**TARGETED ASSISTANCE GRANT (TAG) NARRATIVE**

1. **Background and Overview:** Districts with one or more schools identified under the Massachusetts District and School Accountability System for focused/targeted and broad/comprehensive support are eligible for this grant opportunity.[[1]](#footnote-1) These are the Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG) categories within which schools are eligible: Planning Grants, Implementation Grants, and Subgroup Performance Only Grants[[2]](#footnote-2). More explanation on the categories is on page 2.

The grant-funded activities that districts and schools engage in are expected to fall into two broad categories:

1. Planning and Pre-Implementation activities
2. Activities supporting the implementation of sustainable improvement plans (formerly referred to as Turnaround Plans)
3. **Guidance and Resources:** Detailed guidance to support schools in all phases of planning and implementation can be found in the Massachusetts [Sustainable Improvement Planning Guidance](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/guidance.html). Districts can also refer to the ***Fund Use Recommendations for the Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG)*** in the *Additional Information* section of the TAG RFP for research-based suggestions for using funds for planning and implementation activities.
4. **An Important Note about Evidence-Based Interventions:** In order to meet both state and federal requirements, schools with sustainable improvement plans are expected to incorporate *at least one* strategy backed by evidence that meets the criteria from one of the [*top three evidence tiers* as defined by ESSA](https://ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/guidanceuseseinvestment.pdf)**.**

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s (DESE) [“How Do We Know Initiative”](http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/howdoweknow/) resources can help support districts’ efforts in meeting this funding requirement. Schools requesting funds for developing sustainable improvement plans should also consult these pages as they select evidence-based interventions to help them achieve their sustainable improvement goals. If you require further support in this area, please contact Kendra Winner at kwinner@doe.mass.edu.

1. **Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG) Categories[[3]](#footnote-3)**
2. **Planning:** Planning grants ranging between $20,000-$30,000 will be awarded to districts to support schools that will engage in the sustainable improvement planning (formerly turnaround planning) process in SY19-20. Schools in the 6th-10th percentiles are eligible for up to $20,000 and schools in the 1st-5th percentiles are eligible for up to $30,000. Funding may be used to support activities related to the development of a sustainable improvement plan to be implemented in the 2020-2021 school year. Districts may apply for multiple, eligible schools in the planning category. Final sustainable improvement plans for each school must be submitted to DESE upon completion in spring 2020 by a date to be determined by the Department. Go [here](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/guidance.html) for guidance on sustainable improvement plans. Schools engaging in Planning grants can select one of two vendors (American Institutes for Research (AIR) or SchoolWorks) to conduct a Targeted Site Visit (TSV). DESE will contract directly with the selected vendor using grant funding separate from TAG. Please read carefully the ***MSV/TSV FAQ document*** in the RFP posting for more information and instructions relative to the TSV process.

1. **Implementation:** Funds ranging between $30,000-$50,000 to support the Implementation phase will be awarded to districts to support and enhance the implementation of sustainable improvement plan(s) currently in place, and on file at DESE, in eligible school(s). Schools in the 6th-10th percentiles are eligible for up to $30,000 and schools in the 1st-5th percentiles are eligible for up to $50,000. Activities listed in the chart below are expected to align with strategies as outlined in the sustainable improvement plan. Please be sure to include the page number(s) in the sustainable improvement plan(s) that contains the challenge, strategy, or priority area to be enhanced with grant funding. The chart below should include each school the district is serving. Schools engaging in Implementation grants can select one of two vendors (American Institutes for Research (AIR) or SchoolWorks) to conduct a Targeted Site Visit. DESE will contract directly with the selected vendor using grant funding separate from TAG. Please read carefully the ***MSV/TSV FAQ document*** in the RFP posting for more information and instructions relative to the TSV process.
2. **Subgroup Performance Only, Planning and Implementing:** Schools above the lowest 10th percentiles with low-performing subgroups can use up to $10,000 on planning activities aligned to the [sustainable improvement planning guidance](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/guidance.html) focusing on identifying subgroups. with conducting a needs assessment and probing for root cause of low performance in identified subgroups and developing and implementing strategies to improve outcomes for students in identified subgroups. The final plan should be approved and monitored by the district as per federal ESSA requirements. Final sustainable improvement plans for each school must be submitted to DESE upon completion in spring 2020 by a date to be determined by the Department. Go [here](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/guidance.html) for guidance on sustainable improvement planning. Schools in this category will not receive a site visit as part of this grant opportunity.

