



Maryland

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

GRANT INFORMATION GUIDE

Maryland Elevates SFY 2025

Maryland State Department of Education

200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Deadline

May 31, 2024

No later than 5:00 p.m. EDT

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Table of Contents

Program Description 3

Use of Funds 5

Initiatives and Focus Areas 6

Application Requirements 17

Budget and Budget Narrative 21

Appendices..... 22

The Review Process 23

Maryland Elevates Grant Scoring Rubric..... 24

Reporting Requirements 30

Grant Application Timeline 31

Non-Discrimination Statement 32

The General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Sect 427..... 33

Customer Service Support Sessions..... 34

Program Description

The Maryland Elevates Grant Program is designed to enhance and sharpen the State's steadfast focus on narrowing gaps for infants and toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and their families in a comprehensive system of early intervention and special education services, birth through age 21. With heightened emphasis on high-leverage strategies and evidence-based practices necessary to transform early intervention and special education, Maryland Elevates targets disparities impacting children and families across a range of priority needs. Maryland Elevates is elevating outcomes with Focus Area and High-Leverage Strategies:

Eligible applicants represent non-profit organizations, community-based partners, and Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) demonstrating a commitment to:

- Equitable and accelerated outcomes in inclusive and rich learning environments in a birth through age 21 continuum of special education supports and services. •
- Implementation of processes grounded in evidence-based practices, equitable solutions, and data driven outcomes, and •
- Out-of-the-box solutions for growing teacher capacity, instructional leadership, and professional expertise.

AUTHORIZATION

[Public Law 108-446, Part B of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act IDEA](#)

GRANT OVERVIEW

Name of Grant Program

Maryland Elevates FY2025

Dissemination

This Grant Information Guide (GIG) was released on April 25, 2024.

Deadline

Proposals are due no later than 5pm on May 31, 2024

Grant Period

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

Funding Amount Available

\$3,425,360

Estimated Number of Grants

Twenty-four (24)

Eligibility

This funding opportunity is designed for non-profit organizations, community-based partners, and Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs). Priority will be given to exceptional applications that address more than one high leverage strategy. Notes: Recipients of federal funds are required to register and maintain active status on the federal government's System for Award Management (SAM) website. Active status will ensure that the applicant has been assigned a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). A Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification (W-9 Form) is completed for first time applicants and/or grantees requiring a change of address or contact information.

Submission Instructions

The Maryland Elevates Grant electronic application can be downloaded here. Download and complete the application. Attach any required appendices. An electronic copy with all required signatures must be uploaded in PDF format to the program's designated email address deisesgrantsubmissions.msde@maryland.gov.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

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State Responsibilities

MSDE is responsible for providing required information, data, documentation, and technical assistance to facilitate the grantee's performance of the work. MSDE program staff will be available and make every effort to support on demand additional assistance when requested throughout the grant period. In addition, MSDE will monitor program implementation throughout the grant performance period to ensure each council is on target to meet its goals and fully expend its awarded program resources.

Use of Funds

The following are examples of approved uses for the grant funds in accordance with the purpose of the grant. Other costs not listed here may be presented to the grant manager for determination of allowable expenditures.

Funds may be used for:

- Tuition and fees ·
- Salaries, wages, and stipends ·
- Supplies and materials ·
- Technology and equipment ·
- Partnerships, project management, consulting, and technical assistance

Funds may not be used for:

- Construction of temporary or permanent structures ·
- Food or meals ·
- Renting or maintaining building space ·
- Supplementing salaries and/or stipends during the regular workday

Initiatives and Focus Areas

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Building Inclusive Opportunities for Young Learners

Overview: Decades of research and experience demonstrate that inclusion in high-quality early care and education settings promotes social, developmental, and pre-academic skill gains for young children with disabilities. Children benefit from developmentally appropriate learning opportunities, modeling of age-expected language and social behavior, and the opportunity to develop relationships as valued members of their communities from the start. Families also benefit from participating in typical experiences, building connections to their community, and accessing the childcare and other supports that they need. However, too often children with developmental delays and disabilities are excluded from typical early childhood settings and the opportunities they provide. Statewide, less than 60% of preschoolers with IEPs receive their special education services in a regular early childhood setting.

Requirements: Applicants will support access to typical early childhood settings for young children with disabilities and their families through one or more of the following activities. Preference will be given to applicants proposing a model for scalable and sustainable systemic change.

- Partner with two or more LEAs and/or LITPs to increase participation of children with disabilities in regular early childhood programs (such as PreK, community childcare, or Head Start) through a comprehensive program of technical assistance and professional learning resulting in system change
- Build the capacity of early childhood educators and/or community-based childcare providers to include children with developmental delays and disabilities in their learning and care environments using innovative professional learning opportunities (e.g., modules, micro-credentials, etc.) for early childhood educators on effective inclusive practices
- Provide statewide targeted consultation and coaching to build the capacity of LEAs to support the inclusion of young children with complex support needs who have previously been served in separate settings using replicable tools and resources for adapting activities for participation in the least restrictive environment.
- Create and pilot a resource library of accessible assistive technology tools, toolkits, and instructional resources for supporting IFSP outcomes and/or IEP goals in inclusive and natural environments.

