

**Nebraska Department of Education’s Office of Special Education  
District Targeted Improvement Plan Support (DTIPS) Grants: Results Driven Accountability (RDA)  
2016-17 APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

See Grant Announcement for eligible applicants, funding, and other details:  
<http://www.education.ne.gov/sped/index/DTIP%20Grant%20Announcement%20Final.pdf>

**Purpose**

Nebraska Department of Education’s (NDE) Office of Special Education is accepting proposals to support implementation of District Targeted Improvement Plans (TIPs). Funds must be used to assist with the deep implementation of evidence-based practices designed to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities. Projects must demonstrate a high degree of collaboration between special and regular education and be part of the framework of ongoing district continuous improvement practice(s).

**Background**

The NDE Office of Special Education remains committed to supporting districts in improving results for children with disabilities. To meet this purpose, grant funding is available during the 2016-2017 school year to support implementation of District Special Education Targeted Improvement Plans. Based upon data and infrastructure analysis, districts must identify a focus area of improvement which should be within each district’s general education school improvement plan. Grants are available to assist districts with their TIPs.

As part of Nebraska’s Results Driven Accountability (RDA) System, all school districts must participate in ongoing review of their special education program utilizing the Improving Learning for Children with Disabilities (ILCD) process. Districts utilize the guidance documents and resources available at <http://www.education.ne.gov/sped/ilcd.html>. The process begins with analysis of district data to study Impact Area data, district infrastructure, and other pertinent district data to identify target areas for improvement. The second step involves identifying measurable results (goals) and coherent improvement strategies that will be the focus for improvement. Next the district reviews the current infrastructure and capacity to implement, scale-up and sustain evidence-based practice. Finally, guidance is provided on developing a comprehensive, multi-year TIP detailing coherent improvement strategies focused on improving results for children with disabilities. The state plan directs districts to implement phases of the ILCD improvement process over several years. (See chart below.)

**District Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP): Activities by Phase**

Year 1 Due by August 1, 2016	Year 2 Due by August 1, 2017	Years 3 – 5 Due by August 1, 2018-2020
<b>Phase I Analysis</b>	<b>Phase II Plan</b>	<b>Phase III Implementation &amp; Evaluation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Analysis</li> <li>• Infrastructure Analysis</li> <li>• Focus for Improvement</li> <li>• Evidence-based strategies/activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-year plan addressing               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Infrastructure Development</li> <li>○ Implementing Evidence-based strategies/ activities</li> <li>○ Evaluation plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting on progress including               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Results of on-going evaluation</li> <li>○ Extent of progress</li> <li>○ Revisions to the TIP, if needed</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Phase I of the Special Education District TIP is due August 1, 2016 which includes:**

- Data Analysis of the three Impact Areas including the multiple sources of data used in the analysis and how the data was disaggregated to determine the focus for improvement;
- Infrastructure analysis including strengths and challenges within the system to support the focus for improvement;
- ONE Focus for improvement including the specific student level outcome(s) that will lead to improved results for children with disabilities, baseline data and measurable targets to demonstrate improvement (i.e. “reading as measured at 3rd grade”); and
- Evidence-based strategies/practices including how they relate to general education initiatives for improvement.

**Phase II of the Special Education District TIP is due August 1, 2017:**

Designing, Creating, and Evaluating the District's Multi-year, Comprehensive Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP)

Based on the analysis of the district data and infrastructure, the district must develop a comprehensive, multi-year TIP that includes identified measurable results and coherent improvement strategies to improve outcomes for children with disabilities. The district TIP includes:

- Broad measurable outcome for one Impact Area with detailed improvement strategies that address the needs identified in the root cause and/or infrastructure analysis
- Outcomes that need to be met to achieve the district-identified, measurable improvement in results for children with disabilities
- A description of the changes in the district system and provider practices, including the adoption and implementation of evidence-based practices, to achieve measurable improvement in results for children with disabilities
- Identification of resources, responsibilities and timelines for improvement activities
- How the district tracks progress and ensures fidelity of implementation of the TIP

Did our response produce results?

- Annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the TIP and progress toward achieving identified outcomes for improving results for children with disabilities reported to NDE annually
- Revision of TIP in response to evaluation of results, plan effectiveness and consultation with NDE Regional Consultant

Phase I identified the focus for improvement and the evidence-based, child centered strategies the district plans to implement to improve results for children with disabilities. Phase II provides the details of the strategy selected. For example, during Phase I: the district may have identified plans to implement Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS); In Phase II: the district will describe the specifics about how MTSS will look for the district. Plans will include what training staff need to implement MTSS, who will provide training and what supports will be provided to staff, what indicators will be used to determine that MTSS is being implemented with fidelity, etc.

Phase II is the final step to the *planning* phase for the TIP. Phase III is the *implementation* of the plan and on-going evaluation of the district's progress toward meeting its identified goals.

A district already in Phase II during 2016-17 school year should continue by implementing and evaluating their plan. The goal is for the scheduled dates to be seen as benchmarks toward improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

DTIPS Grant activities are intended to assist districts in meeting Phase II requirements in preparation for Phase III tasks the following year (See page 1.). Grant resources are being made available beginning with the 2016-17 school year. Projects should encourage agencies to leverage resources and align efforts to serve students with disabilities through continuous school improvement. Projects should increase the capacity of districts to deeply implement evidence-based practices designed to improve outcomes of students with disabilities. Grant activities must address unique district strengths and needs. Applicants will identify the structures and supports necessary to implement and measure progress toward achieving the District TIP.

### Priority Needs

To date, stakeholders have indicated districts will need additional training, coaching, and individualized technical assistance to implement TIPs. The following chart includes a sample of support services requested by Nebraska educators (not all-inclusive).

<b>TIP Support Grant Activities</b>
Support activities may include : <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilitate networking among educators to share TIPs, ideas, similar work, and provide feedback;</li><li>• Provide training or technical assistance, such as, using data, selecting interventions/supports, coaching, and conducting classroom observations;</li><li>• Increase collaborative efforts among areas of expertise (special and general education, professional development, educational technology). Include special education in ongoing district improvement processes;</li><li>• Improve communication increase access to informational resources and use of distance learning;</li><li>• Build local capacity to apply the concepts of implementation science; and/or</li><li>• Increase knowledge of implementation science, evidence-based practices, data literacy, fidelity checks, and coaching.</li></ul>

When possible, applicants are encouraged to leverage available resources. For example, many districts are implementing MTSS. In response, Nebraska’s MTSS Project at University of Nebraska-Lincoln, is available to prepare trainers for Educational Service Units (ESU) and selected districts. In the future, these individuals can also provide training and technical assistance for additional districts implementing MTSS, freeing grant resources for other services and activities. NE PBIS is another important statewide initiative supporting TIP implementation. As both programs have limited resources, arrangements must be made with program staff to explore participation options. If these options aren’t available others can be explored.

- Tanya Ihlo, [tihlo2@unl.edu](mailto:tihlo2@unl.edu), 402-472-2744, regarding MTSS; or
- Amy Rhone, [amy.rhone@nebraska.gov](mailto:amy.rhone@nebraska.gov), 402-471-2744, regarding NE PBIS

The Data Literacy Project has built statewide capacity to assist districts using data. Individuals can provide training or technical assistance related to ongoing, systematic data use. They can facilitate collaborative planning to integrate the special education TIP within the District School Improvement Plan. Contact your ESU staff developer or Russ Masco, [russ.masco@nebraska.gov](mailto:russ.masco@nebraska.gov), 402-405-1748, to access this resource supporting ongoing improvement.

### PROPOSAL ELEMENTS

#### Project Requirements

Applicants submitting a DTIPS proposal must consider these requirements as they develop the application:

- District Commitment Documentation
- Contract/agreement with provider of services (i.e. UNL MTSS; trainers, etc.)
- If salary/benefits are requested, job description of grant duties (Name, FTE)
- Budget (object codes 100s through 600s); Detail expenses per “Programming Accounting, and Reporting System for Nebraska School Districts, 2015 User’s Manual”  
<http://www.education.ne.gov/FOS/SchoolFinance/AFR/Downloads/1415/2015UsersManual.pdf>
- ESU allocations are consortium based and to be used to support district with TIPS
- Submission of Interim and Final grant reports (narrative and fiscal)

## Required Reports

- Quarterly
  - Fiscal request for funds with appropriate supporting documentation
  - Brief narrative reporting progress
- A Final Narrative and Fiscal Actual Expenditures Report

