

**PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR LICENSING
AND STANDARDS BOARD**
1021 Bandana Blvd E., Suite 222
St. Paul, MN 55108
(651) 539-4200



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FISCAL YEAR 2025 PATHWAY PREPARATION
GRANT PROGRAM**

Minnesota Session Laws – 2023 Regular Session, Chapter 55, Article 5, Section 65, Subd. 7

DEADLINES

Intent to Submit – by 4:30pm April 5, 2024

Grant Proposal – by 4:30pm April 19, 2024

Early submissions are encouraged.

PROJECT FUNDING PERIOD:

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2026

Alternative Format:

Upon request, this request for proposals can be made available in an alternative format by contacting Laura Dyer, Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board, 1021 Bandana Blvd E., Suite 222, St. Paul, MN 55108, email: Laura.Dyer@state.mn.us, phone: (651) 539-4182. TTY users should contact the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529 and request assistance in contacting PELSB

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) STATE FISCAL YEAR 2025
PATHWAY PREPARATION GRANT PROGRAM**

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Key Terms

District: For the purposes of this grant, “district” means a public school district or charter school.

Field: A “field,” “licensure area,” or “subject area” means the content area in which a teacher may become licensed to teach.

Initial Professional License: means a grantee’s first professional teaching license

License: Authorization granted by PELSB to teach in a public school district or charter school. Only licenses that allow an individual to serve as a “teacher of record” as a classroom teacher, itinerant teacher, or related services school professional are included. The following license types are not included in this definition: substitute, administrative, supervisor, and director. All tiers are included.

Professional License: A license with unlimited renewals that is transferable to any school district, including a Tier 3 or 4 License.¹

Shortage area: (1) Licensure fields and economic development regions reported by the commissioner of education or the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board as experiencing a teacher shortage; and (2) Economic development regions where there is a shortage of licensed teachers who reflect the racial or ethnic diversity of students in the region, where the aggregate percentage of Indigenous teachers and teachers of color in the region is lower than the aggregate percentage of kindergarten through grade 12 Indigenous students and students of color in that region. Only individuals who close the gap between these percentages qualify as filling a shortage by this definition, as stated in Minn. Stat §120B.113.

Teacher: A teacher is defined in Minn. Stat §122A.06 as “a classroom teacher or other similar professional employee required to hold a license from the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board.”

Teacher Education Institution: For the purposes of this grant, “teacher education institution” means a teacher preparation provider appointed by PELSB.

Teacher Educator Institution: For the purposes of this grant, “teacher educator institution” means a teacher preparation provider approved by PELSB.

Tier 1 License: A one-year license that requires most individuals to hold a bachelor’s degree² and the district to show that no “acceptable” teacher holding a Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 License applied for the position. The license is limited to the district verifying the need and has limited renewals.

Tier 2 License: A two-year license that requires the individual to have either a master’s degree in the content, enrollment in teacher preparation, or two of five criteria aligned to the content and pedagogical knowledge and skills. The license requires a job offer from a Minnesota public school district, charter school, or other educational institution. The license is limited to the district offering the job and has limited renewals.

¹ The term “professional license” is defined in Minnesota Rules 8705.0200, subpart 7c.

² CTE educators are not required to hold a BA. As of August 1, 2023, native speakers of World Language and visual performing artists are not required to hold a bachelor’s degree.

**STATE FISCAL YEAR 2025
PATHWAY PREPARATION GRANT PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB)**

I. OVERVIEW

PELSB makes this competitive state grant funding available to support teachers seeking a Tier 3 or 4 license under [Minnesota Session Laws – 2023 Regular Session, Chapter 55, Article 5, Section 65, Subd. 7.](#)

See **Appendix A** for the legislative language that informs the Pathway Preparation Grant (PPG) Program, which first began in 2023.

II. FUNDING AVAILABILITY

This grant opportunity provides \$400,000.00 dollars in fiscal year 2025 in state funding under Minnesota Session Laws, Chapter 55, Article 5, Section 65, Subd. 7 for the support of Tier 2 teachers seeking a Tier 3 or 4 license through completion of a teacher preparation program or the licensure via portfolio process.