Additional Resources:

[Policy Statement on the Inclusion of Young Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs](#)

[Joint Position Statement on Inclusion](#)

[Strengthening early childhood inclusion opportunities to improve collaboration between school districts and community partners to support young children with disabilities.](#)

Model for Inclusive Education

Overview: Over forty years of research demonstrate that inclusive educational practices benefit both students with and without disabilities. Students with disabilities, regardless of any additional factors including disability type, socio-economic status, race, etc., benefit from access to typically developing peers throughout their educational career. Students also gain important social skills and demonstrate higher levels of achievement. Current Maryland data, as of 2023, indicates that LRE A (participation in general education for 80% or more of the school day) is 73.44% and that LRE C (participation in general education for 40% or less of the school day) is 11.9%.

Federal guidance defining FAPE and LRE has made clear that: All children and youth with disabilities should participate in the general education curriculum, including learners who participate in the alternate framework, with annual goals that are aligned with their grade level general education standards. (See 2015 Dear Colleague Letter). The placement of learners with disabilities is expected to be in the school and class the child would attend if they did not have a disability, unless the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) requires another placement after full consideration of the range of supplementary aids and services that could be offered in the general education class (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] of 2004, and Code of Maryland Regulations [COMAR 13A.05.01]).

Requirements: Applicants will create a partnership with at least one local education agency (LEA) having a diverse demographic representation and consideration of current LRE data to develop a systemic model for school transformation that results in collaborative practices delivered within an integrated, tiered model of interventions and supports, available to each and every learner in the school community. This work will result in improved membership, participation, and learning children/youth who experience, or are at risk for, marginalization, segregated placement, or removals from general education settings.

Applicants will develop a proven model for systemic change in order to increase inclusive placements, reduce removals from general education, and narrow the achievement gap for learners with disabilities. Key activities for initial implementation must include:

- District-level action planning to promote coherence in work to address equity, inclusion, diversity, significant disproportionality, and a structured approach to tiered interventions and supports for all learners in the LEA.
- Commitment of a district partner through all aspects of district-school technical assistance, support, professional learning, etc. to support district and school-based teams.
- Engagement of schools in a feeder pattern that agree to participate in the systemic change process to demonstrate school-wide inclusion, collaborative instruction and interventions, and implementation of the organizational structures that lead to improved learner outcomes. This model will be used to create demonstration sites that are replicable and sustainable across Maryland.
- School-level action planning based on a variety of data on learner access and outcomes, staff knowledge and beliefs, and qualitative assessment of inclusive practices to identify initial steps for change (e.g., collaboration, adapting curriculum, master scheduling, family engagement, etc.).

- District-wide and targeted site-based professional learning with job-embedded coaching for implementing evidence-based general and special education instruction, intervention, and personalized learner supports.
- Demonstration of evidence-based practices that lead to inclusive experiences, including:
 - Individual child- and family-centered planning process for including children and youth with intensive support needs.
- Educator collaborative methods (tools and strategies) and adaptations of the curriculum for diverse learners in general education lessons.
- Organizational school structures: use of collaborative planning time, scheduling students in natural proportions, master scheduling that includes time for interventions.
- Administrator practices that lead to effective inclusive services, ranging from IEP decisions to adaptive leadership support for educators as they learn role-release and collaborative planning, delivery, and evaluation of learning.

Additional Resources:

[Creating Inclusive Schools: What Does the Research Say?](#)

[Systems Improvement for All Students, Including Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities](#)

[The General Education Curriculum - Not an Alternate Curriculum!](#)

High School to IPSE Connections (Inclusive Post-Secondary Education (IPSE))

Overview: Inclusive post-secondary education fosters an environment where students of abilities have equitable access to higher education opportunities. Recognizing the importance of inclusion and diversity in higher education, the state of Maryland is committed to expanding opportunities for high school students with diverse learning needs.

Requirements: This initiative's main objective is to encourage institutions of higher education in Maryland to collaborate with high schools to develop and implement inclusive postsecondary education programs. These programs should give students with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to access and fully participate in higher education alongside their peers. Key components of this initiative include:

- The development of innovative curricula that caters to the diverse learning needs of all students, ensuring accessibility and adaptability; establishment of partnerships between institutions of higher education and high schools to co-create inclusive education pathways; implementation of comprehensive support services, including academic, advising, tutoring, counseling, and peer mentoring, to facilitate the success of diverse learners in post-secondary education; offer training and professional development opportunities to educators, administrators, and support staff to enhance their capacity to support inclusive education
- Fostering opportunities for inclusive campus engagement by promoting awareness, understanding, and acceptance of diverse abilities among students, faculty, and staff.

One primary recourse for technical assistance is Think College, a national organization dedicated to developing, expanding, and improving inclusive higher education options for people with intellectual disabilities. They provide resources, training, and technical assistance to colleges and universities

interested in creating inclusive postsecondary education programs. One of their key initiatives is the National Coordinating Center, which offers support to institutions in developing and implementing inclusive college programs across the country. Another local model is the University of Maryland TerpsExceeds program which is an exemplary model of inclusive education within the state of Maryland. This innovative program is designed to provide students with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to engage in a fully inclusive college experience, complete with academic coursework, career exploration, and social integration.

