RTAP Planning Grant Walkthrough #1

0:00
Good afternoon and welcome everyone.

0:03
Thank you for joining us today.

0:05
Today's session is a brief walkthrough of the RTAP GEMS Planning Grant.

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This grant is for districts and partners that are not yet implementing an RTAP and want time to explore program design, partnerships and readiness.

0:19
Let's get started.

0:21
Here's a quick overview of what we will cover today.

0:25
We will start with the purpose of the GEMS Planning Grant and why this planning year exists.

0:30
Then I will give a brief overview of our TAP and what districts should expect during a planning year.

0:36
From there, I will walk through the application sections and GEMS, followed by guidance on the budget and appropriate uses of funds.

0:43
We will wrap up with the timeline and submission tips.

0:48
Our goal is to keep this practical and clear, so you leave knowing what is expected and what comes next.

0:55
Now that we have gone through the agenda, I want to take a moment to do brief introductions.

1:00
My name is Lakia Bayman and I serve as the Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program Coordinator here at DESI.

1:06

I oversee the development and support of our TAPS across the Commonwealth and work closely with districts at Prep providers and partners throughout both the planning and implementation phases.

1:18
I am also joined today by my colleague Claire Abbott.

1:21
Claire is the Director of Educator Effectiveness at DESI and overseas state policy and resources related to Ed preparation, licensure, supervision and evaluation, induction and mentoring, and professional learning.

1:36
We are also joined by Aaron Dunn who serves as a strategic initiative specialist supporting the RTAP initiative here at DESI.

1:44
We are glad to be here with you today and look forward to walking you through the planning grant and answering questions.

1:52
This slide gives a high level overview of RTAP and what the planning year is meant to do.

1:58
RTAP is an initial licensure pathway.

2:01
It allows aspiring teachers to earn their license while working in a classroom as paid employees.

2:07
The model combines job embedded learning with coursework and mentoring so apprentices are learning on the job while being supported by experienced educators and Ed prep providers.

2:18
RTAP is designed to help address ongoing teacher shortages and to diversify the educator workforce in a way that is intentional and sustainable.

2:28
The main point here is the planning year.

2:31
The planning year is not about launching a program.

2:34
It is focused on program design, readiness and partnership development, so districts are set up for strong implementation later.

2:43
The planning grant exists to help districts design a strong RTAP before launching.

2:48
It provides time and resources for needs assessments, planning and partnership development across districts, unions and Ed Prep providers.

2:57
The planning year also positions districts to submit a full RTAP application in a future cycle once they are ready.

3:06
The planning grant is for district schools and collaboratives that are not currently implementing an RTAP and need time to assess readiness, design a program, and build partnerships.

3:16
It is not intended for districts that already have an RTAP in place.

3:20
Cohort One districts that are planning to add a licensure area should plan to use their RTAP Implementation Grant budget for that work.

3:29
The goal here is to make sure our districts pursue the right funding at the right stage.

3:35
Now I will walk through the Gyms application components section by section and highlight what we are looking for in each part.

3:43
This section asks districts to clearly describe their staffing challenges and any high need licensure areas.

3:50
Use available data such as vacancies, turnover, or licensure shortages to support your explanation.

3:57
This does not need to be overly detailed, but it should be specific and grounded in your local context.

4:03
Applicants should also explain how these staffing challenges affect students, schools, and the broader community.

4:10
Finally, this is where you explain why RTAP makes sense as a strategy for your district.

4:16
We are looking for a clear rationale, not a finalized program design.

4:23
Section 2.

4:24
This section focuses on licensure areas.

4:27
Applicants should identify one to three licensure areas they are considering and explain why those areas are priorities for their district.

4:36
DESI has identified 4 statewide priority areas, ESAU Special education, secondary STEM, and early childhood.

4:45
Districts should also describe potential candidate pools such as paraprofessionals or other staff who may be interested in pursuing licensure.

4:53
Licensure selections during the planning year are exploratory, and districts are not expected to finalize these decisions at this stage.

5:03
Section 3.

5:05
This section focuses on who is involved in planning and how decisions are made.

5:10
Applicants should identify the district leaders and staff who will participate in the planning process and describe how unions, school committees, and boards are being engaged.

