

RTAP Planning Grant Walkthrough #1

0:00

Good afternoon and welcome everyone.

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Thank you for joining us today.

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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.

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Let's get started.

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

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

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

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

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We will wrap up with the timeline and submission tips.

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

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

1:00

My name is Lokia Bayman and I serve as the Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program Coordinator here at DESI.

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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.

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I am also joined today by my colleague Claire Abbott.

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

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

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

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

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RTAP is an initial licensure pathway.

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

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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.

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

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The main point here is the planning year.

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The planning year is not about launching a program.

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

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

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

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

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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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Section 2.

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This section focuses on licensure areas.

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

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

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

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

5:03

Section 3.

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

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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.

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

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Section 4.

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

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

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

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

6:08

Section 5.

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This section focuses on equity and access.

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

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

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

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Section 6.

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This section covers how planning funds may be used.

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

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

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Section 7.

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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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Dessie will review applications within 30 days of submission.

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The grant.

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

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

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

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Focus on readiness and planning rather than finalize decisions.

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

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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.

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

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

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

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

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

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Can two or more LEAS apply together?

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

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

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Can approved special education schools apply?

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The answer is yes.

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

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Can cohort 1L EAS apply for the planning grant?

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

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Can Cohort 1L EAS apply for other RTAP funding?

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

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Does a planning grant guarantee implementation funding?

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

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A separate application is required.

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Thank you so much for your time and attention.

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

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Thank you again.