Additional Resources:

[PACER's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment](#)

[Maryland State Department of Education – Transition Talks](#)

[Think College Inclusive Higher Education Network](#)

Inclusive CCR/ CTE Programs- Eliminating CTE and certification barriers for students with disabilities

Overview: Career and Technical Education (CTE) and College and Career Readiness (CCR) programs play a crucial role in preparing students for post-secondary education and the workforce. However, students with disabilities often face significant barriers that limit their access to and success in these programs. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensuring equitable opportunities for all students to pursue meaningful careers and achieve their full potential.

Requirements: This initiative's main objective is to create and implement strategies that promote inclusivity within CCR/CTE programs and eliminate barriers to participation and certification for students with disabilities. By fostering an environment that values diversity and accessibility, we aim to enhance the quality, relevance, and impact of CCR/CTE programs for all students.

Applicants' inclusive program design should include the following:

- Develop and adapt CCR/CTE curricula and instructional materials to meet the diverse learning needs of students with disabilities, ensuring accessibility, relevance, and alignment with industry standards and certifications.
- Professional Development: Provide training and professional development opportunities for educators, administrators, and support staff to enhance their capacity to effectively support and accommodate students with disabilities in CCR/CTE programs.
- Barrier Identification and Elimination: Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing barriers to participation and certification for students with disabilities in CCR/CTE programs and develop targeted strategies to address and eliminate these barriers.
- Collaborative Partnerships: Foster partnerships between educational institutions, industry stakeholders, disability service organizations, and community agencies to enhance the coordination and delivery of inclusive CCR/CTE programs and support services.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Implement a systematic monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of the strategies implemented, measure progress towards achieving inclusive outcomes, and identify areas for continuous improvement.

Additional Resources:

[Advancing Racial Equality in Career and Technical Education Enrollment](#)

[Advance CTE – Achieving Inclusive CTE](#)

[DC – CTE](#)

Building Educator Capacity through Professional Learning

Overview: Building educator competencies in specially designed instruction (SDI) is crucial for meeting the diverse needs of students with disabilities and ensuring their academic success. Research consistently shows that effective SDI positively impacts student learning and achievement and can facilitate improved outcomes across subject areas. Competencies in SDI also support the implementation of inclusive practices, which promote the full participation and engagement of students with disabilities in general education settings. This benefits not only students with disabilities, but also their peers, fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for all. Ongoing professional learning is essential for building and maintaining educator competencies in SDI. Research underscores the importance of targeted training, coaching, and support to enhance educator’s knowledge, skills, and confidence in delivering SDI to students with disabilities. Using this key strategy, applicants will improve educator competencies through the development of statewide professional learning opportunities and support for special and general education teachers, administrative leaders, paraeducators and related service providers.

Requirements: Applicants will design and deliver statewide professional learning in one or more of the following key areas needed for effective, specially designed instruction. Priority will be given to applicants who address more than one of the key areas below:

- Develop model lessons or lesson seeds aligned to the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards for learners with disabilities highlighting opportunities for specially designed instruction for learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities within general education settings.
- Create a toolkit of scenarios and exemplars for collaborative planning, co-teaching, and differentiated formative assessment of learners with disabilities (e.g., sample lesson plans that model and demonstrate how to provide a student with a disability with access to the lesson through multiple access points).
- Establish a tiered Special Education Leadership Academy designed for aspiring special education teachers to move up the career ladder becoming leaders in their districts and enhance the skills of new LEA Directors of Special Education. Professional learning opportunities should focus on the implementation of effective policies, procedures, and instructional practices aligned to State and federal regulations; developing and applying the knowledge and skills necessary to lead organization and/or systems change to improve outcomes for children with disabilities, and collaborating with LEAs to cultivate a cohort of high-quality special education leaders. This will support the shortage of Directors of Special Education and strengthen leadership capacity.
- Plan and facilitate regional or statewide events to support ongoing initiatives within the state of Maryland to include inclusive practices, enhanced specially designed instruction, and supporting students with complex support needs to access academic opportunities.

Additional Resources:

[How to Develop Four Competencies for Teacher Educators, 2022](#)

[Improving 21st-Century Teaching Skills](#)

[Special Education Teacher Preparation, Literacy Instructional Alignment and Reading Achievement](#)

[Building Better PL: How to Strengthen Teacher Learning](#)

ADDRESSING STAFFING NEEDS**Grow Your Own Teacher Preparation Programs**

Overview: Grow-Your-Own programs are an effective strategy for teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention due to its focus on developing teachers from the local community, removing barriers to entering and persisting in a teacher preparation program, and incentivizing partnerships between school districts and educator preparation programs. Effective Grow-Your-Own programs can help increase the diversity and quality of the teacher workforce by recruiting and supporting candidates from traditionally underserved groups and providing supports embedded in schools and communities. Requirements: Applicants will implement at least one of the following:

