to effective inclusive services, ranging from IEP decisions to adaptive leadership support for educators as they learn role-release and collaborative planning, delivery, and evaluation of learning.



Expand existing partnerships to develop courses, modules, and/or professional learning activities (such as workshops, collaborative professional learning sessions, quick reference sheets, video models or practice scenarios for collaborative problem solving, etc.) and assessments in support of implementing effective, inclusive specially designed instruction. One partner must include the Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education, Inc. (MCIE).

Inspiration from the Field

› [Colorado's three-year plan on integrating learning with disabilities in schools](#)

ABC News

› [Stories from the Classroom: Viewing Disability Rights as an Equity Issue](#)

Progress Center

› [Gwinnett County Public Schools, GA](#)

Moving Your Numbers

Additional Readings

- [Lighting the Path to Inclusion: Cultivating Leaders with a Deep Commitment to Learners with Disabilities \(CCSSO\)](#)
 - [Building More Collaborative, Equitable, and Inclusive Classroom and Schools for Learners with Diverse Learning Needs \(CCSSO\)](#)
 - [Placement of Learners with Disabilities in the LRE \(MCIE\)](#)
 - [Building a Culture of "All" for Inclusive Schools \(CCSSO\)](#)
 - [The General Education Curriculum Not an Alternate Curriculum \(The TIES Center\)](#)
-

Building Educator Competencies

Overview: Using this key strategy, applicants will improve educator competencies through the development of statewide professional learning opportunities and support for special education teachers, administrative leaders, paraeducators and related service providers.



Requirements: Applicants will design and deliver statewide professional learning in one or more of the following key areas needed for effective specially designed instruction. **Priority will be given to applicants who address more than one of the key areas below:**

- Develop model lessons or lesson seeds aligned to the [Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards](#) for learners with disabilities highlighting opportunities for specially designed instruction for learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities within general education settings.
- Create a toolkit of scenarios and exemplars for collaborative planning, co-teaching, and differentiated formative assessment of learners with disabilities.
- Develop the content for micro-credential certification for IEP chairs to build capacity Statewide for the development of IEPs. This work will be based on a pre-existing platform for asynchronous learning and identified competencies for learning by special education personnel or administrators wishing to receive a certification as an IEP chair. Applicants will design the instructional content and assessments of competency attainment.
- Establish a strategic partnership with an identified Local Education Agency (LEA) (via MOU) to advance and sustain safe, equitable learning environments to meet the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) needs of adolescents with disabilities experiencing challenging behaviors in the middle and high school settings. Strategies may include implementation of data analysis processes to identify systemic barriers and solution finding supports, the development of an SEL Toolkit for the explicit instruction of SEL competencies, and/or the implementation of capacity-building strategies for sustaining inclusive student-centered school environments that are developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive, and evidence based.
- Establish a tiered Special Education Leadership Academy designed for aspiring special education teachers to move up the career ladder becoming leaders in their districts and enhance new LEA Directors of Special Education. Professional learning opportunities should focus on the implementation of effective policies, procedures, and instructional practices aligned to State and federal regulations; developing and applying the knowledge and skills necessary to lead organization and/or systems change to improve outcomes for children with disabilities; and collaborating with local education agencies to cultivate a cohort of high-quality special education leaders. This will support the shortage of Directors of Special Education and strengthen leadership capacity.
- Sustain Statewide Steering Committees of national advisors, state and local stakeholders and service providers (representation from each LEA/Public Agency) to research current national, state, and local evidence-based strategies that impact student outcomes and to address problems of practice for staff and their students with disabilities. Deliverables include accessible resources, training modules, and/or toolkits to be used statewide by teachers, service providers, and families to improve student outcomes. Funding may also be used for steering committee members to attend conferences, build leadership capacity, and/or hold conferences to build LEA capacity to meet the needs of these populations. This grant activity is limited to \$3,500 per steering committee.