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process with review by a committee for a two-year period. Grantees will be announced by late May/early June.

The state reserves the right to offer award amounts that differ from the applicant's request.

III. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The following may apply for a program grant:

- A school district
- A charter school district
- An education service cooperative
- A partnership between one or more teacher preparation providers and school districts, including charter schools districts

IV. ESTIMATED GRANT PERIOD

The term of funding is anticipated to be from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026.

V. USE OF FUNDS

Grantees must use grant funds to:

- Support teachers holding a Tier 2 license and seeking a Tier 3 license through completion of a teacher preparation program or the licensure via portfolio process.
- A grant recipient must provide teachers holding a Tier 2 license with professional development, mentorship, and coursework aligned to state standards for teacher licensure.

VI. GENERAL, SPECIFIC & REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF GRANTEES

Submit an end of the year evaluative progress report by the date indicated in Section 2.3 of the grant contract agreement.

Maintain a ledger to track the grant budget expenditures and payment reimbursements, plus all documents that support budget line item expenses.

If subcontracting is an allowable expenditure in the approved budget, follow applicable state and federal procurement laws and select "responsible vendors" who are not debarred or suspended, not engaged in unlawful practices and who are qualified.

PELSB will conduct a pre-award risk assessment to consider financial capacity for grant awards over \$25,000. For awards over \$50,000, financial monitoring is required and, at least one reconciliation of a Grantee's expenditures during the grant period. Grants over \$250,000 require annual financial reconciliation of Grantee expenditure.

REPORTING

Grant recipients must submit a report to PELSB by **September 30** of each year after receiving an award, for each year that grant funds are active. If the due date falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the report is due by 4:30PM the prior workday. **Even though the grant contract agreement extends for a two-year period, reports on the use of grant funds each state fiscal year are due each year.**

The report must detail the number of teachers enrolled in a teacher preparation program, the number of teachers working on licensure via portfolio, licensure area demographics, and progress toward licensure.

VII. STATEMENT OF INTENT

PELSB will use Intent to Submit emails to plan for proposal review and to understand the scope of the competition. **Intent to Submit communications must be sent by April 5, 2024.**

Please send a simple statement identifying an intention to submit a grant application with the name of the main applicant as well as any partnering organizations, units, or districts and the MN Economic Development Region (EDR) that your district, charter school district, or partnership *predominately* serves, to Grants.PELSB@state.mn.us.

VIII. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

APPLICATION COVERSHEET

The application coversheet must include:

1. An original signature from the Identified Official with Authority (IOwA) to sign on behalf of the applicant.
2. Contact information for the agency, agency head, the program contact and the accounting or business office manager.
3. Identify the grant amount requested.

REQUIRED STATE FINANCIAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

SWIFT (Minnesota's Statewide Integrated Financial Tool System) Vendor/Supplier Number

It is likely your organization already has this number; check with your business office.

This number is required for all applicants. If you are applying with a fiscal agent, the SWIFT number must be for the fiscal agent who will be receiving and administering the grant funds.

To acquire a SWIFT Vendor Number please visit:

https://supplier.swift.state.mn.us/psp/fmssupap/SUPPLIER/ERP/h/?tab=SUP_GUEST

APPLICATION NARRATIVE COMPONENTS AND BUDGET

Use the application template to develop clear and complete narrative responses for the following components based on the grant period. The total page count for the narrative components must not exceed 8 pages. Applicants are welcome to submit supporting documents as appendices.

SCORED PROPOSAL

SECTION 1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

A. Are you applying as a (check one):

- ☐ School district
- ☐ Charter school district
- ☐ Education service cooperative
- ☐ Partnership between one or more teacher preparation providers and school districts, including charter school districts

B. Please list all schools, districts, and teacher educator institutions involved in the grant work proposed.

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SECTION 2. PROGRAM NARRATIVE (40 Points)

Please describe program need and detail proposed activities to be funded by this grant related to the required objectives:

- ☐ Supporting teachers holding a Tier 2 license and seeking a Tier 3 license through completion of a teacher preparation program or the licensure via portfolio process.
- ☐ Providing teachers holding a Tier 2 license with professional development, mentorship, and coursework aligned to state standards for teacher licensure.