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Districts should also explain how mentors or journey workers and potential apprentices will have a voice during the planning process.

5:28
The emphasis here is on collaboration and shared decision making, not on having everything finalized.

5:35
Section 4.

5:37
This section is about how districts will use the planning year.

5:41
Applicants should outline the primary planning activities they expect to complete, such as needs assessment, workforce analysis, and program and supervision design.

5:51
This is also where districts describe partnership development, including drafting MO us with unions and educator preparation providers.

5:59
Finally, districts should identify milestones that explain how they will track progress and deliverables throughout the planning year.

6:08
Section 5.

6:10
This section focuses on equity and access.

6:14
Applicants should explain how equity is centered in planning decisions and identify potential barriers such as cost, scheduling, or transportation.

6:23
Districts should also describe how tools like the Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices and DESI model evaluation rubrics will inform program design.

6:33
Finally, this section asks districts to outline strategies to support apprentices and foster a sense of belonging.

6:42
Section 6.

6:44
This section covers how planning funds may be used.

6:48
Allowable uses include staff time, facilitation, partnership, coordination and design work related to supervision and program structure.

6:58
Funds may also support application development and sustainability planning for a future RTAP application.

7:05
Section 7.

7:07
This section asks districts to look ahead.

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Applicants should describe how RTAP could fit into their long term workforce strategy and identify potential funding sources or district structures that could support the program over time.

7:22
Districts should also consider the role of Ed Prep providers, labor partners, and possibly community colleges depending on their program design.

7:31
The sustainability vision should be high level and forward-looking.

7:35
Detailed implementation budgets or finalized plans are not expected at this stage.

7:42
Now I will talk about the timeline and logistics related to the GEMS application process.

7:48
The planning year takes place during the 2627 school year and is focused on design and readiness, not launching apprentices.

7:57
Districts that choose to move forward would submit a full RTAP application in spring of 2027 after they've completed the planning year.

8:06
Implementation would only occur after the full application is approved by DESI.

8:13
Awards are up to 25,000 per Lea or coalition.

8:17
The application opens in February and is due on March 20th.

8:22
Dessie will review applications within 30 days of submission.

8:26
The grant.

8:27
Will run from July 1st of 2026 through June 30th of 2027.

8:33
Applications are submitted through GEMS and submissions are considered complete only after Superintendent approval.

8:40
To produce a strong application, be clear, specific, and realistic in your responses.

8:46
Focus on readiness and planning rather than finalize decisions.

8:49
Use relevant district data to support your narrative and ground your responses in your local contexts and needs.

8:56
These applications are strongest when they are honest, well aligned, and clearly tied to district priorities.

9:03
For more information, you can visit the RTAP web page for program details, resources, and updates as they become available.

9:10
If you have any questions or need follow up support, you can reach us at the e-mail address listed here.

9:16
We will continue to post updates and materials on the web page, so please check back as you move through the planning process.

9:23
We encourage you to review the application materials and frequently asked questions on the RTAP web page.

9:29
You should also plan ahead for the gym submission deadline and confirm internal roles and approvals early.

9:36
Before we close out, we wanted to highlight some frequently asked questions that come up often.

9:43
Can two or more LEAS apply together?

9:46
Yes, two or more LEAS may apply as a coalition.

9:49
1L EA must serve as the lead applicant and submit the application in GEMS on behalf of the group.

9:55
Can approved special education schools apply?

9:59
The answer is yes.

10:00
Approved special education schools are eligible to apply either independently or as part of a coalition.

10:07
Can cohort 1L EAS apply for the planning grant?

10:10
No, the planning grant is only for LEAS that are not currently implementing in RTAP.

10:17
Can Cohort 1L EAS apply for other RTAP funding?

10:20
Yes, Cohort 1L EAS may apply for the FC-221-I targeted implementation grant.

10:28
Does a planning grant guarantee implementation funding?

10:32
No, receiving a planning grant does not guarantee future implementation funding.

10:37
A separate application is required.

10:41
Thank you so much for your time and attention.

10:43
We hope that you found this webinar informative and we look forward to receiving your applications.

10:48
Thank you again.