Inspiration from the Field

› [Accomplishments Across 20 States](#)

The Leadership Academy

› [Stories from the Classroom: Five Tips for Longevity as a Special Educator](#)

Progress Center

› [A Model for Retaining Effective Special Educators](#)

IRIS Center

Additional Readings

- [Keeping Quality Teachers: The Art of Retaining General and Special Educators \(The University of the State of New York\)](#)
 - [Special Education Teacher Preparation, Literacy Instructional Alignment, and Reading Achievement for Learners with High-Incidence Disabilities \(CALDER\)](#)
 - [Strategies for Preparing and Retaining Effective Special Education Teachers \(The CEEDAR Center\)](#)
-

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Overview: A positive behavioral interventions and supports program is an evidence-based, tiered framework for supporting students' behavioral, academic, social, emotional, and mental health ([COMAR 13A.08.06.01](#)). When implemented with fidelity, this program improves social emotional competence, academic success, and school climate. It also improves teacher health and wellbeing. The Maryland-Integrated Multi-Tiered System of Support Collaborative (consisting of local and state leaders) supports the ongoing statewide infrastructure to leverage implementation science and tiered service delivery logic model for equitable and welcoming learning environments.



Requirements: Applicants will develop a plan to grow the statewide infrastructure for the implementation of positive behavioral interventions and supports program using a framework that emphasizes systems of support, partnerships, and the provision of high-quality responsive learning environments. **Key activities must include:**

- Implement differentiated technical assistance inclusive of “train the trainer” events, resources, and coaching support for state, district and school leadership related to the implementation of the multi-tiered service delivery logic including shared leadership, universal screening and progress monitoring, evidence-based instruction, assessment and intervention, data-driven problem-solving and community partnerships using targeted technical assistance, outreach, and resource development.
 - Identify recommendations and processes for scaling up intervention supports to reduce disciplinary removals and restrictive placements for students with disabilities experiencing challenging behaviors.
 - Partner with at least one LEA to implement and sustain safe and equitable learning environments to meet the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) needs of adolescents with disabilities experiencing challenging behaviors in the middle and high school settings.
-

Inspiration from the Field

› [Using PBIS to Ensure Racial Equity in School Discipline](#)

The Center on PBIS

› [Restorative Approaches in Callaway Elementary School](#)

Maryland Carey Law

› [Providing Positive and Constructive Feedback to Guide Behavior](#)

The Progress Center

Additional Readings

- [Data Rich, Information Poor? Making Sense of Progress Monitoring Data to Guide Intervention Decisions \(Center on Multi-Tiered System of Supports\)](#)
 - [HLP \(K-12\) > Social Emotional Behavioral \(High-Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities\)](#)
 - [Providing Access to School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities \(Center on PBIS\)](#)
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Grow-Your-Own Programs

Overview: Grow Your Own (GYO) programs are an effective strategy for teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention due to its focus on developing teachers from the local community, removing barriers to entering and persisting in a teacher preparation program, and incentivizing partnerships between school districts and educator preparation programs. Applicants will implement at least one of the following:



Requirements: Applicants must partner with an LEA to expand the pool of licensed BCBA's and LBA's certified to teach in Maryland. **The following key elements must be a part of the program:**

- Continued implementation and evaluation of a structured cohort of participants as they complete coursework and utilize their learning in job-embedded practicum experiences in typically underserved LEAs and school communities.
- Develop an expanded implementation plan for recruiting, training, and retaining licensed BCBA's and LBA's certified to teach in Maryland.
- Partner with an LEA to develop a community of learning and tuition assistance program for a cohort of paraprofessionals seeking certification as Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA's) and Licensed Behavior Analysts (LBA's). This will support statewide staffing shortages for behavior support personnel and contributes to "grow your own" personnel development.

Overview: Grow Your Own (GYO) / Teacher Apprenticeships are a promising model for providing structured, low-cost training for occupations that require bachelor's degrees, including a high number of in-demand positions in fields like education. Apprentices are paid, have access to work-site mentors, and earn progressively higher wages as they advance in their programs. Partner with an LEA to create a plan for a Department of Labor (DOL) registered apprenticeship program which supports a cohort of staff members to become highly qualified special education teachers. Degree apprenticeships



Requirements: Applicants must partner with an LEA and design a GYO, degree-based apprenticeship program to expand the pool of educators certified to teach Special Education. **The following key elements must be a part of the GYO program development plan:**

- A strong partnership with an LEA, educator preparation programs (EPP), and community organizations, including a letter of commitment from at least one LEA and one EPP.
- An EPP course plan that reflects a current, MHEC-approved, accredited teacher certification degree program with specific course requirements for which specific work/apprentice activities will qualify as sufficient. These plans should include structured pathways for candidates to earn required credentials and certification.
- A plan and anticipated timeline for bringing the degree-based apprenticeship plan to the Maryland Department of Labor for approval.
- Community-based recruitment of community members, high school seniors, para-educators, substitutes, or other non-certified personnel that aims to increase the ethnic, linguistic, and racial diversity of the teacher workforce.
- Wraparound supports through the recruitment, preparation, and induction years (e.g., cohort structure, scholarships, licensure test preparation, assistance navigating college admissions process, etc.).

