RTAP Planning Grant Webinar 1

0:04
So welcome everyone and thank you for joining us today.

0:07
This webinar is focused on the Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program Planning Grant and is designed to help you understand the RTAP grant timeline, what is expected at each stage, and what next steps you should take.

0:20
We will walk through how the Planning grant fits into the larger multi year RTAP model supporting sustainable design, scalable growth and long term implementation from planning through continuation.

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This session is especially helpful for districts considering applying in the upcoming cycle and are looking for a clearer picture of readiness and expectations.

0:43
We will also share a few lessons that we've learned from the current RTEP districts and leave time at the end for Q&A.

0:50
Again, we are glad that you are here and look forward to the conversation.

1:00
This webinar is designed to be informative and practical.

1:03
Our goal is to give you a clear picture of how RTAP works, how the planning grant fits into the larger RTAP timeline, and what districts should be thinking about as they consider next steps.

1:14
We also want to name that RTAP is a multi year commitment.

1:17
The planning year again is about readiness, partnership building and design, so districts are set up for a strong implementation cycle.

1:26
As we move forward, we will highlight key considerations and opportunities for support along the way.

1:37
My name is Lakia Bayman and I serve as the RTAP Program Coordinator here at DESI.

1:42
I am joined by my colleague Claire Abbott who serves as the Director of Educator Effectiveness and will be Co presenting with me today.

1:50
We are also joined by Aaron Dunn, our strategic initiative specialist, who will be taking notes and managing the Q&A for us throughout the session.

1:58
Please feel free to add your questions as we go.

2:02
Aaron will help to track them and we will address them during the Q&A and even some during the live presentation.

2:13
Here's a quick look at the remainder of our agenda today.

2:17
We will start by grounding us in a shared understanding of what RTAP is and how it functions as a paid work based pathway into the teaching profession.

2:27
We will then discuss why RTAP matters, particularly in its role in diversifying the educated workforce and addressing critical shortages in areas such as special education, ISOL, early childhood and secondary STEM.

2:41
From there, we will walk through the DESI grant program overview, including a brief look at Cohort 1 districts, what the planning year entails for Cohort 2 districts and how the implementation year fits within the broader multi year RTAP model.

2:56
We will close with next steps in AQ and A.

2:59
And then please continue to add your questions throughout as we go because that's going to help inform the discussion that we have at the end.

3:08
So what is RTAP?

3:11
I'm glad you asked.

3:13

Our TAP is directly aligned with Desi's educational vision, specifically Strategic Objective 3, Building a diverse and effective educator workforce.

3:23
This objective emphasizes developing and sustaining a workforce that is diverse, culturally responsive, well prepared, and committed to continuous improvement so that all students have equitable access to effective educators.

3:37
You can see this alignment reflected in our Tap's focus on the full educator pipeline from recruitment to development and retention.

3:46
Our TAP is not only about bringing new educators into the profession, but about supporting them over time through high quality preparation, mentoring, and ongoing professional growth.

3:58
The Planning grant supports districts in intentionally designing programs that strengthen this full pipeline and create the conditions for sustainable, scalable implementation over multiple years.

4:16
This slide brings together the core elements of what makes RTAP work.

4:21
At its core, RTAP is a clear and articulated pathway that allows aspiring educators to become licensed teachers at little to no cost to them while earning a salary at the same time.

4:34
That earn while You learn structure is a major feature of the model.

4:39
On the right of the slide you see what we often describe as the best of both worlds.

4:44
Apprentices are enrolled in a degree or licensure program through an Ed prep provider while simultaneously gaining hands on experience in AK through 12 classroom under the guidance of a trained mentor or journey worker.

4:58
This means apprentices are not learning theory in isolation, they are immediately applying what they are learning in real classrooms with support, feedback and coaching built into the model.

5:09
They are full time employees, but they are not teachers of record.

5:13
This allows space and time for learning and development within a real practical context.

5:19
This structure is what makes RTAP a strong, sustainable and scalable approach for building a diverse and well prepared educator workforce.

5:32
Now that we've talked about what RTAP is, the next question is why does RTAP matter?

5:43
RTAP is intentionally built around 3 core focus areas, Educator diversity, the educator pipeline, and educator quality.

5:53
First, educator diversity.

5:55
RTAP expands access to the teaching profession by creating pathways rooted in local communities.

6:01
It opens doors for individuals who may not have been able to pursue teaching through a more traditional route.

6:07
This helps districts recruit educators who reflect the students and the communities they serve.

6:13
Second, the educator pipeline.

6:16
Our TAP provides A paved job embedded pathway that is intentionally aligned with college coursework.

