

**Question and Answers from the January MassGrad Webinars Facilitated by the
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

Updated January 28, 2011

1. *Should implementation grant applicants focus on one research-based area or is it ok to pursue a strategy that touches multiple menu options?*

A: Implementation grant applicants may focus on at least one, and up to three, of the research-based strategies listed (there are seven strategy options, information about these are provided within the [RFP Background Packet](#)).
2. *Can we do work with 8th graders in our district who are at-risk and will be coming to an eligible high school?*

A: Yes, the activities included in a planning or an implementation grant may target students that are in 8th grade and that are expected to enroll in an eligible high school.
3. *How one would develop an application for both a planning and an implementation grant?*

A: Activities included in an implementation grant should focus on those programs, services, and supports that the eligible school is ready to begin implementing between April 1, 2011 and September 30, 2011. Activities included in a planning grant should focus on things such as a program evaluation, needs assessment, thorough planning process, and action research.
4. *Can we apply for a planning grant for a program that will be included in Year 2 of our implementation grant, in addition to other initiatives that will begin in Year 1?*

A: The planning and implementation grants are separate competitions, and the implementation grant should not rely on receiving a planning grant award (i.e., avoid saying in an implementation grant: “if we receiving the planning grant we will also be able to implement...”). However, you should say what you plan to eventually implement within your planning grant proposal.
5. *We need to do the planning first to gather the data, but should we also apply for the implementation grant?*

A: Activities that you feel require more planning (including the gathering of data, needs assessment, etc.) should be included in a planning grant. If there are activities that you feel ready to begin implementing without additional planning, than these may be included in an implementation grant.
6. *Year 1 is April 1, 2011 to September of 2011 - is this correct? Is there possibility of carryover of some of these funds?*

A: Yes, Year 1 is expected to be a six-month time period: April 1, 2011 to September 30, 2011. We expect that grant recipients of all three grants (implementation, planning, and Gateway to College) will be able to carryover funds between years. However, it is expected that implementation grant and planning grant recipients will spend the majority of funds during the Year 1 period.

7. *Can the Project Coordinator be named by the district or does it need to be posted?*

A: The Project Coordinator and other staff involved with the MassGrad grants may be assigned or hired according to the local agreed-upon rules and human resources practices. The Project Coordinator may be an appropriate existing staff member.

8. *Will there be an email notification if the implementation grant is available again in the summer?*

A: Yes, if additional implementation grant funds (and/or planning grant funds) are available, an email notification will be sent to all 133 eligible high schools (MassGrad School Cohort) in the early summer. A second round of implementation and/or planning grant awards is only possible if some funding is available after the awards are made this March.

9. *Is there a link to the actual RFP available?*

A: Yes, the RFP submission requirements for each of the three grant programs (implementation, planning, and Gateway to College) are available on our website here: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/dropout/reduction.html>
Please keep in mind that the RFP packets will not be posted on the Department's regular grants management page because of the unique plans to distribute funds through a partner organization (more details about this will be provided to grant recipients).

10. *Are there any tips for additional data you would like to see in the implementation grant RFP?*

A: Data included in the needs and assets section of the implementation grant application should focus on data that provides the reader a deep understanding of the needs, strengths, and characteristics of the students that you intend to support through the grant. Please do not repeat information that easily accessible on the Department's website (general dropout rates, graduation rates, etc.).

11. *Can you explain the matching funds section of budget?*

A: For both the planning and implementation grant competitions, we are asking applicants to describe how other resources (e.g., from the local budget, other state or federal grants or funding sources, in-kind services from community partners) will be used to support the project's activities. This match can be in-kind and/or an actual cash expenditure. The match does not need to equal 100 percent but should demonstrate that there is a substantial commitment to this project in the school and district.

12. *As a first time grant applicant – I want to get it right. What are key areas to focus on?*

A: Please remember to answer each individual question and component of the "Required Project Information" document for the planning and/or implementation grant. The grant reviewers will be scoring each item separately,

as well providing the quality and cohesiveness of your total application an overall “bonus” score. In the “Required Project Information” documents the total points available are indicated for each section. The detailed scoring rubric that the reviewers will be using will be posted here:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/dropout/reduction.html> in the near future.

13. *Can individual schools in a district submit their own Implementation, Planning, and/or Gateway applications, or do these need to also be coordinated and submitted by the district?*

A: To ensure that there is buy-in from the district level, we are requesting that all grant applications be submitted by the district on behalf of the eligible school(s). The district application is required for the Implementation Grant, and strongly encouraged for the Planning Grant. The Gateway to College Supplementary Form does not need to be submitted by the district, but the district will need to be involved in the remaining steps in the Gateway to College application process.

14. *How many schools intend to apply and how many grants do you expect to award?*

A: A total of 37 districts submitted the optional intent to apply online form in December, and some of these districts represent multiple high schools. Not all of the districts will be submitting both an Implementation Grant and Planning Grant. We expect to award Implementation Grants to *approximately* 30 high schools, and Planning Grants to *approximately* 15 high schools. These numbers are rough estimates, and will ultimately be determined by how many grant proposals are submitted for each category, the amounts of the submitted grant proposals, and the quality of the proposals.

The Gateway to College grant program will fund three new program locations, and we expect up to 10 communities to apply.

15. *Is there a possibility that all three Gateway sites might be selected from the first round of applications submitted in December?*

A: No, we expect to select no more than one site in the first round (to begin student enrollment in fall 2011). The second round (beginning with submission of the [Gateway to College Supplementary form](#) by February 18th) will fund up to two sites to begin student enrollment in fall 2012. Submitting the Gateway to College Supplementary form does not commit a community to participating in the full application process; it is similar to a letter of interest in the application process.

16. *What does the Gateway to College award consists of – is it a monetary amount and/or membership in the Gateway community, and what else?*

A: The Gateway to College award is a \$300,000 grant to be spent over a period of three years. With the acceptance of the grant award, the community must also commit to working with the Department and our technical assistance partners, the Gateway to College National Network to receive training and ongoing support. This includes participating in a network and learning community of

programs from across the country! Details about what this involves will be provided after February 18th.

17. Are there any restrictions on the formatting of our grant application (e.g., page length, adding attachments)?

A: Within the Implementation Grant and Planning Grant “Required Project Information” documents there are suggested page lengths for each section. We strongly encourage applicants to stay within these page lengths when possible. The narrative should be single-spaced, a minimum of a 10 point font, and one-inch margins. Please keep any attachments to ***only*** those that directly explain or support the content of the application – such as a letter of commitment from a community partner.

18. If we have questions in the process of writing the grant, who do we contact?

A: Please contact Jenny Curtin via email at jcurtin@doe.mass.edu. Completed grant proposals should also be submitted to jcurtin@doe.mass.edu