



Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906

Telephone: (781) 338-3000
TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

November 16, 2018

Dear District Leader,

The DESE Turnaround Assistance Grant (TAG) is posted online, and the funding opportunities are available in EdGrants now. **The submission deadline is Wednesday, December 5, 2018 at 5:00 pm.**

The districts eligible for this grant have schools identified under the state's new accountability system as performing in the 1st-10th percentile and requiring Broad/Comprehensive or Focused/Targeted support. This grant replaces our previous DSAC and Strategic Support grants and differs substantially from the previous grant programs.

The **TAG Request for Proposal** is at the following link: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2019/222-325/>. In EdGrants, the *Funding Opportunity Names* are as follows:

- ESE - FY19 Fund Code 222 - Turnaround Assistance Grant (State) ONC
- ESE - FY19 Fund Code 325 - Turnaround Assistance Grant (Federal) ONC

The purpose of this non-competitive grant program is to support the **development and implementation of turnaround plans** in the state's lowest performing schools and districts. TAG will fund activities aligned with conducting a needs assessment and probing for root causes of low performance as well as developing and implementing strategies to improve outcomes for students.

As a reminder, please note that ALL schools that are funded for planning under this grant are required to submit the final turnaround plan to DESE. DESE will monitor directly the implementation of turnaround plans for schools in the 1st-5th percentile, whereas districts are responsible for the turnaround plan implementation monitoring for their schools in the 6th-10th percentile, per federal ESSA requirements. Districts that already have a turnaround plan will be required to submit their plan as part of their TAG application.

TAG funding amounts were determined on a per school basis based on percentile ranking of each eligible school and its category. Individual school allotments fall into four grant categories: Planning grants, Implementation grants, School Redesign Grant Planning grants, and Subgroup Performance Only grants. Although districts will determine funds distribution to their eligible schools, amounts were calculated based on the belief that implementation costs are greater than planning costs, and schools in the lowest 5 percentiles need greater funding than those in the 6-10th percentiles.

Planning grants for schools in percentiles 1-5 are calculated at \$30,000 and for schools in percentiles 6-10 at \$25,000. Implementation grants for schools in percentiles 1-5 are calculated at \$45,000 and for schools in percentiles 6-10 at \$40,000. Schools that are eligible for the SRG have planning grants calculated in the amount of \$35,000. Districts planning only for subgroups will receive \$10,000.

Schools engaged in planning or implementation under this grant program will be afforded a **Turnaround Site Visit (TSV)** by one of two state-approved vendors – SchoolWorks or American Institutes for Research (A.I.R.). Unlike past practice, all TSVs through this grant program will be contracted with directly by DESE on each district’s behalf, so your district will receive the service without needing to pay the site visit provider. Please email us your choice of TSV provider as soon as possible at SSoS1@doe.mass.edu, so that we can arrange for these visits.

The TAG is designed to coordinate with the **School Redesign Grant (SRG)**, which will be posted in the spring. TAG eligible districts, with Title I schools in the 1st-3rd percentiles and without an existing turnaround plan, will be eligible to select ONE of those schools to apply for this **3-year competitive federally funded grant**, with submission anticipated in mid-April. Only Title I schools are eligible for SRG funding. If the school is not currently Title I, then the district will need to ensure the school is Title I by the start of the 2019-20 school year to be eligible to receive federal competitive funding through the SRG.

TAG funding to districts that plan to apply for the SRG will be provided for turnaround planning and early implementation, with SRG funding to be awarded to schools for the 2019-20 School Year. Schools opting to engage in SRG planning through the TAG will receive a full two-day Monitoring Site Visit by A.I.R. instead of a TSV, contracted directly with DESE on the district’s behalf. Districts that are eligible for the competitive SRG grant will use their **turnaround plan created under TAG funding as part of the SRG application**. The SRG application process will include both written and interview elements. Information about the SRG can be found on DESE’s website at the following link:
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/redesign/>.

We ask that you use the DESE Turnaround Template and Guidance, as it is aligned to all federal and state requirements. The new Turnaround Plan Template, as well as additional resources to support the creation, implementation, and monitoring of Turnaround Plans, are available at this link:
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/guidance.html>.

Your Statewide System of Support Regional Assistance team is prepared to discuss your district’s TAG options, assist toward the development of your grant proposal, and support the planning process. They will be in contact in the coming weeks to discuss your needs and to create a support plan. The Directors for the Coastal Region are Mary Ann Jackman (maryann.jackman@ssosma.org) and Susan Berglund (sberglund@doe.mass.edu). The Directors for the West/Central Region are Donna Harlan (donna.harlan@ssosma.org) and Joan Tuttle (jtuttle@doe.mass.edu).

We're looking forward to describing the requirements and expectations of this opportunity in more detail and answering your questions during the TAG informational webinar on Monday, November 19 at 4:00 pm.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ventura Rodriguez, Jr.', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ventura Rodriguez, Jr. Ed.L.D.
Senior Associate Commissioner
Statewide System of Support and Strategic Initiatives