- A plan to ensure the program will make use of federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds to support long-term program sustainability.
 - Determine the financial implications and logistics for rolling out the apprenticeship.
 - Develop an implementation plan for recruiting, training, and retaining special education teachers through an apprenticeship program.
-

Inspiration from the Field

› [Tennessee Pioneers Teacher Apprenticeship program](#)

Tennessee Department of Education

› [Effects of Behavioral Skills Training on Preservice Teachers' Ability to Code Articles](#)

Western Michigan University

› [Teacher Residencies Building a High-Quality, Sustainable Workforce](#)

Learning Policy Institute

Additional Readings

- [Teacher PREP – University of Colorado, Denver \(*The Par²A Center*\)](#)
 - [Creating Pathways to College Degrees Through Apprenticeships \(*New America*\)](#)
 - [Preparing and Retaining Effective Special Education Teachers: Short-Term Strategies for Long-Term Solutions \(*The CEEDAR Center*\)](#)
 - [Grow Your Own Teachers: Enhancing Educator Pathways to Address Teacher Shortage and Increase Diversity \(*State of Washington*\)](#)
 - [Using a Mixed Reality Environment to Train Special Educators Working with Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder to Implement Discrete Trail Teaching \(*Sage Journals*\)](#)
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Application

Applicants must download and complete the Maryland Elevates Grant: Access, Equity, Progress electronic application.

APPLICATION COVER PAGE

Applications must include the Cover Page. The cover page should not contain any graphics or additional information and must be signed by the Head of Agency. The Cover Page must include a screenshot of the [SAM.GOV](https://sam.gov) UEI verification.

PROJECT ABSTRACT

The Project Abstract summarizes the overall project and includes a description of impact as it relates to one or more of the high-leverage strategies. The Project Abstract should also contain the number of children and youth with disabilities, age 3 through 21 years to be served, the anticipated number of participants for capacity building activities or professional learning with coaching, and/or the course content to be developed. If this proposal is to support a continuing project, provide an excerpt of the successes of the previous year and state plans for expanding the project or for implementing a complementary project. Limit to a one-page summary.

STATEMENT OF NEED

Provide a description of the proposed activities and how they will address the problem, root cause factor(s) and result in improved outcomes for children and youth with disabilities, and their families and/or their service providers. Any proposed strategies must be evidence-based practices (EBP) and include specific references to research supporting plan implementation.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Describe how the proposed activities will address the problem and root cause factor(s), and result in improved outcomes for families of children with disabilities (birth through 21), educators, and service providers. Proposed strategies must be evidence-based practices (EBP) and include specific references to research supporting plan implementation. Applicants must also describe their history and capacity to complete the proposed work. Include a description of the applicant's experience and history in terms of effective practices leading to the desired outcomes. Discuss how past performance has informed the proposed activities, and the future impact your proposed key activities are likely to have on the target population.

GOALS, OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIES

Goals and outcomes must be stated in measurable/quantifiable changes in learner outcomes and/or professional practices with projected timelines for completion. Evidence-based strategies (EBSs) identify the specific actions that will be implemented to achieve the goals and objectives by addressing root causes. Number each goal statement. EBPs should include citations or references documenting evidence or research in support of implementation.

Goal #1:
Measurable Outcome:

Evidence-based Strategy:

BENCHMARKS

The application for funding must provide benchmarks to measure quantifiable changes related to child, learner, family outcomes and/or professional practices. Benchmarks represent a clear progression of outcomes and/or outputs aligned with plan implementation. Progress benchmarks include qualitative and quantitative data. Applicants will be required to complete the following chart in the electronic application:

Benchmark / Outcome: How will it be known that progress is made?	Data: What data will be used to measure progress?	Frequency: How often will benchmark data be collected?	Evaluator: Who is responsible for conducting the evaluation?

