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Introduction

The purpose of this user guide is to:

► Provide information on the policies governing all grants in the Grants Management System (GMS) awarded by the Nebraska Department of Education, excluding those issued by Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Disability Determination Section, and the Assistive Technology Partnership,
► To communicate the procedures and guidelines,
► To support sound accounting practices and,
► To provide consistency throughout the Department in the administration of all State and Federal grants.

It is not intended to address program specific requirements or regulations.

This guidance and requirements are identified as applicable to grants funded by the State where they differ from Federal grants. Since regulations and guidance apply to both the State (the Nebraska Department of Education) and to the agencies or organizations that receive grants from the State, there are a number of descriptors used that can be confusing (i.e., grantee, sub-grantee, recipient and sub-recipient, etc.). To maintain some consistency, this guidance will use the term “grant recipient” or “grantee”, whenever possible to mean the agency that receives the grant from the Nebraska Department of Education.

Changes, which result from implementation of the Grants Management System (GMS), are indicated. As programs are added to the GMS, these changes will apply to them.
General Navigation

Hardware, Software and Browser Requirements
The Grants Management System (GMS) is functional on both PCs and Macs.

Internet Access
An internet connection is required to access the Grants Management System (GMS). A high speed connection is recommended, but is not required.

There is no minimum requirement for computer processor/speed. No software beyond a browser is required to use the system. Some reports may be delivered as PDF documents. To open and save PDF documents, you must install a free copy of Adobe Reader. To download: http://get.adobe.com/reader/

Operating Systems and Browsers
The GMS is accessible on PCs and Macs using Operating systems that are currently supported by their respective owners (Microsoft/Apple).

The following Internet Browsers are supported when using the GMS:
- Microsoft Internet Explorer 11.x – Recommended for PC users
- Microsoft Edge
- Google Chrome 47.x and later
- Mozilla Firefox – 3.5 or higher
- Safari for OS x Version 9.x and later

All browsers must disable Pop-up Blockers for the GMS site in order to view the Review Checklist.

Pop-up Blocker
The Review Checklist documents within the GMS open in a second window. Turn off the pop-up blocker in your browser to allow these documents to open. Some computers may have multiple pop-up blockers installed; all will need to be set to allow the pop-up window in order to view the checklist.

Resolution
The GMS is best viewed in 1024 x 768 or higher resolution.
Authorized Representative

The “authorized representative” is a person who legally acts on behalf of the recipient of Federal and State grants. The authorized representative is the liaison between the grant recipient and NDE as the grantor. The governing body of an agency delegates their authority to the person (e.g., district superintendent or ESU administrator) who will act as the authorized representative of the agency receiving State or Federal grants. **This authorization must be done annually, for some programs, and duly noted in recorded board minutes.** The chairperson of the managing board or committee of the grantee organization is assumed to be the authorized representative for applicants that are not districts or ESUs, unless otherwise indicated by the managing board.

Role and Responsibility of the Authorized Representative

The signature of the authorized representative protects the legal rights and interests of the recipient and commits the recipient to fulfill the obligations of the grant project. The signature of the authorized representative is required in order to form a legal contract between the recipient and the Department of Education as the grantor agency. By signing grant related documents on behalf of the organization, the authorized representative binds the recipient to operate the grant within the terms of the grant agreement, assurances, administrative and program requirements as the electronic signature for online submissions.

The authorized representative is responsible for:
► Developing a work plan or calendar to administer and achieve the goals and objectives of the grant award;
► Informing the business manager/financial contact of the application, approval of the award, applicable requirements for allowable costs of the program, reporting requirements, budget or program modifications, close-out procedures, etc;
► Ensuring an appropriate system of time and effort records is used in cases where an employee that is paid using grant funds is also paid using local or state funds or funds of another Federal program;
► Submitting timely and accurate program reports and ensuring the person responsible for fiscal reporting is also prompt and accurate, and;
► Ensuring the grant award is administered in compliance with applicable State and Federal laws, regulations, statement of assurances and terms and conditions of the grant award.