- Continued implementation and evaluation of a structured cohort of participants as they complete coursework, and utilize their learning in practicum experiences in typically underserved LEAs and school communities.
- Development of an expanded implementation plan for recruiting, training, and retaining licensed special educators and special education teacher candidates, Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), and Licensed Behavior Analysts (LBAs) certified to teach or work in Maryland.
- Partnership with an LEA to develop a community of learning and tuition assistance program for a cohort of paraprofessionals and/or other school community members seeking certification as certified special educator, BCBAs, or LBAs. The program should include community-based recruitment of candidates, wrap-around support to promote program completion, and induction year(s) support to promote success and retention in the profession

Additional Resources:

[A 50-State Scan of Grown Your Own Teacher Policies and Programs](#)

[National Education Policy Center, Grow Your Own, 2022](#)

[Analysis: Study of 6 'Grow Your Own' Teacher Prep Programs Shows How They Can Improve the Diversity of the Workforce](#)

Addressing Shortage Areas

Overview: Currently, there are multiple shortage areas in special education to include a variety of related services and itinerant positions. Students who require additional supports need access to these services to access their educational programming.

Requirements: Using this key strategy, the applicant will develop and implement specialized training and certification options for current special educators to receive their TVI (Teacher of the Visually Impaired), Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Orientation and Mobility specialist certification in the

state of Maryland. Applicants will create a cohort of professionals seeking certification. This will support state and local staffing shortages. Key activities must include:

- Create a community of learning to support special educators as they pursue TVI certification, as well as post-graduation working in Maryland. This must include teacher mentoring and coaching support.
- Provide tuition assistance to cover a certification program, assure educators complete the program and serve 3 years in Maryland post-graduation.
- Connect the cohort to state and national resources available to them.

Additional Resources:

[The Virginia Consortium for Teacher Preparation in Vision Impairment](#)

[Paths into the Profession: Personnel Preparation for Orientation and Mobility Specialists](#)

Teacher and Staff Retention Projects

Overview: Diversity of the teacher workforce guides advancement of educational excellence. Recognizing the importance of retaining teachers and staff from diverse racial backgrounds helps build inclusivity, equity, and support. Achieving this requires the development of comprehensive initiatives tailored to address existing challenges, provide avenues for professional growth, and cultivate inclusive environments within the school system. Recent data sheds light on concerning trends: approximately 2000 teaching positions unfilled, 13.6% of new teachers leave the profession within three years, and around 25% of special education teachers resign voluntarily. Through collaborative efforts and vision, a solid foundation for retaining educators from diverse racial backgrounds benefit members of the educational community. The aim is not only to enhance educational outcomes but also to create an environment where educators feel valued and empowered. Focusing on diversity and inclusion in teacher and staff retention lays the groundwork for an equitable and promising future for all.

Requirements: Applicants seeking to address special education teacher and staff retention from diverse racial backgrounds will need to implement comprehensive strategies. These strategies should encompass support programs and efforts to cultivate inclusive school environments. Additionally, retention incentives and collaborative partnerships are essential components for success. Applicants will include one or more of the following:

- Comprehensive support programs: Develop mentoring, professional development, and resource access initiatives to support new special education teachers and staff.
- Cultivating inclusive school environments: Focus on creating inclusive environments through cultural competency training, open communication, and addressing bias and discrimination.
- Collaborative partnerships: Collaborate with local education agencies, community organizations, and stakeholders to support special education teacher and staff retention efforts. This could involve sharing resources and coordinating professional learning opportunities.

Additional Resources:

[Professional Staff Diversity and Student Outcomes: Extending our Understanding of Race/Ethnicity-Matching Effects in Education](#)

[Why Teachers of Color Leave and How to Disrupt Teacher Turnover](#)

[Increasing teacher diversity: Four ways districts can take action](#)

[We need to improve minority teacher turnover](#)

Strengthening the Early Childhood Special Education Paraeducator Work Force

Overview: Paraeducators (also referred to as paraprofessionals, assistant teachers, and by other titles) play critical roles in the delivery of early childhood special education services. Through years spending working in early childhood special education classes, many of these paraeducators have developed valuable knowledge and skills in supporting the needs of young children with disabilities and assisting in the delivery of specially designed instruction. As more preschool students receive their services in general education PreK settings, these staff can become key members of early childhood teams. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future requires assistant teachers in PreK classes to have at least an Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or Associate's degree. Many experienced early childhood special education paraeducators do not currently have these credentials, as they have not previously been required.

Requirements: Applicants will promote the retention of these staff members in ECE/ECSE settings by implementing on or more of the following activities:

Partner with one or more LEAs to identify training needs of the early childhood special education paraeducator workforce and develop and implement a plan to assist staff in obtaining needed credentials

- Develop and implement course work that meets CDA requirements while addressing specific content needs of staff who work in ECSE settings.
- Create and pilot tools and strategies for coaching and supporting ECSE paraeducators in completing CDA requirements (coursework, portfolio development, experience documentation, etc.).
- Develop scalable recommendations and guidance for LEAs to recruit, credential, and retain ECSE paraeducators.

