

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Alternative Teacher Preparation Grant 2018

### **When is the Technical Assistance Session? Will it be virtual?**

The session will be held Monday, March 19th, 2018 from 11am-12pm

You may come in person, there will be a phone in option and possibly a webinar option.

### **Where will the Technical Assistance Session take place?**

It will happen at the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, 1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350, St. Paul, MN 55108

You can attend in person or via phone conference. We will plan to have a webinar option available if technology allows.

### **Are public institutions of higher education eligible for this program?**

This grant is for alternative teacher preparation programs under the definition below that are one of those eligible entities. The understanding is this does not include public institutions of higher education. It does not mean however that one of those eligible entities could not work with an institution of higher education, but the eligible entity must be the one applying and the one to be the provider or operator of the program.

"Alternative teacher preparation program" means an alternative teacher preparation program under section 122A.245, subdivision 2, or an experimental teacher preparation program under section 122A.09, subdivision 10.

Eligible entities are a school district, charter school, or nonprofit corporation organized under chapter 317A or under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for an education-related purpose that has been operating continuously for at least three years in Minnesota or any other state.

### **These grants are not available for traditional teacher education programs, even if they include elements such as *grow your own* partnerships, correct?**

This grant is for alternative teacher preparation programs under the definition below that are one of those eligible entities. "Grow Your Own" would work if the district that is leading the program applies for the grant money to be the provider or operator of the program.

"Alternative teacher preparation program" means an alternative teacher preparation program under section 122A.245, subdivision 2, or an experimental teacher preparation program under section 122A.09, subdivision 10.

Eligible entities are a school district, charter school, or nonprofit corporation organized under chapter 317A or under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for an education-related purpose that has been operating continuously for at least three years in Minnesota or any other state.

**Are the categories for how grant funds can be used weighted in any particular order?**

Not necessarily. The intent of the program is to get more alternative teacher programs allowing for alternative pathways of becoming a teacher, so it is encouraged, but not required that the applicant is seeking initial unit approval.

If applying for funds to support either (2) expansion of alternative teacher preparation programs by expanding program approval to other licensure areas identified as shortage areas by the commissioner of education; or funding to (3) recruit, select, and train teachers who reflect the racial or ethnic diversity of students in Minnesota, neither in combination with using the funds to establish unit approval, it must be clearly articulated how you plan to establish initial unit approval to become an alternative teacher preparation program.

**What if the applicant is partnering with an entity that is the one seeking unit approval?**

If the applicant is seeking the grant funds for something other than establishing initial unit approval, but has a partnership with an entity/program that is working towards unit approval, the workings of the partnership need to be clearly articulated in the grant proposal along with documents from the partnering entity/program stating their role.

**Is the grant funds available to non-Minnesota based organizations?**

Yes, but it must be a nonprofit corporation organized under chapter 317A or under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for an education-related purpose that has been operating continuously for at least three years in Minnesota or any other state, that is working to fill Minnesota's teacher shortage areas.

Priority will be given to applicants based in Minnesota when awarding grants.

**Do the appendices count as a part of the 10 page, page limit?**

No, these are considered supplemental documents.

**What is [PELSB] going to be reviewing when someone is trying to establish initial unit approval to become an alternative teacher preparation program?**

This grant program does not provide unit approval and those questions are best directed to the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB)

According to the board director, they will be looking for evidence of meeting standards in Minnesota Administrative Rules [8705.1000](#) or a reasonable request to waive a rule that does not apply to the specific alternative pathway.

**What will the payment schedule be for selected grantees?**

The Office will work with each grantee to determine the most appropriate payment schedule.

**If we hand deliver our application will we receive a receipt of delivery?**

Yes, this can be provided upon request.

**Our program has been approved by the MN Board of Teaching (now PELSB) as a "nonconventional teaching licensure program." Is that considered an "alternative teacher preparation program"?**

"Eligible" entities can access grant funds for programs they lead.

The nonconventional program approved by BOT/PELSB is not an alternative pathway. The best way to look at the difference is:

Conventional: IHE-based programs, both traditional and innovative that meet all board rules  
Nonconventional: IHE-based innovative programs that need a waiver from board rules  
Alternative: non-IHE based teacher preparation program (district, coop, non-profit, etc.)

The designation is given to the entity that is the *recommending body*. Partnerships between IHE and non-IHE organizations have so far in Minnesota fallen on the IHE to be the recommending body because they already have that approval. This Alt Prep grant funds are meant, I believe, to increase the non-IHE recommending entities.