**Business Roles**

► There are several different “Business Roles” activation codes available for the Grant Management System:

**District Administrator** (Dist Admin): This role allows access for data entry; ability to sign the assurances and submit the application, future amendments; accessing reimbursements; and submitting claims. **NOTE:** The District Administrator is the only role that has the “Submit to NDE” button for submitting applications. However, District Admin (DA) and the Bookkeeper role can submit reimbursement requests.

**Data Entry:** This role allows access for data entry to the application and payments submission to the District Administrator, **but does not allow for submitting to NDE.**

**Bookkeeper:** This role allows rights to the application and access to the payment portion of the GMS. **NOTE:** The bookkeeper role has the “Submit to NDE” button for submitting reimbursement requests and final reports only.

**View Only:** This role allows view only rights to the application pages and payment portion of the GMS.

**EACH USER SHOULD LOG IN WITH HIS/HER OWN USER ID AND PASSWORD**

The Authorized Representative should not permit use of his/her login information by other individuals.
Entering the GMS System

► The GMS is no longer in the portal – it is a single sign on system using your email address and password. Please bookmark the below URL:

► Go to https://nde.mtwgms.org/NDEGMSWebv02/logon.aspx

► Sign in with your email address and password. Users will need to set their password when logging in the first time using the following steps:

1. Type your email address in the Username/Email text box
2. Click “Forgot Password”
3. Follow the directions found in the pop-up window

► This will open the “Menu List” for the Grants Management System (GMS)

► Organization Select – If an administrator is responsible for more than one district, the “Organization Select” screen appears first. This screen will list all the districts to which the individual has access. To enter, click on the radio button next to district to view.
Overview of the Grants Management System

System Rules
► To move across the page or between Tab sections, use the computer mouse – DO NOT USE the computer’s “tab” key. Move from left to right across the tabs.

► DO NOT use the “BACK” button on the browser to move among tabs. Click on the next tab or use the pull-down menu of applications.

► When inserting text, do not use quotation marks, bullets or other special characters. When copying and pasting from another document, ensure the results do not include hypertext (<br>). Proofread the text information and remove any of these characters. The page will give an error and will not save if hypertext is present.

► To check for spelling errors, click on the “Spell Check” button to sweep the page.

Save Page
► SAVE - The “Save” button is at the end of each page. If data has been omitted or is inaccurate, an error message in red will appear at the top of the page. Make the necessary corrections or additions and click on the “Save Page” button again.

► SAVE OFTEN – The GMS system has a security feature and times out after 20 minutes of inactivity, so save often to prevent loss of data.

► Pages with multiple text boxes/questions – All text boxes/questions must be completed before the page will save if they are required. You may need to enter one word in each text box to save the page, then go back and work on each box, saving after each. This will eliminate timing out and losing previously entered data.

► Once all information has been entered, use the “Save Page” button. Clicking on another section Tab before saving a page will result in the loss of data entered on that page!

► Users can move among tabs and programs without having to SAVE the information entered on one page. Selecting another Tab without clicking “Save Page” (and resolving any errors) will result in loss of data entered.

► Pre-populated pages do not have a “Save Page” button because that information is already saved by the GMS and is for your review.

► Data that has been saved can be changed at any time until the application’s final submission to NDE.
Printing

► Printer Friendly: To print individual web pages, click on the “Printer Friendly” link in the upper right hand corner of any application page. This is an immediate print for individual pages only. To get the entire document in one request, see “Selectable Application Print” below.
 ► **Selectable Application Print**: The “Selectable Application Print” tab is on the tab strip of each grant application - This print function can be accessed to (1) print the entire application, or (2) create a single document of selected pages when the entire document isn’t needed but many pages need to be printed (i.e. NCLB Consolidated-selected Title I application only). This tab allows a complete document by just selecting the pages that have data on them.

► The print function can be accessed to request a single document copy of the entire document. This will send a request to the system and will run an automatic process hourly. This print job will be available on the hour after you request the print job (i.e. order print job at 9:00 am – completed job available at 10:00 a.m.). The printed application will appear as a green link and will provide a pdf document for printing or saving.
►Select the link next to the application to expand the selection of pages - Select the checkbox next to the page or pages that you wish to print and click the “Request Print” button.