6:22
Apprentices learn while working.

6:25
This is This reduces financial barriers and allows districts to build again a more sustainable, unsustainable and stable predictable pipeline for future educators.

6:36
Third, educator quality RTAP prioritizes high need areas such as special Ed, ESOL, STEM, and early childhood.

6:45
Even though these are the priority areas, they are not the only areas.

6:49
Apprentices received strong mentorship and hands on support from the start.

6:54
Again building on instructional skill, confidence and long term commitment to the profession.

7:04
Our TAP is guided by 4 core goals.

7:07
First, to diversify the educated workforce.

7:10
Second, to remove financial barriers through Tuition free Earn while You Learn models.

7:16
3rd, to strengthen partnerships between districts and Ed prep providers.

7:20
And finally, to support long term sustainability through braided funding strategies that allow districts to maintain and scale their programs over time.

7:33
Across Massachusetts, students of color make up about 43% of enrollment, while only 10% of teachers identify as educators of color.

7:43
This gap matters.

7:45
Research shows that when students of color have access to teachers who reflect their identities, outcomes improve, including higher graduation and college enrollment rates.

7:55
It also leads to stronger relationships, higher expectations and a greater sense of belong.

8:01
This work is not about replacing existing educators.

8:04
It is about expanding the pipeline so the workforce better reflects the students we serve.

8:10
Our TAP is 1 strategy to help close this gap by removing barriers and again expanding access and creating sustainable pathways into the profession.

8:25
Many districts are facing ongoing staffing shortages.

8:29
Traditional pipelines are not producing enough candidates to meet these needs, which makes it difficult for districts to respond in sustainable ways.

8:37
As a result, districts are seeking preparation models that are local, align to their staffing priorities, and build for the long term.

8:46
Our TAP supports this shift by helping districts grow their own educators and create durable pathways rather than short term solutions.

8:55
This is the district context the planning grant is designed to support.

9:05
As districts navigate these staffing challenges, the impact on students is significant.

9:11
When staffing is unstable, instructional continuity suffers.

9:15
Turnover and unfilled positions disrupt relationships, consistency, and student learning, with disproportionate effects on students with disabilities and multilingual learners who depend on specialized, ongoing supports.

9:29
At the same time, this moment presents an opportunity.

9:34
Our tab helps districts build a workforce that not only reflects the community's strength and sense of belong and trust and engagement, it also is an opportunity for us to invest in the local community and really build a sustainable, strong workforce.

9:54
This slide outlines the priority licensure areas that are a priority in Massachusetts, Special LED Esau Early childhood and secondary STEM.

10:04
These areas reflect where shortages are currently existing in Massachusetts.

10:09

And so the purpose of this program is to really help to close the gap by preparing and providing educators who can take on these roles and make sure that our students get what they need.

10:19
Final licensure selections will be made during the planning year.

10:23
We're encouraging districts to build gradually, really focusing on one licensure area, one priority area, and then gradually building from there.

10:32
Next slide please.

10:38
As districts consider how to build these pathways, it is also important to think about who those pathways are designed to serve.

10:46
Many apprentices begin as paraprofessionals or instructional assistants who already work in schools and have strong relationships with students and staff.

10:55
Others may be career changers or community based staff with valuable skills, deep local ties and an interest in education.

11:03
Our TAP is also designed for individuals who face financial or access barriers to to traditional pathways.

11:12
This is not an exhaustive list.

11:14
The planning year allows districts to think intentionally and creatively about recruitment strategies that align with local context and workforce goals.

11:28
With the district context, workforce needs, and RTAP goals in mind, we will now shift to the DESI grant programs that support this work.

11:37
I will turn it over to my colleague, Claire, who's going to walk us through the grant programs overview and explain how the planning and implementation grants fit within the broader RTAP model.

11:49
Thank you, Lakia, and welcome everybody.

11:51
Thank you so much for joining us.

11:54
I'm going to walk everybody through the 2 grant programs that DESI has established to support the planning and the implementation of registered teacher apprenticeship programs in Massachusetts.

12:05
But before I jump in, I want to provide some important context around the current state of apprenticeships in in the Commonwealth and then discuss how the 2 grant programs will operate to support the growth and the development of these models going forward.

12:22
So here you can see our Cohort 1 RTAP districts across Massachusetts.

12:28
These seven are the inaugural ARTAP districts, which launched this fall, and they represent a range of geographic contexts including urban, suburban, and even an island community.

12:41
So you'll see here Everett, Lowell and Lynn, Salem, Waltham, Randolph and Martha's Vineyard.

12:49
This geographic spread reflects the flexibility of the RTAP model and its ability to respond to different local contexts and workforce needs.