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Applicants must provide a description of the proposed activities and how they will address the problem and result in improved outcomes for children and youth with disabilities, and their families and/or their service providers. Any proposed strategies must be evidence-based practices (EBP) and include specific references to research supporting plan implementation.

Project Timeline

A Project Timeline tells the reader when key activities will take place during the grant period. Applicants should consider all of the key tasks or activities that need to be carried out to implement the program successfully, whether each task can realistically begin and end in the proposed time frame, and how long each task will take to complete. It should contain three sections: management, implementation, and evaluation. See sample below:

Key Activities	Individual Responsible	Time Frame
Management Activity		
Implementation Activity		
Evaluation Activity		

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

Applicants are required to provide a list of the key staff or personnel responsible for the successful implementation and monitoring of the grant requirements. Attach a one-page resume. Applicants are required to complete the following management plan chart as part of the application:

Name	Title	Roles & Responsibilities

EVALUATION AND REPORTING

Evaluation is an important part of determining the success of the program. Applicants are required to describe in detail what success will look like and the criteria that will be used to determine and measure success. Furthermore, grantees are required to submit annual evaluation reports and interim progress reports that are consistent with the project’s goal and outcome(s).

Evaluation Measure	Goal

Applicants must describe how they will communicate the expanded services as well as how the evaluation results will be disseminated to major stakeholders and individuals interested in the project. Descriptions of the types of reports and other by-products developed during the course of the project may be made available.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The grant applicant shall ensure that programs and projects offering paper, web or technology-based instructional products or programs funded in part or total through this grant operate in compliance with [Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#). The narrative must include documentation of the accessibility criteria embedded within the proposed products.

GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA), SECTION 427

Section 427 of the U. S. Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act ([GEPA](#)) requires any applicant receiving federal funds to include in its application a statement that includes the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to and participation in its federally assisted program for learners, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. The GEPA allows applicants’ discretion in developing the required statement. The statute highlights six (6) types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age.

BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

The project’s budget should detail all related project expenses in a separate itemized budget. It should demonstrate the extent to which the budget is reasonable, cost-effective, and integrates other sources of

funding. All costs described in the project narrative should appear in the budget narrative and must have a corresponding entry in the itemized budget for that year. Reviewers should be able to see a clear connection between the project activities and the budget line items.

Each line must be detailed and specific. General expenses should be broken down into specific line items. For example, “meeting expenses” can be broken down into room rental, photocopying and refreshments. There is no page limit for the budget, so be as detailed as possible. See a sample budget below:

1. Salaries & wages (list separately for each position)

Line item	Calculation	Requested	In-Kind	Total
Stipends for 3 experts for curriculum development of modules	\$2,500 * 3	\$7,500	\$0	\$7,500
1/3 Salaries and wages for 1 project manager providing oversight, data collection and coaching supports to participants	\$25,000 (1/3 of \$75,000 FTE project manager salary)	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$75,000
Total for salaries & wages:		\$32,500	\$50,000	\$82,500

APPENDIX

The following appendices must be included. Include other appendices as deemed necessary.

- A signed Recipient Assurances page (see [Maryland Elevates Grant Program](#))
- A signed Non-LEA/IHE Certification page (see [Maryland Elevates Grant Program](#))
- A signed certifications page regarding Lobbying, Debarment, Suspension, other responsibility matters, and Drug-free Workplace (see [Maryland Elevates Grant Program](#))
- A [signed C-1-25 MSDE budget form](#)
- One-page resumes of key personnel
- A copy of the [W-9 Form](#) (Applicable for first time grant applicants and/or grantees requiring a change of address/contact)

The Review Process

The review of proposals will be a four-part process:

1. Written applications will be pre-screened for submission requirements and inclusion of all required sections. Applicants not meeting all pre-screen requirements will not be reviewed.

2. A review committee established by the MSDE, will evaluate applications using the scoring rubric. The scoring rubric is tailored to the grant program, its intent, and intended impact on the target population.
3. Applicants may be scheduled for an oral program presentation as determined by the review committee.
4. Final approval for awards will be determined by the review committee.

Note: The MSDE reserves the right to take into consideration geographic distribution when making awards.

