Teacher Mentorship and Retention of Effective Teachers Grant
Q & A
State Fiscal Year 2025

Eligibility

Q. Who may apply for a Teacher Mentorship and Retention of Effective Teachers grant?

A. The following groups may apply for a program grant:

- A school district (including a charter school district)
- A group of school districts
- A coalition of teachers

Higher education institutions with teacher education programs and non-profit organizations other than charter school districts are not eligible as the primary applicant seeking funds, but may be selected by teachers as a partner in conducting program work. A teacher education institution or non-profit organization may serve as the fiscal agent for a coalition applicant.

Funding Amounts & Uses

Q. Is there a funding range for proposals?

A. Due to the competitive nature of the grant, we are unable to provide specific funding amounts or a specific number of awardees. We recommend that you develop your proposal based on program needs.

Q. What can Teacher Mentorship and Retention of Effective Teachers grant funds be used for?

A. Funds may be used to:

- Pay a stipend to a mentor who may be a current or former teacher who has taught at least three years and is not on an improvement plan
- Provide additional stipends as an incentive to mentors of color or who are American Indian
- Financially support professionally learning community affinity groups across schools, within and between districts, for teachers from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups to come together throughout the school year. For the purposes of this grant program "affinity groups" are groups of educators who share a common racial or ethnic identity in society as persons of color or who are American Indian.
- Financially support programs for induction aligned with the district or school mentorship program during the first three years of teaching, especially for teachers who are from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups
- Provide professional development focused on ways to close opportunity and achievement gaps for students of color and American Indian students

- For teachers of color and Indigenous teachers, grant funds may be used for professional development graduate coursework toward a first master's degree in a field related to their teaching licensure or toward an additional teaching license.

Q. Can grant funds be used to support non-licensed educators?

A. By statute, this grant only supports non-licensed educators via affinity group meetings and affinity group activities.

Q. Can the funds be used to pay portions of a salary for a mentor or program coordinator?

A. Grant funds may be used to "financially support programs for induction," which could include induction program coordination, but applicants are cautioned against committing grant funding to pay a salary because future grant funds are not guaranteed and program coordination should be sustainable.

Q. What is the difference between administrative cost and program cost?

Examples of administrative costs include:

- Overall program management and coordination, and office management salaries and related costs

- Preparing program plans, event plans, budgets, and schedules and hiring planning consultants

- Monitoring programs, projects, and related systems and processes

- Developing systems and procedures, including management information systems, for assuring compliance with grant program requirements

- Preparing reports and other documents related to grant program requirements and evaluating grant program results against stated objectives

- Program-specific accounting, auditing, and/or legal activities

Examples of program costs include stipends for:

- Program support facilitation and lead mentorship

- Affinity group networking, event hosting, and facilitation

- Leading and conducting workshops and training

- Providing mentorship support to other teachers

- Mentorship and induction program attendance

- Advising and recruitment activities

Q. Can grant funds be used to support substitute teachers, ECE instructors, and education professionals like social workers and school administrators?

A. Although school social workers and counsellors are sometimes defined as "teachers" in state legislation, this grant program is focused on Tier 3 and 4 classroom teachers and does not extend to funding education administrators or education professionals. Coalitions of licensed ECE teachers working in a public school setting are, however, eligible to apply.

Q. Can grant funds be used to educate families and other community members related to addressing the opportunity/achievement gap for students of color and indigenous students?

A. No. Although addressing the opportunity/achievement gap for students of color and indigenous students is a funding category, only licensed teachers may receive professional development pertaining to addressing this, and affinity group membership is limited to educators.

Q. How long can grant funds be used?

A. Funds are awarded by state fiscal year. Fiscal years end the year that they are named: for example, state fiscal year 2025 begins on July 1, 2023 and ends on June 30, 2025.

In FY25, Teacher Mentorship and Retention of Effective Teacher awards will span two state fiscal years (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 and July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026) if needed, without requiring an amendment.

If awards overlap, please note that older, active award funds must be fully expended and submitted for reimbursement before newer award funds may be reimbursed.

Grant activity should be planned to occur within the time frame noted in the Request for Proposals (RFP). For example, FY25 grant activity may begin after the grant contract agreement has been fully signed and delivered (approximately late May/early June 2024) through the fiscal year end date of June 30, 2025, and extending until June 30, 2026 if needed.

Application & Review Process

Q. Are all applicants required to be part of an organization?

A. Coalitions of teachers may apply for grant funding, however, each applicant is required to have a fiscal agent responsible for receiving and administering the grant funds. If you do not have a fiscal agent who is willing to apply with your coalition, please contact Laura.Dyer@state.mn.us. PELSB may be able to help you find a partner organization.

Q. What if my coalition cannot find a fiscal sponsor before the application due date?

A. If you are unable to find a fiscal sponsor before the application deadline, you may leave this part blank and PELSB will work with you to find a fiscal sponsor.

Q. Are applicants required to find additional funding?

A. Per statute, applicants must seek additional funding and assistance from sources such as school districts, postsecondary institutions, foundations, and the private sector.

Q. Pursuant to Minn. Stat. §122A.70, all school districts that receive a grant "must negotiate additional retention strategies or protection from unrequested leave of absences in the beginning years of employment for teachers of color and teachers who are American Indian." Do these additional strategies and protections need to be negotiated by the time of making an application or receiving a grant?

A. No, a district may state that negotiations are in process or commit they will take place. However, the result of these negotiations should be reported in the year-end grant report.

Q. If we applied for this grant before but didn't receive a grant, can we apply again?

A. Yes, but such applicants are encouraged to strengthen their new application rather than simply resubmit a proposal that was not funded.

Q. If we applied for this grant before and received funding for just some of our proposed activities, should we apply for grant funding of these activities that were not previously funded?

A. Yes, if the proposed activities are allowed by statute.

Q. Do application narratives need to be formatted a specific way (line spacing, font size, etc.)?

A. Proposals must use the application template, but are not required to be formatted in a specific way. However, we would prefer narratives be double-spaced and use 12-point Times New Roman font (or similar).

Q. How strict are the page limits? Do tables of contents and/or appendices count towards the narrative page count?

A. Applicants will not be penalized for exceeding page limits. However, lengthy applications may affect a reviewer's perspective. Tables of contents and/or appendices do not count as part of the narrative page count.

Q. Where can I find the percentage of teachers who are of color or who are Indigenous in my economic development region?

A. These statistics are listed in PELSB's Teacher Supply and Demand Report, located at https://mn.gov/pelsb/board/reports.

Q. How will awards be made?

A. Applications will be reviewed by multiple reviewers serving on an advisory group. The criteria and components to be scored are summarized in a rubric within the RFP. Reviewers may recommend the funding of specific items listed in the program budget. The state reserves the right to offer award amounts that differ from the applicant's request.