►After your print request has been ordered, the “Requested Print Jobs” will indicate who ordered the request along with the date and time it was ordered.
You should receive an email once the link is ready.  Click the link to open a pdf which can be printed and/or saved.
Page Design

Access Select Page

- **District Name and Number:** The top of each page displays the District Name and ESU/County/District Number.
- **Page Title:** The title of the page you are on will be in the upper left corner (Access Select in the screen shot above).
- **Instructions:** Links to Instructions will be in the upper right hand corner. This link will bring up a list of instructions for the page and is available on nearly every page in the application. Detailed program instructions are available on the Overview page.
Status Bar

► **Application Name**: Lists the application year and allows a selection via radio button.

► **Revision**: Indicates if it is an Original Application or Amendment #1, etc.

► **Status**:
  
  ‘Not Submitted’ – Application still resides at the District in progress.
  
  ‘Submitted for Review’ – Submitted to NDE or District Administrator.
  
  ‘Returned for Changes’ – District needs to make revisions based on NDE findings listed on the Review Checklist.
  
  ‘In Process’ – First level of NDE approval passed. Now needs to be final approved by NDE.
  
  ‘Final Approved’ – Application has been final approved by NDE and GAN has been created.

► **View GAN**: Click on link “View GAN” to bring up the most current pdf of the Grant Award Notification or move to the Allocations page and retrieve the history of all GANs on the GAN link.

► **Date**: the application/amendment date based on the status of the approval cycle.

► **Actions**: These buttons take action on the application – Open, Amend, Payments and Delete Application.

► **Contact Us**: Link available at the bottom of each page. Lists important contact names, email and phone numbers for all NDE contacts for GMS applications and payments for grants.
**Action Buttons**

► **Open**: To open the application, click on the “Open” button to the right of the application/amendment you want to view.

► **Amend**: To create an amendment on an approved application, click on the “Amend” button to the right of the most current approved application.

► **Payments**: To create or view a reimbursement request, click on the “Payment” button to the right of the most recently approved application/amendment.

► **Delete Application/Amendment**: To withdraw an application/amendment, click on the “Delete” button to the right of the application/amendment you want to withdraw. An application/amendment cannot be withdrawn if it has already been submitted to NDE or approved by NDE.

► **Review Checklist**: To view the review checklist, click on the “Review Checklist” button to the right of the most current approved application/amendment. Remember, this is a pop-up window, so be sure to have your pop-up blockers turned off.
Applications/Amendments

Follow the steps below through the available tabs.

If this is a consolidated application, in the upper right hand corner there will be a pull-down menu where you can select the sub-program. Use the pull-down menu to complete the pages for each of the programs that you have an allocation.

Note: Using NCLB as example
Tab Strip
Across the screen is a TAB strip designed to look like the tabs from a file folder. The number and name of tabs vary based on the program you are in. Each tab represents a different web page that should be reviewed and/or completed by the applicant.

► **Overview Tab:** The Overview provides the background information for the grant application and all of the programs in the application. There is no action needed on this page.

► **Allocations Tab:** This tab lists the allocations for the program(s) within the application that a district received. Down the left hand column are variables that can affect the total allocation. These include reallocation funds, carryover funds (not included until after the previous year’s project is closed out), and released funds, if any. When carryover funds are available, an amendment will be necessary to add them to the application budget. If a district has assigned their funds to their consortia, that information is indicated on the Allocations page by clicking the green hyperlink within the program column. The fiscal agent will complete those applications for the districts who have assigned funds to the consortia.

► **Contact Information Tab:** This tab asks for contact information for staff that can be contacted by NDE regarding the application. The authorized representative (This is usually the Superintendent or ESU Administrator) section is required.