REVIEW COMMITTEE

The committee will be composed of programmatic and fiscal representatives from the MSDE, DEI/SES. Reviewers will assign numerical scores to each proposal based on the criteria on the scoring rubric below. Applications must receive a cut score of 70 to be considered for funding.

Need and Impact (10 total points)

Exemplary 9-10 points	Meets Standard 7-8 points	Does Not Meet Standard 0-6 points
The applicant demonstrates a compelling and urgent need supported by evidence from the field and data within Maryland. Historically underserved groups are included in the needs assessment. The applicant has a demonstrated a history of experience and sustained positive outcomes.	The applicant demonstrates a need for the proposed activities and provides some data but may not be directly related to the need. Either research or local data may be provided but may not address historically underserved groups. The applicant has experience and reports positive outcomes.	The stated need is not clearly defined, and data is not clearly related to the need. The applicant has not committed to including historically underserved groups. The evidence of impact is weak.

Goals, Outcomes and Strategies (20 total points)

Exemplary 13-20 points	Meets Standard 7-12 points	Does Not Meet Standard 0-6 points
Program goals are clearly stated, ambitious and attainable. There is a direct and robust alignment to the purpose and intent of the strategy. Clear milestones are provided that measure progress towards meeting the goal(s). All goals and objectives are measurable having a clear alignment with the root cause factor(s) or need identified.	Program goals are clear and measurable. Program goals align with the purpose and intent of the strategy. Milestones are provided that measure progress towards meeting the goal(s).	Program goals are stated, but they are not measurable. There is a not a clear alignment to the strategy selected. Milestones do not measure progress towards the goal(s).

Project Narrative (20 total points)

Exemplary 13-20 points	Meets Standard 7-12 points	Does Not Meet Standard 0-6 points
All proposed activities clearly support at least one high leverage strategy. Activities reflect an evidence-based approach as demonstrated in research in the fields of specially designed instruction; an integrated, tiered system of interventions; and/or inclusive education. The applicant shows a commitment to sustaining the work beyond the grant period, and how it will result in transforming Access, Equity, Progress.	Activities align with one high-leverage strategy and reflect evidence-based practices in the fields of specially designed instruction; an integrated, tiered system of interventions; and/or inclusive education. There is a commitment to sustain the activities beyond the grant period. The applicant connects the work to the MSDE priority for Access, Equity, Progress.	Activities do not align with the identified strategy or research that demonstrates the activity will result in the intended goal. There is not a commitment to sustain the activities beyond the grant period. The applicant may reference the Access, Equity, Progress priority but does not connect it to the activities.

Benchmarks / Measuring Success (20 total points)

Exemplary 13-20 points	Meets Standard 7-12 points	Does Not Meet Standard 0-6 points
The benchmarks clearly identify, measurable, realistic, short-term outcomes aligned with the objectives. The benchmarks directly relate to the project and represent a clear progression for plan implementation over time.	There are benchmarks to measure progress on project activities and achievement of outcomes. These benchmarks directly relate to the project and demonstrate a progression for plan implementation over time.	There are benchmarks to measure progress, but not a clear relationship between the project activities and the outcomes. Benchmarks are process driven rather than indications of completion of activities or outcomes achieved.

Implementation Team (10 total points)

Exemplary 9-10 points	Meets Standard 7-8 points	Does Not Meet Standard 0-6 points
There is a clear and robust management plan to ensure successful completion of the project. Highly qualified key personnel have been identified and have experience in conducting the activities and achieving the proposed outcomes. Roles and responsibilities of all key personnel are directly aligned to the proposed activities. Evaluation of the project activities and goals is an important part of the management plan presented. Resumes are provided.	There is a management plan to ensure execution and completion of the project. Qualified key personnel have been identified to provide oversight. Roles and responsibilities of key personnel are directly aligned to the activities and strategy. Program evaluation is an integral part of the management plan. One-page resumes are provided for all key personnel.	There is a limited management plan. Key personnel have been identified to provide oversight. Roles and responsibilities of key personnel are not aligned to the activities and/or strategy. Program evaluation is only loosely addressed in the management plan. One-page resumes may or may not be provided but personnel skill and experience does not match the requirements for implementing the proposed work.