If applicable, which teacher preparation providers will you partner with to enroll teachers seeking initial licensure in a teacher preparation program?

How will you support the teachers to ensure they make meaningful progress toward licensure?

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SECTION 3. TEACHER PARTICIPANTS (35 Points)

| | Tier 2 Teachers |
|--|-----------------|
| Number of teachers who will be enrolled in an initial licensure program | |
| Number of teachers who will be supported through the licensure via portfolio process | |
| Total Teachers | |

| | Tier 2 Teachers |
|---|-----------------|
| Of the teachers you plan to support, how many are teachers of color and/or Indigenous teachers? | |
| Of the teachers you plan to support, how many work in teacher shortage areas ? | |
| Total Teachers | |

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SECTION 4. EXPERIENCE AND CAPACITY FOR EFFORTS TO SUPPORT TEACHERS (20 Points)

Describe existing or prior efforts in your district(s) or school(s) relevant to your proposal, focusing on the experience and capacity of your district or coalition to successfully implement the proposed activities.

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SECTION 5. BUDGET WITH DESCRIPTIONS (5 Points)

Create and attach a **plainly formatted** Excel budget for the requested grant funds. Specify the grant amount requested and detail all **necessary and reasonable** expenditures anticipated during the project period that align with project goals and activities. Necessary means it is important to the success of the project. Reasonable means that fair market price is paid for the item or services.

Submissions with decorative colors, logos, non-standard fonts, blocked out sections, and/or information related to other grants or prior awards will be returned for revision. The budget must include a brief narrative description of each line-item.

Please use the suggested format below:

| Budget Item | Amount allocated per teacher x number of teachers | Total Amount |
|--|--|--------------|
| Teacher preparation coursework, books, fees, etc. | \$2500.00 x 10 teachers | \$25,000.00 |
| Professional development aligned to initial licensure requirements | \$X | \$X |
| Mentorship to aid licensure via portfolio | \$X | \$X |
| Portfolio fees | \$X | \$X |
| Substitutes/time release | \$X | \$X |
| Budget Total | | \$X |

Reviewers should be able to determine if the budget aligns with the project activities and primary purpose of the funding. The planned budget expenses must be **necessary, reasonable** and fundable by statute [see Appendix A].

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APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND SIGNATURE

Applications must be emailed to Grants.PELSB@state.mn.us by **4:30PM on Friday, April 19, 2024**.

Applications sent to any other email address will not be accepted. Late applications will not be accepted.

Provide **one** electronic copy via e-mail by **April 19, 2024 at 4:30PM** to Grants.PELSB@state.mn.us.

Please do not cc any other PELSB email address. Only one application per school district is eligible for review.

Submit the application in the following format:

1. In the subject line of the email put "FY25 Pathway Preparation Grant Application – [Your Organization's Name]."
2. Save and attach your signed application as a PDF and budget as a combined PDF.
3. Save and attach your budget as an Excel document as well.
4. Label your documents with the name of your organization. Example: "[Organization Name] FY25 Teacher Preparation Pathway Proposal"

Then submit to the designated email box by **Friday, April 19, 2024, 4:30PM, Central Daylight Time**.

Please save or print Google documents to PDF for submission. Links, zip files, and Google documents will not be accepted. Costs associated with preparing the application must be borne by the applicant. The burden of proof of timely submission is on the applicant.

IX. APPLICATION SCREENING AND REVIEW

PHASE 1: Screening

Applications that meet the following criteria will be forwarded for review.

1. Received in the designated email box by the due date and time.
2. Applicant meets the eligibility requirements.
3. Application includes a narrative and budget.

PHASE 2: Application Components Reviewed and Scored

The components to be scored are summarized below. Total points possible are 100.