Additional Resources:

[The Blueprint for Maryland's Future](#)

[Exploring the Professional Development Needs of Early Childhood Paraeducators and Supervising Teachers](#)

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Parent activities where the grantee partners with local family support

Overview: The parent's role in the special education process is essential as the parent is the expert in understanding the unique characteristics of their child's learning and development. Parent input helps the team assess the talents, skills, and needs of the child and contributes to establishing realistic yet ambitious goals to narrow developmental and learning gaps. It is critical that parents, as equal and informed partners, and members of the IFSP/IEP decision-making teams have the knowledge and skills necessary to fully participate.

At the same time, efforts to provide families with information through workshops and in-person participatory activities have proven less and less effective. Local education agencies have reported that their efforts to provide families with essential information through traditional methods have attracted fewer families over time. Calls to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Family Support team have increased, as have the number of State complaints. The nature of the MSDE contacts reflect that many families are lacking a basic understanding of the different special education processes and their rights, as well as resources to assist them in gaining the skills in effectively and positively advocating for their children.

Requirements: Applicants will plan innovative strategies to work with families in learning and family engagement activities on a large scale. Successful applications will plan for a whole system approach to address the decrease in family participation in local information sharing activities. Creative strategies should include multiple stakeholders, local agencies, and community partnerships.

Additional Resources:

[Parents in Special Education: Are We Really Supporting Them?](#)

[A Conceptual Model for Parent Involvement in Secondary Special Education](#)

[Barriers to parental involvement in education: an explanatory model](#)

STUDENT SELF-DETERMINATION AND SELF-ADVOCACY

Enhancing Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy Skills for High School Students with Disabilities in Maryland

Overview: Self-determination and self-advocacy are essential skills that empower individuals to make informed decisions, set and achieve goals, navigate challenges, and advocate for their rights and needs. High school students with disabilities receiving Individualized Education Program (IEP) services often require additional support and resources to develop and strengthen these critical skills. Collaborative efforts between institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, and high schools can play a pivotal role in enhancing self-determination and self-advocacy skills among students with disabilities, paving the way for greater independence, success, and well-being in their transition to adulthood.

The primary focus of this initiative is to encourage institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations in Maryland to collaborate with high schools and students with disabilities receiving IEP services to develop and implement programs and initiatives aimed at enhancing self-determination and self-advocacy skills. By fostering an environment that promotes autonomy, empowerment, and self-advocacy, we aim to equip students with disabilities with the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to navigate their educational journey, pursue their goals, and advocate for their rights and needs effectively.

Requirements: Applicants will implement one or more of the following:

- Program Development and Implementation: Design and implement tailored programs and initiatives by conducting comprehensive assessments to identify the specific self-determination and self-advocacy needs, strengths, and challenges faced by high school students with disabilities receiving special education services in Maryland. These programs and initiatives will incorporate evidence-based practices and strategies to enhance self-determination and self-advocacy skills, including goal setting, decision making, problem-solving, communication, and self-awareness.

- **Skill-Building Workshops and Training:** Offer workshops, training sessions, and educational resources to provide students with opportunities to learn, practice, and apply self-determination and self-advocacy skills in various contexts, such as academic settings, transition planning, employment, and daily life.
- **Mentorship and Peer Support:** Establish mentorship programs and peer support networks to provide students with disabilities with opportunities to connect with peers, mentors, and role models who can offer guidance, encouragement, and support in their journey towards greater self-determination and self-advocacy.
- **Collaborative Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement:** Foster partnerships between educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, community agencies, families, and other stakeholders to enhance the coordination, delivery, and sustainability of self-determination and self-advocacy programs and support services.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement a systematic monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of the programs implemented, measure progress towards achieving desired outcomes, and identify areas for continuous improvement and refinement.

By encouraging collaborative efforts between institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, and high schools to enhance self-determination and self-advocacy skills among students with disabilities receiving IEP services, we can empower these students to take control of their lives, pursue their aspirations, and advocate for their rights and needs effectively.

Additional Resources:

[Promoting Self-Determination Among Students with Disabilities: A Guide for Tennessee Educators](#)

[Self-Determination](#)

[Pacer's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment: Self-Determination](#)

Entrepreneurship initiatives for students with disabilities (ST)

Overview: Entrepreneurship and self-employment offer valuable opportunities for individuals to leverage their unique skills, talents, and passions to create innovative solutions, generate income, and contribute to economic growth. However, high school students with disabilities often face significant barriers to accessing entrepreneurial education, resources, and support services. Addressing these challenges is essential to empowering students with disabilities to explore, develop, and pursue entrepreneurial and self-employment opportunities. By encouraging collaborative efforts between institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, and high schools to develop and implement inclusive entrepreneurial and self-employment programs for students with disabilities, we can unlock their potential, foster creativity, and innovation, and create pathways to economic independence and empowerment. We must collaborate to create a dynamic, all-encompassing entrepreneurial ecosystem in Maryland that champions diversity, drives equity, and empowers the next wave of trailblazing innovators and leaders.