Evaluation (10 total points)

Exemplary 9-10 points	Meets Standard 7-8 points	Does Not Meet Standard 0-6 points
There is a clear plan for how the applicant will measure the success of the program. There are clear evaluation measures that align to the program requirements and goals.	There is a plan for how the applicant will measure the success of the program. There are evaluation measures that loosely align to the program requirements and goals.	There is not a clear plan for how the applicant will measure the success of the program. Limited evaluation measures that do not align with program requirements and goals.

Budget (10 total points)

Exemplary 9-10 points	Meets Standard 7-8 points	Does Not Meet Standard 0-6 points
The budget directly reflects program activities and includes sufficient resources for successful execution within the proposed timeline. Justification has been provided for all expenses. There is a clear explanation of costs and demonstrates cost-effectiveness. All line items contain the calculations.	The budget reflects most program activities. Justification has been provided for most expenses. There is a clear explanation of costs and demonstrates cost-effectiveness. Most line items contain the calculations used to derive the expected cost. There may be a few mathematical errors.	The budget reflects some grant activities and/or includes erroneous costs. Some line items are missing the calculations used to derive the expected cost. Some line items may not be justified for implementation of the proposal.

AWARD NOTIFICATION

Notification of approval will be sent by email within 30 days of the deadline to submit proposals. Approved proposals may begin implementing the program as soon as the award notification letter is received. The Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) will be forthcoming within 3 weeks of the approval letter.

Reporting Requirements

Progress monitoring and reporting is an essential component of grant management. Required reports include a comprehensive summary of expenditures to-date and programmatic outcomes related to the implementation of goals, objectives, and related evidence-based practices. All reports are inclusive of qualitative and quantitative measures of success with outcomes aligned to projected timelines.

Date	Reporting Requirements
Jan 31, 2023	Interim Cumulative Variance and Programmatic Progress Report is due
Aug 15, 2023	Deadline for the submission of any requests for grant amendment
Sep 30, 2023	Grant period ends
Nov 30, 2023	The following reports are due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Cumulative Variance and Programmatic Progress Report; • Final Financial Report (inclusive of all liquidations as of 9/30/2023); and • Final Invoice

Notes:

Submit a PDF copy of the fully executed grant reports and invoices to DEI-SES-grant.submissions@Maryland.gov.

Any requests for programmatic amendments must be submitted at least 45 days before the grant period ends, and must be submitted using the C-125-B form found in the [Grant Budget Forms](#) on the [MSDE grants webpage](#).

Final invoices must be submitted no later than 60 days after the grant period ends.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Maryland State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry/national origin, color, disability, gender identity/expression, marital status, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. For inquiries related to Department policy, please contact:

Equity Assurance and Compliance Office
Office of the Deputy State Superintendent for Operations
Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street - 2nd Floor Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2595 410-767-0123 - voice
410-767-0431 - fax
410-333-6442 -TTY/TDD

Customer Service Support Sessions

The MSDE will hold several customer service support sessions for interested applicants. During these sessions, MSDE personnel will review what applicants need to get started, the program requirements, as well as a walk-through of the application. To register for the initial session and see other available dates and resources, visit the [Maryland Elevates Grants](#) website.

- September 16, 2022, from 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Questions

If you have questions about the application or the process, please contact the Program Monitor:

Alicia Palmer, Section Chief, Resource Management and Monitoring Branch
Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services
(410) 767-0946
Alicia.Palmer@Maryland.gov

A list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) and answers will be posted to the [Maryland Elevates Grants](#) website following customer service support sessions.

Grant Application Timeline

This funding opportunity, including all attachments and updates, are found on the [Maryland Elevates Grants](#) webpage.

Date	Program Milestone
September 19, 2022	The Grant Information Guide and the application for participating are released
September 16, 2022 from 9 a.m. - 10 a.m.	The MSDE will hold a virtual customer service support session for interested applicants (Session 1)
See Maryland Elevates Grants webpage for additional dates and times.	The MSDE will hold a virtual customer service support session for interested applicants (Session 2)
October 21, 2022 at 5 p.m.	The grant application period closes
November 1- 21, 2022	The MSDE Review Committee will convene and evaluate complete proposal
November 21, 2022	The MSDE will notify applicants of the award status
October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023	The grant program period

Appendix

APPLICATION FOR PARTICIPATION