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EVALUATION RUBRIC

| Criteria | Not Recommended | Recommended | Highly Recommended |
|---|---|--|--|
| Section 2 Program Narrative (40 Points) | 29 Points: The proposal does not provide a sufficient explanation of each program activity or who will be served. The proposal does not address the funding requirements for this grant program and/or several proposed activities are not allowable by statute. | 35 Points: The proposal provides a reasonable explanation of each program activity aligned with the funding requirements for this grant program, including the types of teachers who will be served, how they will be supported. | 40 Points: The proposal provides a clear and detailed explanation of each program activity aligned with the funding requirements for this grant program, including the types of teachers who will be served, how they will be supported. |
| Section 3 Teacher Participants (35 Points) | 21 Points: Explanation of need is not clear and local data is either not provided or does not sufficiently support a case for the need to receive grant funds in order to have the capacity to support teachers seeking an initial professional license. | 30 Points: Proposed programs will provide support to teachers seeking an initial professional license. Explanation of program need, as well as data on program participants demonstrates reasonable need and ability to execute the proposed program activities. | 35 Points: Explanation of program need, as well as data on program participants provide a very clear and compelling case, emphasizing support to teachers of color and Indigenous teachers, and/or teachers in license shortage areas. A high number or proportion of the district's teachers will be served. |
| Section 4 Capacity for Teacher Support (20 Points) | 11 Points: The applicant's explanation of capacity leaves questions about their ability to execute the proposed programs successfully and/or achieve intended outcomes. | 15 Points: The applicant demonstrates a reasonable capacity to execute the proposed activities. | 20 Points: More than most other applicants, the applicant demonstrates a clear and strong capacity to execute the proposed programs, through a detailed explanation of capacity. |

| Criteria | Not Recommended | Recommended | Highly Recommended |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Section 5 Budget (5 Points) | 2 Points: The budget is not itemized and/or does not clearly match what is described in the rest of the proposal. Requested funds are not necessary or reasonable. | 3 Points: The budget provides an itemized description of how necessary and reasonable funds will be spent. | 5 Points: The budget provides a clear, itemized description of how necessary and reasonable funds will be spent. Each item matches what is described in the rest of the proposal. All items align with grant funding purpose. |

PHASE 3: Review of Outcomes

PELSB staff will review the outcomes resulting from the reviewers' evaluation of applications. PELSB may offer grant award amounts that differ from the applicant's grant request, including award amounts for specific program items. During this phase, PELSB staff or grant services staff may contact an applicant to obtain clarification on one or more sections of their application. PELSB staff or grant services staff may contact reviewers to obtain clarification on their feedback. All funding decisions made by PELSB are final.

Pre-Award Risk Assessment

Before executing grants for non-governmental organizations, if awards exceed \$25,000, PELSB must conduct a risk assessment on financial capacity as well as prior performance.

Delays

OTHER - The following may result in a delay of preparation of any grant awards:

- Clarifications to the budget or work plan
- Invalid SWIFT VENDOR ID Number
- Pre-Award Risk Assessment Review

The agency *anticipates* the review to be completed by early November 2023. Applicants are expected to be notified within two weeks of when the review has been completed. Grant review feedback is considered public information, but not until all grant contract agreements have been negotiated and executed with the selected applicants.

Applicants recommended for an award must wait until the grant contract agreement is fully executed **before** providing any services and before incurring expenditures. Any expenses incurred prior to the full execution of the grant contract agreement are not reimbursable and are the responsibility of the applicant/grantee.

X. ASSISTANCE DURING PROPOSAL SOLICITATION

The question and answer document will be available by February 21, 2024. A virtual informational session for interested applicants will be held on April 3, 2024 at 4:30PM.

PELSB Grant Specialist Laura Dyer is available to provide additional information or answer questions. Questions should be emailed using “PPG” (Pathway Preparation Grant) in the subject line. Email: Laura.Dyer@state.mn.us Phone: 651-539-4182

Questions related to the grant opportunity may only be answered by PELSB’s program contact representative identified above or their successor. Information received from an unauthorized source is not binding and could result in misinformation.

XI. GRANT ADMINISTRATION REGULATIONS

Administrative guidelines will be sent to grantees which will outline details on the grant award process, applicable regulations, monitoring expectations, fiscal procedures, reporting requirements, and more, upon contract execution.

XII. GRANT CLOSE-OUT, SUSPENSION, AND TERMINATION

Close-out: Each grant shall be closed out as promptly as feasible after expiration or termination. In closing out the grant, the following shall be observed:

1. The grant recipient shall submit the evaluation report, as required by the terms of the grant.
2. The close-out of a grant does not affect the retention period for State and/or Federal rights of access to grant records.