Schools that have already completed a sustainable improvement plan that is on file with DESE can use up to $20,000 to support the implementation phase of sustained improvement plan(s) currently in place in eligible school(s). Activities and strategies listed in the chart below are expected to align with challenges, strategies, and/or priority areas for improvement as outlined in the sustainable improvement plan. Please be sure to include the page number(s) in the sustainable improvement plan(s) that contains the challenge, strategy, or priority area to be enhanced with grant funding. The chart should include each school the district is serving. Schools in this category will not receive a site visit as part of this grant opportunity.

1. **Targeted Assistance Grant Narrative:** Once a district determines how grant funds will be utilized in its eligible school(s), it can complete the grant narrative.
* The ***Targeted Assistance Grant Narrative*** is required and must be submitted in EdGrants as part of a complete application.
* Districts will submit one grant narrative, regardless of how many schools will receive funding.
* The *Summary* and *Grant-Funded Activities* tables must both be filled in completely in order to be considered for funding.
* Once complete, save with the file name *FY20 TAG Application [Name of district]* and upload it as an attachment in EdGrants.

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**Summary Table**

*In the table below, please indicate the name of the district the total amount of funds being requested. List each school that will be receiving Targeted Assistance Grant funds, indicate the grades each school serves, and note the TAG grant category. If necessary, rows may be added to this table.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **District** | ***(insert name of district here)*** |
| **Total Funds Requested:** | $ |
| **School** | **Grades Served** | **Grant Category** *(i.e., Planning, Implementation, Subgroup Planning, Subgroup Implementation, or Acceleration Academies)1* |
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1 Districts should identify one grant category for each school. The exception is some schools receiving Acceleration Academy funding could also receive TAG funding. This is only applicable to schools in Chelsea and New Bedford.

**Targeted Assistance Grant: Funded Activities/Strategies**

In the table below please list each activity/strategy TAG funds (and Acceleration Academies, if applicable) will support. If necessary, rows may be added to this table.

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| --- | --- |
| **District** | ***(insert name of district here)*** |
| Activity/Strategy1 | What page number in the plan is the activity listed? (implementation grants only) | Description: Provide a **brief** explanation for how the activity/strategy supports and/or enhances the development or implementation of the sustainable improvement plan (***one paragraph maximum per activity***). | List schools engaged in this activity/strategy2 | Activity/strategy Cost3 |
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1Districts may budget funds to support district activities/strategies that directly support multiple schools. Please flag these as district-level activities in the Activity/Strategy column and indicate the schools to which it is providing supports in the *Schools engaged in this Activity/Strategy* column.

2Additional information required for districts requesting funds for implementation activities: In the **List schools engaged in this activity/strategy** column, next to the name of each school, please reference the page number(s) indicating where this strategy appears in its sustainable improvement plan.

3District Indirect Costs should be considered when estimating final costs. See “Indirect Cost” tab in Budget Workbook.

1. A complete list of eligible districts, district grant allocations by funding source, and schools eligible to use TAG funds appears in the ***Targeted Assistance Grants: District Allotments*** document attached in the *Additional Information* section of the TAG RFP. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For the 2019-2020 school year there will not be a new School Redesign Cohort identified. Those eligible for SRG renewal funding will continue to receive their allocation. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Fund use must be consistent with applicable state and/or federal requirements. Cost calculations should reflect realistic estimates, with all final costs uploaded into EdGrants. All expenditures will be closely reviewed as they relate to the priorities of this grant opportunity and align directly with proposed sustainable improvement implementation and/or planning activities aligned to evidence-based turnaround practices. Funding will only be approved after programmatic and budgetary reviews by Department staff and upon review by the Office of the Governor. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)