13:00
While these districts differ in size and in setting, they do share some common challenges related to staffing shortages as well as a commitment to building a sustainable local educator pipeline.

13:13
We are learning a lot from our Cohort 1 districts in terms of how to implement and scale registered teacher apprenticeship programs, and this is already directly shaping our current grant design as well as how we will be supporting future cohorts and ongoing state level support.

13:34
Here you can see a high level snapshot of each RTAP district in Cohort 1.

13:40
So rather than walk through what row by row, I want to highlight a few key patterns here.

13:45
First, you should be able to see that the the strong district and educator preparation provider partnerships that anchor each program.

13:55

So Cohort 1 districts are partnering with a range of public universities, private colleges and community colleges to ensure alignment between coursework and classroom practice.

14:08
2nd, the licensure areas reflect high need priorities within each district, particularly moderate disabilities and early childhood, with some districts also including ESL licensure pathways.

14:20
This really reinforces how our TAP is being used strategically to address persistent local shortages at the district level.

14:30
Third, you can see flexibility in pathway design.

14:34
Some districts are implementing A baccalaureate pathway while others are implementing a post baccalaureate route.

14:43
Program length and cohort size also vary reflecting different differences in the district context, capacity and workforce goals.

14:52
So taken together, we just want you to see how our TAP is really not A1 size fits all model, but rather a structured framework that can allow districts to design programs that meet their local needs while maintaining statewide expectations for quality, alignment and sustainability.

15:17
So as I said, we've learned a lot from our Cohort 1 districts and here are just some of the best practices and lessons learned to date from the from these programs, particularly with regard to planning.

15:28
In terms of best practices on the left, here we see districts scheduling frequent check insurance with their Ed prep partners and that allows them to better align coursework and licensure requirements to the on the ground realities of an employment based model such as RTAP.

15:45
Identifying potential journey workers early on and intentionally placing apprentices in school based cohorts have also helped to create stronger support systems within these districts.

15:56
Several districts have also found value in formalizing a designated para apprentice role which clarifies expectations and really protects instructional time for that apprentice.

16:10
On the right you can see some key lessons learned.

16:13
One of the most important has been the value of engaging educator unions early on in the process, who have generally been very supportive but are really essential to the design phase of this of this work.

16:27
Districts also learned the importance of matching the apprenticeship pathway, whether it's a baccalaureate pathway or a post baccalaureate pathway to the needs of their existing paraprofessional workforce.

16:39
And finally, planning intentionally around wrap around supports has emerged as important to apprentice persistence and success.

16:53
So with all of this background and lessons learned in mind, we're going to start walking through the 2 grant programs themselves that are aligned to both the planning and the implementation phases for Strong Registered Teacher Apprenticeship program.

17:09
This slide outlines how the RTAP grant structure works over multiple years, moving from planning into implementation and then scaling.

17:20
So on the left, you see your One, which is the planning phase and is supported by Dessie's Strategic Planning Grant.

17:28
During this year, districts may apply for and receive a Strategic Planning Grant up to $25,000 to conduct a needs assessment, build partnerships with educator preparation providers, design their program model, and even begin mentor and apprenticeship recruitment.

17:47
In the middle, you see Year 2, which is which represents the first year of implementation.

17:51
And at this stage, districts may apply for an implementation grant that supports apprentice employment, mentor training, tuition and coursework, and ongoing supports.

18:03
Funding amounts for implementation years are determined based on the approved program design and the cohort size.

18:09
So those vary a bit more.

18:11
And once you get to Year 3, you're focusing really on continued implementation and scaling.

18:16
And this may include adding apprentices, training additional mentors and sustaining supports as the program grows.

18:25
If you could go back to the prior slide, that would be great, Aaron.

18:29
Oh, no, Am I in the correct slide?

18:31
Thank you, I'm good.

18:33
So both of these grants require applications, submission of a full budget and finalized program design.

18:41
And I do want to_we'll say this a couple times, that participation in the planning grant does not automatically move a district into implementation.

18:49
We'll talk a little bit more about that in a moment.

18:52
But the planning grant is really essential to helping districts build a strong sustainable program and successfully apply for our TAP approval so that they're well positioned when they do apply for implementation funding to receive that money.

19:11
Next slide, please.

19:15
So let's dig into the planning grant itself.

19:18
Here you can see the purpose and the scope of the RTAP planning grant at a high level.

19:24
The purpose of this grant is to support districts and educator preparation providers in designing a high quality registered teacher apprenticeship program.

19:33
This is about building a strong foundation before moving into implementation.

19:39
The focus of the Planning grant is on planning design and readiness, which you'll hear us_frequently.