Suspension: When a grant recipient has materially failed to comply with the terms of a grant, PELSB may, upon reasonable notice to the grant recipient, suspend the grant in whole or in part. The notice of suspension will state the reason(s) for the suspension, any corrective action required of the grant recipient, and the effective date.

Termination: PELSB may terminate any grant in whole, or in part, at any time before the date of expiration whenever PELSB determines that the grant recipient has materially failed to comply with the terms of the grant. PELSB shall promptly notify the grant recipient in writing of the termination and the reason(s) for the termination, together with the effective date.

XIII. FINANCIAL REVIEW PROCESS

All Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must undergo a financial review prior to receiving a grant award made of \$25,000 and higher. In order to comply with the [Policy on the Financial Review of Nongovernmental Organizations](#), please submit one of the following documents with your application, based on the following criteria:

- Grant applicants with annual income of under \$50,000, or who have not been in existence long enough to have a completed IRS Form 990 or audit should submit their most recent board-reviewed financial statements.
- Grant applicants with total annual revenue of \$50,000 or more and less than \$750,000 should submit their most recent IRS Form 990.
- Grant applicants with total annual revenue of over \$750,000 should submit their most recent certified financial audit.

XIV. GRANT CONTRACT AGREEMENTS

State grant contract agreements are found in the [Forms and FAQs tab](#) located on the Office of Grants Management website.

XV. TIMELINE FOR PROPOSALS, AWARDS, AND FUNDED PROJECTS

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| February 21, 2024 | Request for Proposals (RFP) available to applicants |
| April 2, 2024 | Information Session (virtual) |
| April 5, 2024 | Deadline for receipt of Intent to Submit |
| April 19, 2024 (by 4:30PM) | Deadline for receipt of Proposal |
| Late May/Early June | Grant award notification |
| July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2026 | Project period starts on the date of full execution of the grant contract agreement and notification that grant work may begin. |

Provide **one** electronic copy via e-mail by 4:30PM April 19, 2024 to Grants.PELSB@state.mn.us

Any proposal submitted late will not be accepted.

All proposals will be acknowledged upon receipt. **Each late or ineligible applicant will be notified that their proposal will not be considered.**

Only one application per school district is eligible for grant review.

XVI. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

We will take steps to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers per [Minn. Stat. §16B.98](#) and [Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making](#). Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- a grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to PELSB due to competing duties or loyalties; and/or

- a grantee's or applicant's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties.

In cases where a conflict of interest is suspected, disclosed, or discovered, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued including, but not limited to, disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the grant agreement.

XVII. PUBLIC DATA

Per [Minn. Stat. §13.599](#):

- Names and addresses of grant applicants will be public data once proposal responses are opened, after the date for final submission has passed.
- All remaining data in proposal responses (except trade secret data as defined and classified in [Minn. Stat. §13.37](#)) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purpose of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).
- All data created or maintained by PELSB as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret data as defined and classified in Minn. Stat. §13.37) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).

XVII. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND NON-DISCRIMINATION REQUIREMENTS

- A. The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. [Minn. Stat. §363A.02](#). The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.
- B. The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship. Minnesota Rules, Part [5000.3500](#).
- C. The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

APPENDIX A: COPY OF STATUTE

Sub. 7. Pathway preparation grants.

(a) For grants to support teachers holding a Tier 2 license and seeking a Tier 3 license:

\$ 400,000..... 2024

\$ 400,000..... 2025

(b) The following are eligible for grants under this subdivision:

(1) school districts;

(2) charter schools;

(3) service cooperatives; and

(4) partnerships between one or more teacher preparation providers, school districts, or charter schools.

(c) Grant funds must be used to support teachers holding a Tier 2 license and seeking a Tier 3 license through completion of a teacher preparation program or the licensure via portfolio process. A grant recipient must provide teachers holding a Tier 2 license with professional development, mentorship, and coursework aligned to state standards for teacher licensure.

(d) The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board may collaborate with the Department of Education and the Office of Higher Education to administer the grant program.

(e) The board may retain up to three percent of the appropriation amount to monitor and administer the grant.