► **Goals and Needs:** The “Goals and Needs” tab is the “heart” and the most critical part of all applications. It is important to understand how the information entered here will be used throughout the application and is used for budgeting purposes. Goals based budgeting is an integral part of the GMS. The Goal entered or funding source selected will reappear on the “Budget Detail” page. All funds must be budgeted in support of one or more of the Goals. Once funds have been budgeted on the Budget Detail page in support of a particular goal, the checkbox on the Goals and Needs page that caused this Goal to be copied to the Budget Detail page cannot be unchecked. In order to unselect such a checkbox, the user must first delete all rows on the Budget Detail page for that program associated with the Goal and save. Once these budget details and enterable text on the Goals and Needs pages are deleted, then the checkbox can be unchecked and the page saved.

► **Assurances:** Assurances for all programs in the application are provided under this tab. At the end of the assurances is the “Organization Agrees” button. NOTE: This button will only be displayed to the authorized representative. Once the district agrees to the assurances, it does not need to repeat this step for amendments or changes later in the year. To agree to assurances, select the radio button and save page.

► **Amendment Description:** The Amendment Description Page is a page that was created for NDE Reviewer efficiency and auditing purposes. This page only needs to be completed upon an amendment to the original approved application which requires information describing the changes made to the application. This text box description allows the NDE Reviewer to accurately determine and approve changes from the original application. The amendment is unable to be submitted without this page completed.

► **Submit:** This is the last step in the process and is used only when all application pages are complete for. Prior to the authorized representative clicking on the “Submit” button, the system requires a “Consistency Check” to be successfully performed. The consistency check examines the entire application, as opposed to a single web page of the application. Example: If any page contains required responses that were skipped or if any available funds were not budgeted, an error message is displayed. The “Submit to NDE” button is only available after the consistency check has successfully passed. Further, when the consistency check does pass, the application is “Locked”. This prevents modifications to the application that could nullify the consistency check. If changes need to be made before submission, the user who ran the consistency check must click the “Unlock” button on the Submit page. **This can only be done by the person’s credentials (login id and password) who “locked” the application. By unlocking the application at this time, the record of successful consistency check is erased, necessitating the consistency check being run again prior to submission.**
The submit page will be different for a person designated for data entry. The data entry person will have a “submit to District Administration” button and will send the completed application or payment request to the authorized representative. **Only the authorized representative can submit the application to NDE for review and approval.** If an attempt is made to submit an application before the agency has agreed to the assurances, an error message will direct the applicant to the Assurances for completion and the consistency check will need to be run again.

► **Application History:** This tab will display the progress of your application after submission to NDE. (Dates/User ID’s).
NDE Review and Approval of Applications

► Each application will be reviewed and approved by one of the NDE Program staff. The final approval of all applications will be given by the NDE Leadership Council member.

► When an application is being reviewed for approval, the NDE Reviewer will use the Reviewer Checklist. This checklist is available to all applicants as a reference during the process of completing their application. Any applicable item on the checklist that is not acceptable will cause the application to be returned to the district, ESU, or institution for changes. The checklist will identify the needed changes and contain the comments of the reviewer as to what changes are needed. The checklist can be accessed by clicking the Review Checklist button on the Access Select page. The checklist will open in a separate browser. This enables NDE Reviewers or applicants to easily toggle between the application they are reviewing and the Review Checklist that they must complete before approving the application. During the review and approval process, the Department staff will never be able to change anything on the application.

► When the application has received final approval the system will notify the authorized representative through email. A Grant Award Notification (GAN) will be generated and available to view or print from the Access Select page or the Allocations page.
Page Lock Control

Once an application is submitted to NDE, it is set in a “Locked Status”. This feature was put in place as an audit control. If a page is locked, no changes can be saved. If the application, amendment, or reimbursement is being returned to you for changes, pages can be unlocked under the “Page Lock Control” tab.

► Expand All: Click on the “Expand All” to display the lowest level of detail for each application section. All pages in each of the application sections will display in the left-hand column.

► Page Status: The Page Status column displays the status of the GMS Web pages.

► Open Page for Editing: A page or section can be unlocked by clicking the check box next to the page name and clicking on the “Save Page” button. Pages marked FINAL (i.e. Assurances) will NOT be edited or unlocked by the district. Once the page is OPEN, users can navigate to the page and edit as required.