19:46
It is not intended to support implementation activities.

19:49
The District should really think about this year as almost a time to slow down, ask the right questions around program design, and really design a program that meets their local workforce needs.

20:02
Key activities during the planning year will include conducting a workforce needs assessment, developing program design, formalizing partnerships with Ed Prep programs and unions, and planning for recruitment of mentors and apprentices.

20:16
So this grant is really designed and intended for districts and Epps that are preparing to launch an RTEP and really need the dedicated time and resources to do that work thoughtfully and sustainably.

20:34
When approaching the planning year, we're going to be looking for a plan around stakeholder engagement.

20:42
So you'll really be working with several key stakeholder groups in the design of a strong RTAP model.

20:49
At the center of this work is the AD Prep program and its leadership.

20:54
They will partner closely with districts to align coursework, licensure requirements and program design.

21:02
Equal importment, obviously, is school and district leadership.

21:06
Their role is critical and identifying workforce needs, supporting program logistics, particularly around staffing, and ensuring alignment with district priorities.

21:18
We also strongly encourage early engagement with teachers and union leadership.

21:24
Involving them during the planning year really helps to address role clarity, particularly for apprentices and journey workers, working conditions and expectations before implementation begins.

21:43
So I'm going to shift gears a little bit to eligibility and priority areas for the planning grant.

21:48
So at a high level, the planning grant is intended for districts that are facing documented workforce challenges and are ready to engage in thoughtful program design.

21:58
One factor that we will look at is at the demographic imbalance between students and teachers, particularly where student populations are diversifying at a faster rate than the educator workforce and that educator workforce diversification is not shifting at a similar pace.

22:16
We are also prioritizing districts with clear documented shortage areas, especially in licensure fields that are historically hard to staff.

22:26
And another consideration will be the district's use of high quality instructional materials and alignment to to evidence based instructional practices as our TAP is designed to prepare apprentices for rigorous standards aligned teaching.

22:51
So here are the key activities associated with the planning year.

22:55
The planning work begins with a needs assessment and a data review.

23:00
Districts will look closely at workforce data to identify priority licensure areas and confirm where apprentices will have the greatest impact.

23:10
Partnership development is also a key component of the planning year.

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The districts should be using this time to strengthen collaboration with an educator preparation partner, its union, and other partners to formalize roles and responsibilities.

23:27
From there, districts and Ed prep programs formalize roles and responsibilities and engage in program and clinical design.

23:36
So this includes shaping the apprenticeship model, aligning coursework with clinical practice, and clarifying supervision and mentoring structures.

23:47
In the spring of the planning year, the district will finalize and submit a formal application to the state to receive authorization to operate a registered teacher apprenticeship program.

23:59
This application will actually double as the implementation grant application as it will outline the proposed model, pathway and scale of the RTAP itself.

24:12
So we're combining those two.

24:14
The formal application to receive approval to run in our TAP in your district as well as the implementation grant application.

24:23
Upon approval of those districts may begin recruiting and selecting both apprentices and mentors with attention to equity, access and long term workforce needs.

24:35
And finally, planning grants may support administrative coordination of this entire process, including hiring a designated program coordinator to manage the work and to keep the planning process moving forward.

25:00
So here is what you can expect during the planning year relative to Dessie's collaboration.

25:06
We've learned a lot about how districts benefit from supports from Dessie and so we really do focus on finalize on ongoing DESI check insurance and coaching with district grantees as well as helping to support to prepare them for transitioning from that planning year to the implementation year.

25:30
We will also be providing every district with a dedicated DESI program liaison and guidance on reporting and complying with the state requirements for a registered teacher apprenticeship.

25:43
So you really can expect some direct support from DESI both during the planning year and beyond.

25:53
Next slide, please.

25:59
So this is probably what you're all waiting to hear from on the timing of the planning grant.

26:04
So the RFP will be posted this month and we hope that will give districts and their Ed prep partners time to review the expectations and prepare strong proposals.

26:15
Once awarded, the planning grant will run the full fiscal year from July 1st, 2020 sixth through June 30th of 2027.

26:25
And I should have noted applications for the grant will be due on March 20th of 2020.

26:30
Sixth, by the end of the planning year, district should have a fully designed approved RTAP and be prepared to implement in the following school year.

26:41
Throughout this planning year, the EPP partners will play a critical role.

26:45
They will work closely alongside the district to Co design coursework, alignment, supervision structures and licensure pathways so that the program is academically sound and licensure ready from day one.

26:58
This timing is really critical and intentional.

27:01
It creates space for thoughtful design, strong partnership development and a smooth transition from planning into implementation.