Requirements: The primary objective of this initiative is to encourage institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations in Maryland to collaborate with high schools and students with disabilities to engage in research, development, and implementation of inclusive entrepreneurial and self-employment programs. By fostering an environment that values diversity, creativity, and innovation, we

aim to empower students with disabilities to explore their entrepreneurial potential and cultivate the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the evolving workforce.

Key components of this initiative are:

- **Research and Needs Assessment:** Conduct comprehensive research and needs assessments to identify the specific entrepreneurial and self-employment interests, needs, and barriers faced by high school students with disabilities in Maryland.
- **Program Development and Implementation:** Design and implement inclusive entrepreneurial and self-employment programs that provide students with opportunities to learn about business fundamentals, develop entrepreneurial skills, and explore potential business ideas and ventures.
- **Mentorship and Support Services:** Establish mentorship programs and provide tailored support services, including business coaching, networking opportunities, and access to resources and tools, to assist students with disabilities in developing and launching their entrepreneurial ventures.
- **Collaborative Partnerships:** Foster partnerships between educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, industry stakeholders, and community agencies to enhance the coordination, delivery, and sustainability of entrepreneurial and self-employment programs and support services.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement a systematic monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of the programs implemented, measure progress towards achieving inclusive outcomes, and identify areas for continuous improvement.

Additional Resources:

[Office of Disability Employment Policy](#)

[Social Security Administration](#)

[Entrepreneurship for Youth with Disabilities](#)

Application Requirements

PROPOSAL COVER PAGE

Applications must include the Cover Page provided in the application for participation that includes a project statement. The project statement should briefly describe the project's outcome(s) and strategies (i.e., what the project will do, and how it will be accomplished). Do not exceed the 100-word limit. Project statements may be utilized in press releases, State Board presentations, or other MSDE publications. The Cover Page should be printed and signed by the local educational agency Superintendent of Schools or nonprofit organization Head of Agency.

PROJECT ABSTRACT

In the Project Abstract, introduce the project to the reader. The abstract should be factual, brief, and focused on the organization's efforts. Do not assume the reader is familiar with the proposed project. The project abstract should cover the core aspects of the proposed project, such as the populations served, a brief description of the goals, the strategies to meet them, and the roles of the partners.

EXTENT OF NEED

Briefly describe the problem or issue to be addressed, including relevant community data and information about the impact on traditionally underserved communities, to the extent applicable. Include analysis of the underlying factors or root causes that will be impacted by the proposed activities. Include information about the organization's history addressing this or related problems, including evidence of past successful efforts. Describe the experience, knowledge, expertise, infrastructure, and other resources the organization brings to the effort. Provide a description of the proposed activities and explain how they will address the problem, including root cause factor(s), and result in improved outcomes for children and youth with disabilities, their families, and/or their service providers. Any proposed strategies must be evidence-based strategies and include specific references to research supporting plan implementation.

Here are some suggestions for writing the extent of need:

- Clearly state the main problem your proposed project will focus on.
- State who is affected by the problem.
- State when and where the problem exists.
- Document the factors contributing to the problem.
- Discuss the consequences of not dealing with the problem.
- Cite current research and data that support the need for the project from both a broad (i.e., National, State, regional) perspective and the local perspective most relevant to the target population.
- State what data were collected and cite the source of the data.
- Utilize both easily measured quantitative data (e.g., test scores, absentee rates) and qualitative data in support of quantitative data (e.g., interview, focus groups).

- Use multiple methods to document the problem when collecting local data (e.g., surveys, analysis of school records, previous studies, focus groups) and include various stakeholders such as teachers, students, parents, etc. in your data.
- Include relevant demographics and other statistics about each population you intend to serve.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Evidence of impact should be documented to demonstrate the history of impact on the target population. Specific examples should be described that show activities and actions related to the selected initiative. The proposal should also describe the future impact of the activity/project and how the target population will be influenced by change.

GOALS, MEASURABLE OUTCOMES, AND MILESTONES

Goals and resulting outcomes should be written as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time bound) goals. Number each goal statement. The goals and outcomes must be stated in measurable/quantifiable changes in learner outcomes and/or professional practices with projected timelines for completion. Goals should measure meaningful change in the issue(s) identified in the Evidence of Need section. The application for funding must provide interim milestones that represent a clear progression of outcomes and/or outputs aligned with plan implementation. Progress benchmarks include qualitative and quantitative data.

Goals: State the overall goal(s) of the project. The goal should address the main problem identified through the use of data and described in the “Extent of Need” section. While there should be at least one goal, it is possible to have multiple goals; however, the more goals established the more complex the project becomes. Goals must have long-term deadlines. Goals and objectives should directly align to the extent of need. Include all relevant groups and individuals in the target population. Think about how to measure the change projected in each objective. If there is no way to measure a goal, it is not measurable and should be rewritten.

Measurable Outcomes: Measurable Outcomes are the anticipated outcomes to be accomplished for each year of the project and must be related to a goal. Outcomes break the long-term goal into steps or address the factors contributing to the problem addressed by the goal. It is imperative that outcomes be established for every target population the project is designed to affect. For instance, if the project seeks to increase student achievement by training teachers, there must be outcomes for both students and teachers. There may be multiple outcomes aligned to the same goal.