*\* Failure to provide required reports as requested may result in a delay of payment and/or jeopardize future awards.*

## Tentative Timeline

- Application Announced: January 22, 2016 (NDE/NASES Meeting)
- Application Announcement Posted: February 3, 2016
- Application Guidelines Posted: Soon after Application Announcement
- Applications Due: March 30, 2016.
- Preliminary Notification: April 30, 2016
- Grant Award Documents Distributed: May 15, 2016
- Anticipated Project Period: 8/1/16 – 9/30/17 \*

*\*With option to renew for two additional years (2017-18 and 2018-19) via submission of an annual application that meets specified criteria/requirements.*

## Grant Approval Process

Upon receipt, each application will be screened. If a proposal does not meet all of the requirements (i.e. incomplete or late) it will be considered non-responsive and not reviewed.

Applications eligible for review will be scored on the basis of 100 possible points from reviewers. Proposals must reach a minimum average score of 75 points out of 100 points in order to be eligible for an award

## PROPOSAL ELEMENTS

### Required Forms

- Letter of Intent: The cover page should include contact information about the agency submitting the proposal, with an original signature of the agency Administrator. NDE Grant communication will be with a designated project contact provided on the *Letter of Intent*.
- Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters (NDE 06-067): The Lobbying Debarment Form should include contact information about agency submitting the proposal, mark the appropriate boxes and have an original signature of the agency Administrator.
- Budget for Discretionary Funds: If grant funds will be used for staff salary and benefits, the budget must include name, social security number (or Identification Code), Full Time Equivalency (FTE) on grant, supported by a grant related job description and other necessary justifications
- DTIPS Grant Action Plan: Template provided as part of the application grant package to specify plan for project: goals, timeline; person(s) responsible; resources/costs; and evaluation.

### Other Application Pages May be Necessary

- Consortium Member Signature Page (form provided)
- DTIPS Grant Staff Job Description(s) (no sample or form provided)
- Service Provision Agreement (sample provided)

### Common Expenses for DTIPS Grant

Funds may be used but are not limited to:

- Related professional development
- Salary/benefits (supported with job description for grant activities)
- Substitute(s) allowing for collaborative planning, classroom observations, training, and technical assistance.

- Stipends for work beyond regular duties for those participating in implementation activities.
- Grant related travel
- Materials related to TIP implementation/professional development

Funds may not be used /reimbursed for:

- Purchase of computers and other equipment; construction projects; or for pre-award costs (costs incurred prior to Grant Award Document start date)
- Support of compliance/monitoring requirements
- Grant funds are supplemental to, and shall not supplant or duplicate any other funding source(s)

NDE encourages:

- In-kind contributions;
- Cost saving strategies, such as: utilizing technology to conduct meetings, scheduling activities in conjunction with others; and
- Leveraging grant funds with other funding sources

#### **Other Grant Related Forms**

- Final Report
- Report of Expenditures (NDE 28-003), expense reimbursement claim form, <http://www.education.ne.gov/FOS/Forms/NDE28003.pdf>

#### **Grant Payments**

- All federal funds must meet the requirements of the “NDE State and Federal Grant Management Requirements and Guidance” [http://www.education.ne.gov/federalprograms/Documents/Main%20Page/NDE\\_Grant\\_Mgt\\_Guidance\\_2015-08-31\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.education.ne.gov/federalprograms/Documents/Main%20Page/NDE_Grant_Mgt_Guidance_2015-08-31_FINAL.pdf)

#### **Grant Submission**

Submit one (1) original signed application (in the described format) labeled **District Targeted Improvement Plan Support Grant**. Include all relevant and required attachments.

The mailing address for all the above documentation is:

ATTN: Leslie Galloway  
 Office of Special Education  
 Nebraska Department of Education  
 301 Centennial Mall South  
 P. O. Box 94987  
 Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Applicants are responsible for making sure the application package is complete. All materials, as detailed in the Application Guidelines, must be received (or postmarked) by March 30, 2016. Hand delivered applications must be received at the Office of Special Education by 5:00 p.m. on or before March 30, 2016. Late or incomplete applications will not be eligible for review. Facsimile copies of the proposals will NOT be accepted.