27:14
At the at the end of the planning year approaches, districts will have completed and approved our TAP design, applied for implementation funding and this is when the phase of the work shifts from planning to action.

27:28
With funding in place, districts will move forward with hiring apprentices and journey workers in the following school year.

27:35
And because the planning year is intentionally focused on program design, partnerships and readiness, districts will enter that implementation year with clear structures, aligned coursework already ready to go and defined roles in place.

27:51
This allows programs to really launch smoothly and focus immediately on high quality training and support for apprentices.

27:59
So I'm now going to turn it back over to Lakia, who will walk you through what the implementation year looks like, at least in brief, and how districts are supported once programs are actually launched.

28:10
Lakia, turning it back over to you.

28:14
Thank you, Claire.

28:16
So as you see with this graphic, we're now moving into Year 2, which is really where the main work of the core work begins, moving from planning into action.

28:25
This is the first full implementation year supported by the implementation grant, which is separate from the planning grant.

28:32
So for aspiring Cohort 2 districts, it's important to note that participation in the planning year does not automatically lead to implementation.

28:40
You have to apply, districts again must apply and submit a full complete budget, really indicating to us how you're planning to use the implementation funding to start and run your program.

28:53
So during this year, apprentices and mentors are selected, mentor training begins, and apprentices formally enter the program.

29:00
Funding may support things like tuition, required coursework, ongoing supports, materials, books, also community groups which are spaces where apprentices can receive support as a cohort.

29:13
Year 2 is focused on launching.

29:15
This is about the quality and making sure that the systems are in place to support your apprentices success.

29:26

The implementation grant supports the active operation of approved RTAP programs, allowing districts and Epps to move from planning to day-to-day implementation.

29:37
The funding focuses on the core financial components of the apprenticeship including apprentice wages, tuition, coursework, mentor stipends, program coordination and ongoing support.

29:48
The grant is only available to districts and Epps with an approved RTAP.

29:55
Participation in the planning year does not automatically lead to implementation.

30:00
And we keep reiterating that because we really want districts to consider the level of planning that we're expecting before any RTAP is approved and launched.

30:10
The fun code for that implementation grant will be FC-221-I for implementation and so that's a separate grant from the planning year.

30:20
Next slide please.

30:24
The implementation grant RFP will also be released in January and will require a full application including a complete budget from districts with approved R taps.

30:34
The implementation period runs from July 1st through June 30th and it aligns with The Apprentice hiring and the start of their coursework with EPP Partners.

30:43
So we really need to make sure that districts are planning alongside their Ed prep provider to ensure that the funding will be available for apprentices to start their coursework and their actual apprenticeship on time.

30:57
The timing ensures funding is a is in place and that all of the work that needs to be done is ready to go.

31:03
So during implementation at Prep, providers are very, very important to providing the guidance and supervision as well as oversight alongside the district in terms of implementing your programs.

31:16
Next slide please.

31:21
So the grants are intentionally sequenced to support districts from design through sustainability.

31:27
One of the lessons that we learned is that it's really important to give districts time to really plan and map out what they're, what they're R taps are going to look like before diving into implementation.

31:39
So once again, districts apply, they get the funding, and then the work begins.

31:44
And then alongside that, Jesse will be working, working with districts and AT prep providers to ensure that you have all the all that you need in order to be effective in this work.

31:54
We are still in a pilot phase.

31:56
And so we're really looking for your partnership and your patience as we navigate this.

32:00
But we are confident that with where where we are now with Cohort 1 is going to go even better and even greater with Cohort 2.

32:07
So we're very excited about the opportunity and the potential for you to be involved.

32:12
Next slide, please.

32:16
So to close out the formal presentation, this slide outlines the immediate next steps for districts interested in the planning year grant.

32:24
Districts should begin by reviewing the planning grant materials, which will be provided and released alongside the grant application.

32:31
And so just making sure that the resources we put out you're really paying attention to.

32:35
From there, districts should initiate internal conversations and identify potential partners, including Epps and labor union partners.

32:44

The next step is to prepare and submit the planning grant application, which is due on March 20th of this year.

32:57
Thank you again for your interest in RTAP and for your engagement today.

33:02
We appreciate the thoughtful questions that have come through the Q&A and we're getting ready to open up the four free additional questions and things that may be up of mind for you.

33:12
So we will again post this presentation as well as the RTAP on the on the RTAP web page.

33:18
So look out for that within the next couple of weeks so that if you if there are things that you missed during the presentation, you can go and replay it and also share it with your colleagues.

33:27
So on that note, I am going to stop the recording and we will formally begin the Q&A.

33:32
Thank you.