Milestones: Ongoing evaluation is essential to the management of a project. Since goals and outcomes are not evaluated until the end of the year, milestones must be established to measure progress during the year. Milestones should be evaluated during the year, either quarterly or semiannually.

Since milestones are intended to indicate progress towards an outcome, each milestone must be related to a stated outcome. Keep in mind that milestones are indicators of progress and may not use the same measurement tool as the outcome to which they are related. A project may take months before there is an impact on clients, or the rate of improvement may level off over time. Milestones should anticipate this and be gauged accordingly. Be sure that milestones are ambitious, yet attainable.

Goals, Measurable Outcomes, and Milestones Worksheet

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Goal 1: | The project will increase the overall number of children served. |
| Outcome(s): | The number of children served will increase from _____ to _____ constituting an increase of _____% from last year as determined by attendance data at planned project events. |
| Milestone(s): | By December 2023, project staff will have attended two (2) outreach events and collected contact information for at least fifty (50) new families. |

STRATEGIES

Strategies are broad approaches (methods, procedures, techniques) employed to reach milestones, realize outcomes, and ultimately accomplish goals. Evidence-based strategies identify the specific actions that will be implemented to achieve the goals and objectives by addressing root causes. Evidence-based strategies should include citations or references documenting evidence or research in support of implementation.

Begin this section with a justification as to why specific evidence-based strategies were chosen and how they will help in accomplishing the stated goals, including those identified in the Evidence of Impact. The justification should cite research to support the strategies. It is essential that the project include strategies for each outcome, and outcomes for each strategy.

Once the question of why strategies were chosen is addressed, discuss how the strategies will be adapted to fit the project and implemented.

PLAN OF OPERATION, KEY PERSONNEL AND TIMELINE

The plan of operation tells the reader when key activities will take place during the grant period. Applicants should consider all of the key tasks or activities that need to be carried out to implement the program successfully, whether each task can realistically begin and end in the proposed time frame, and how long each task will take to complete. It should contain three sections: management, implementation, and evaluation, and should include responsible staff for each activity. From an implementation team perspective, applicants are required to provide a list of the key staff or personnel responsible for the successful implementation and monitoring of the grant requirements. Attach a one-page resume for each staff person listed. In the application, applicants must provide the name, title, and role/responsibility of each staff person. Space in the application is provided for applicants to provide partner project information.

Submit a detailed and time-specific management plan with pre-assigned responsibilities to avoid the following common errors:

- Failure to submit required reports.
- Failure to regularly monitor performance of the project during implementation.
- Failure to start the project on time.
- Failure to keep adequate project documentation.

- Failure to assure continuity and quality of the project considering personnel turnover.
- Changing without approval from MSDE the overall project from that described in the grant proposal.
- Submission of biased or incomplete project evaluation data.
- Having no approved project fiscal procedure in place.
- Disposal of project supplies, equipment, or other assets in unauthorized ways.
- Budget deviations due to unauthorized transfers from one budget category to another.
- Failure to manage inherent conflicts of policies, perspectives, and philosophies between project's host agency and the funder.
- Failure to form partnerships in which all members recognize and fulfill their clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and contributions to the project.
- Failure to complete the project in a timely fashion.

EVALUATION AND DISSEMINATION

Grantees are required to submit an interim progress report that is consistent with the project's goal and objective(s). Keep in mind that the final evaluation summary will consider the entire project, beginning to end it should not be viewed as what is done after the project's completion, but as an integral element in the project's planning, design, and implementation.

Evaluation is an important part of determining the success of the program. Applicants are required to describe in detail what success will look like and the criteria that will be used to determine and measure success. Measures of success should align to the identified need and to the goals and outcomes. Applicants must describe how they will communicate the outcomes and impact of the process, as well as implications and lessons learned for sustaining, scaling, and/or replicating the activities to MSDE and to other interested stakeholders such as LEAs, other IHEs, and community partners. Descriptions of the types of reports and other by-products developed during the course of the project may be made available. Applicants are required to describe a plan for dissemination of information and results to both MSDE and other stakeholders. This plan should include reports, resources, and other materials that will be available, including products intended to support the sustaining, scaling, or replication of the activities by other stakeholders.

Evaluation and progress reports should be consistent with the project's goals and objectives. An effective ongoing plan should evaluate milestones and help project staff make informed decisions.

Budget and Budget Narrative

The project’s budget should detail all related project expenses in a budget narrative, an itemized budget, as well as on the MSDE Grant Budget C-1-25 form. It should demonstrate the extent to which the budget is reasonable, cost-effective, and integrates other sources of funding. All costs described in the project narrative should appear in the budget narrative and must also have a corresponding entry on the MSDE Grant Budget C-1-25 form. Reviewers should be able to see a clear connection between the project activities and the budget line items.

Use the tables in the application to provide an itemized budget showing how the cost of each item was calculated. It is advisable to take an inventory of existing equipment, materials, and supplies before developing the budget.

Use the fields below each table to provide descriptions of each line item.