For future details, please refer to this link: http://www.education.ne.gov/gms/pagelockcontrol.pdf
Returned for Changes
If an original application, amendment, or reimbursement is being returned for changes, information is provided by your NDE Reviewer on the “Review Checklist”.

To view the Review Checklist, click on the “Review Checklist” button of the most current approved application, amendment, or reimbursement request. Remember, this is a pop-up box, so be sure to have your pop-up blockers off for this site.
Budgets

A budget is a statement of anticipated costs for which grant funds would be used in support of the activities and strategies proposed to meet grant program goals. The budget is of equal importance to the narrative and can be approached as an important final check in clarifying the practical application of the program. Careful deliberation should go into completing the budget section to insure that the financial support requested will be adequate to carry out the goals of the project. Budgets will use whole dollar amounts only.

Before developing a project budget, the applicant must have an understanding of the regulations and requirements of the funding source (State and/or Federal funding agency). This includes allowable direct costs, indirect costs, assurances, project forms and instructions, and changes permitted in a budget once the project is approved. For assistance on specific programs, the applicant can contact the NDE program consultant who can help specify what information is necessary in the final document.

A complete copy of the approved application, approved budget, and all approved amendments must be maintained by the grant recipient. These documents and other supporting information will be used by Department staff and local auditors to determine fiscal and program compliance.


► Function: For Federal programs, the four digit function is a specific number in the range of 4000 to 4999 assigned by NDE School Finance and Organization Services used at the district level for financial purposes. The Budget Detail page uses Function Codes (Activities) for allowable uses of funds defined by the program itself. Activities are defined in the GMS and identified by the allowable uses of funds for each program. An activity might be a summer program or nonpublic school instructional costs.
**Major Object Codes:** Identifies the object of expenditures for each activity. Major object codes are 100 – Salaries, 200 – Employee Benefits, 300 – Purchased Services, 400 – Supplies and Materials, 500 – Capital Outlay, 600 – Other including travel expenses for professional development. Budgets will be submitted using major object codes.
Amendments

To create an amendment, click on the “Amend” button to the right of the most current approved application/amendment.

Amendments to an approved application are required when:

► The scope of the programs is expected to change, either to remove or add a new activity (example: Adding a new component like summer school); or

► Grantees wish to budget for more available funds (i.e., carryover); or

► Grantee wishes to revise amounts across major object codes.

► Changes to the original approved budget will require an amendment. To reduce the number of amendments, the expenditures for a major object code can exceed the approved budget by 25% or $2,500 (whichever is greater, but the total cannot exceed the Allocated Amount) before an amendment is needed, provided there are no program restrictions on that activity or major object code (i.e., administrative cost limitation).

Carryover funds, which if not obligated by the end of the grant period, remain available to the grant recipient for one additional time period, usually one year, unless the program has carryover limitations (i.e., Title I). Costs allowable using Federal carryover funds are subject to the same requirements as all other funding under that particular Federal program. Most formula grant programs usually require the funds to be carried over to the agency that received the original grant award. Competitive grants may or may not allow carryover. Please check individual program guidelines for further clarification. Carryover funds from the prior grant year must be included in the current years and budget and approved before being spent or obligated. Some programs do not allow carryover.

The amount of carryover for Federal Title I, Part A, Improving Basic Programs, is limited to 15% of the original allocation for districts that receive an allocation of $50,000 or more. A grantee may request a waiver to exceed the 15% limitation only once every three years.
IDEA regulations do not limit the amount of carryover for Part B or Preschool entitlement funds. Any “current year” funds available to the grantee not expended during the grant period will be available to the grantee in the next school year.
**Payments**

Payment requests can be found on the “Access Select” page, by clicking on the “Payments” button of the most current approved application/amendment.

Detailed payment instructions can be found at:
http://www.education.ne.gov/FOS/GrantsManagementSystem/Payment_Instructions.pdf

► **Reimbursement Payments:** Require the applicant to have *expendeds funds first* and are made only after supporting documentation for those expenditures have been approved by the Department. Payments for State and Federal grants are made on a reimbursement basis only. There are no scheduled payments nor advance payments.