**What are the designated shortage areas?**

(1) Licensure fields and economic development regions reported by the commissioner of education 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.

Designated teacher shortage areas are identified by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) on an annual basis. Teacher shortage areas can be a statewide teacher license field, an economic development region within the state or a teacher license field within an economic development region. All teacher shortage areas are identified by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). As of last spring based on shortages in the 2016-17 academic year the teacher shortage areas identified by MDE can be found on the OHE website.

**What would be a way to “Provide documentation that certifies the applicant is eligible to receive these grant funds by working to fill Minnesota's teacher shortage areas; and is a school district, charter school, or nonprofit corporation organized under chapter 317A or under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for an education-related purpose that has been operating continuously for at least three years in Minnesota or any other state”**

For the first part a signed letter saying you are committed to filling MN teacher shortage areas by way of the grant and in that same letter you can just state your school district and ISD #. As we move along in the granting process we will do more to verify, but for the application that should suffice for “certification”.

**Does the indirect cost line need a narrative/justification?**

We are not asking for a narrative, but the reviewers may ask and should you be selected as a grantee our agency will need to know what they are.

**It seems to suggest that a representative of the “governing body of the applicant” should sign the grant application. Who is that, exactly? Should it be our Executive Director, or someone on the board?**

This can be an Executive Director or someone of similar stature in the organization.

**Can you speak more on how to identify a shortage?**

If you say you are going to fill the shortage of licensures within an economic development region, or, a shortage of licensed teachers who reflect the racial or ethnic diversity of students in economic development regions, you have to provide proof that there is a shortage. This information won't be on the supply and demand report. You can use the MN Dept. of Education (MDE) report, and teacher/student racial ratios in a region. You can use cross data from MDE and PELSB. You use the second option for shortages when you don't have any shortages in the licensure area.

**When we approach people for the *Letters of Commitment* what are we asking them to write on our behalf? Are we asking them to write on if we have the capacity to run the program?**

The *Letter of Commitment* will be different based on what you plan to do with the grant funds. If you are a district we want to know that you have the capacity to follow through. If you are doing recruitment the letter would be different. The letter should serve as the supporting document for OHE and the reviewer's purposes. The more information provided the better. If you have partnerships It's good to know if partners are on board and that you have the backing support for continued work for the funds you will receive.

**On page 6 it has information on the unit of approval & grant. There are separate processes for both of those things. How much should you talk about the unit of approval and the grant?**

There are no alternative teacher prep providers in Minnesota. Provider is the entity that is providing the licensure program, and program is the licensure program. We currently have no alternative teacher providers in Minnesota, no units. In statutory language the alternative program/pathway is now defined as not based in IHE. The recommending body who tells the state the program is ready for licensure need not be an IHE. That's an alternative pathway. Everything else that is ending with an IHE is a non-conventional or conventional program. On page 6, in order to do 2 or 3 you have to do one. Also, if you are just applying for 2, 3, or 4 or matching state funds and not the initial unit approval we just need you to explain its happening even though you are not using these funds for it. We understand providers are further along in the process than others and may not need funding for the initial unit of approval, we just need to know it is happening. Clearly state it. We know there are partnerships with some providers seeking units of approval and some organizations are going to be doing other pieces for that provider, clearly state that for the reviewers.

**\$200,000 is not a lot to start an alternative teacher program while you are also doing all this other work. Can the funds be used for planning? Or, do you have to show you can do 1 + 2, 3 and 4?**

If you want it for planning, explain how you will move beyond planning. Or, show how you will secure additional funding. Explain what is going to happen after the plan. The reason there is a cap because we want to give others opportunity to secure funding. We are pushing to make this more than just one-time funding at the legislature.

**If a program/provider is approved for funding, would they be approved for the full amount or less than the requested amount?**

It is up to the reviewers on funding a specific amount or level. They can have follow-up questions for the applicant, and request the applicant provide answers within a given timeframe. Funding can be made on contingencies.

**How many people will be on the review team?**

It depends on how many applications we receive. We will make a determination on what is appropriate based on the number of "Intent to Submit" documents we receive. We have gotten two so far.

**Is the request for vitae for personnel for if we plan on applying to be a provider, and who would cover that work? Will something more detail be needed down the road, if we would ultimately be a provider, and who does that work?**

Depends on what you are proposing. If you are proposing to be a provider than we would want the vitae.

**Is it preferred that applications come from organizations in Minnesota versus from another state?**

The process is the same, but Minnesota based programs will get priority for funding.