► **Payment Order of Grant Funds:** The GMS will always pay the oldest funds first which eliminates the need for separate accounting of carryover funds. NCLB and SPED IDEA grant applications have options for using funds under
other programs: Section 6123 (NCLB) allows funds to be transferred to another program and REAP-FLEX allows funds from one program to be used for the purposes of another program. In the NCLB Consolidated Application other carryover funds of the transferred funds under Section 6123 or REAP-FLEX option are paid before the current year funds (i.e., 4100 for Title I carryover funds.) Districts must continue to receipt the payment of any funds designed for REAP-FLEX or Section 6123 to the original program. For example, Title IIA funds used for Title I purposes under REAP-FLEX must be receipted as Title IIA funding. Special Education IDEA also allows for transfers under CEIS into Enrollment/Poverty (E/P) only. Payment of these transferred funds is paid out of E/P.
Expenditure Reports and Supporting Documentation

Reports of expenditures and requests for reimbursement are an accounting of a project’s expenditures through a specified period of time and must be accompanied by supporting detail documentation (e.g. accounting system printout). The Department uses this information to monitor each project for appropriate use of funds.

The GMS will not allow reporting of expenditures that were not budgeted or amounts that are not within the acceptable variance for budgeting items as approved within the program. The acceptable variance is an allowance that expenditures in a major object code can exceed the already approved amount for that major object code before an amendment to that budget is required. The acceptable variance from the approved amount in a major object code is 25% or $2,500 (whichever is greater).

Cash-On-Hand (COH) results when the total of payments received exceeds the expenditures reported to date. Excess cash-on-hand is determined by taking the amounts requested but not receipted plus receipted to date minus the total amount expended per grant period. A positive balance indicates excess cash-on-hand. This amount will be withheld from subsequent payment(s) to the grantee. A recipient may be required to reimburse the Department for excess cash-on-hand.

Payments, like budgets, will use only whole dollar amounts. Supporting documentation, like computer printouts of expenditures, can include exact amounts (including cents) but payments will be rounded-down to the next whole dollar to avoid overpaying the total of the grant award or approved budget.

Expenditures

All costs charged to a grant must be allowable under that program and must meet general grant management principles. For Federally funded grants, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-87 establishes the “Federal cost principles” and guidance for state and local governments. A copy of Circular A-87 may be obtained by visiting: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/index.html. While Circular A-87 details the Federal requirements, the following general rules also apply to all state grants. Costs charged to any grant must be (1) necessary and reasonable; (2) allocable to the grant award; and (3) legal.

► **Necessary and reasonable** means the proposed expenditure must meet the purpose of the program to which it is charged and be of reasonable cost. Guidance from the program will help determine if costs are appropriate. Some programs have specific allowable and non-allowable costs identified in the statute, guidance or regulations.

► **Allocable** costs means the funding program must receive the benefit. Example: a teacher normally funded through Federal Title I cannot be paid by Title I on any days spent performing as a substitute teacher in a regular classroom since the district must pay the cost of all substitute teachers.

► **Legal** costs for Federal programs are definite in Circular A-87. In addition, almost all Federal programs have a “supplement, no supplant” requirement. This means that Federal grant funds must be used to enhance the existing educational program and to supplement state or local funds or services that would otherwise be used. The general rule asks: Would this program or service be required in the absence of these Federal funds? If the answer is yes, then Federal funds may only be used to supplement the required program. Example: State and Federal law requires the provision of a free, appropriate education to children with identified disabilities. Federal NCLB Title I funds cannot be used to provide services to children with disabilities if those services are identified by the Multi-disciplinary Team or are on the Individual Education Plan (IEP).
Equipment/Capital Outlay

Equipment is defined as any instrument, machine, apparatus or set of articles that meets ALL of the following:
► Under normal conditions of use can be expected to last longer than a year;
► Does not lose its identity through fabrication or incorporation into a different or more complex unit;
► Is non-expendable (more feasible to repair the items than to replace);
► Retains its appearance and character through use;
► Is of significant value and, may be;
► Small and attractive.
► Refer to the following reference document for further information:
“Nebraska Department of Education State and Federal Grant Management Requirements and Guidance”