Additionally, enter all line items on the MSDE Grant Budget C-1-25 form.

Salaries & Wages (list separately for each position)

| Line item | Calculation | Requested | In-Kind | Total |
|--|--|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Project Manager | \$50/hr. x 40 hrs. per week x 52 weeks | \$83,200 | \$20,800 | \$104,000 |
| Total for salaries & wages: | | \$83,200 | \$20,800 | \$104,000 |

Appendices

The following appendices must be included but not apply to the page limit of the Project Narrative. Include other appendices as deemed necessary.

Appendix A: A signed [Recipient Assurances](#) page

Appendix B: A signed [C-1-25 MSDE budget](#) form

Appendix C: A signed certifications page regarding Lobbying, Debarment, Suspension, Other Responsibility Matters, and Drug-free Workplace

Appendix D: A signed Non-LEA/IHE Certification page

Appendix E: One-page resumes of key personnel

Appendix F: A copy of the W-9 Form (Applicable for first time grant applicants and/or grantees requiring a change of address/contact)

The Review Process

The review of proposals will be a three-part process:

1. Written applications will be pre-screened for submission requirements and inclusion of all required sections. Applicants not meeting all pre-screen requirements will not be reviewed.
2. A review committee established by MSDE will evaluate applications using the scoring rubric. The scoring rubric is tailored to the grant program, its intent, and intended impact on the target population.
3. Final approval for awards will be determined by the review committee.

Review Committee

The committee will be composed of programmatic and fiscal representatives from MSDE, DEI/SES. Reviewers will assign numerical scores to each proposal based on the criteria on the scoring rubric. MSDE reserves the right to take into consideration geographic distribution when making awards. .

Maryland Elevates Grant Scoring Rubric

PROJECT ABSTRACT

| Level 3 Exceeds Criteria | Level 2 Meets Criteria | Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria |
|--|---|--|
| The project abstract outlines a concise and comprehensive summary of the target population, goals, strategies, and partnerships. | The project abstract addresses the required components. | The project abstract is missing or does not address the required components. |

EXTENT OF NEED

| <p>Level 3 Exceeds Criteria</p> | <p>Level 2 Meets Criteria</p> | <p>Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria</p> |
|--|--|--|
| <p>The main problem and contributing factors are clear, concise, and demonstrate considerable understanding of the issues.</p> <p>The proposal details who is affected by the problem, and when and where the problem exists, including historical impacts on the target population(s).</p> <p>Current qualitative and quantitative data is cited to clearly illustrate the problem. Data is derived from a variety of sources, including state and local data references.</p> <p>Applicant demonstrates extensive history of expertise and aligns to evidence-based practices specific to the population they intend to serve that illustrate progress in the addressing the identified problems.</p> | <p>The main problem is clear and concise.</p> <p>The proposal identifies who is affected by the problem and when the problem exists.</p> <p>Data supports the identified problem. Local data is referenced to document the problem and includes demographic and other statistics.</p> <p>Applicant identifies demographics or other statistics relevant for the population(s) intended to be served.</p> <p>Applicant provides an example of their history of expertise or aligns to evidence-based practices specific to the population they intend to serve.</p> | <p>The main problem is missing or is not clear.</p> <p>The proposal does not accurately identify the target population(s).</p> <p>Data has not identified or does not support the problem stated.</p> <p>Applicant does not identify demographics or other statistics of the population(s) intended to be served.</p> <p>No citations or research included in proposal,</p> <p>The proposal lacks details of how the funds will address the problem.</p> |

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

| <p>Level 3 Exceeds Criteria</p> | <p>Level 2 Meets Criteria</p> | <p>Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria</p> |
|---|---|--|
| <p>The proposal provides two or more examples that explain the history of impact on the target population including discussion of past efforts, failures, and successes toward influencing change.</p> <p>The proposal clearly explains future impacts of the proposed activity/project and how the target population is expected to be influenced by the efforts of specific to implementing this grant.</p> | <p>The proposal provides at least one example that explains the history of impact on the target population.</p> <p>The proposal describes the future impact of the activity/project and how the target population will be influenced by change.</p> | <p>No examples that explain the history of impact on the target population.</p> <p>The proposal does not describe the future impact of the activity/project.</p> |

GOALS, MEASURABLE OUTCOMES, AND MILESTONES

| <p>Level 3 Exceeds Criteria</p> | <p>Level 2 Meets Criteria</p> | <p>Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria</p> |
|--|--|---|
| <p>The goal(s) are measurable, clearly aligned to the extent of need, and ambitiously focused on effectuating change.</p> <p>Realistic and attainable outcomes illustrate a distinguishable effort to significant progress.</p> <p>Milestones for each intended outcome ensure continued monitoring for success and include response to meeting targets.</p> | <p>The goal(s) are measurable and aligned to the extent of need.</p> <p>Outcomes are realistic and attainable.</p> <p>Milestones are provided for measuring progress of each intended outcome.</p> | <p>The goal(s) are not measurable are not clearly aligned to the extent of need.</p> <p>Outcomes are not realistic or attainable.</p> <p>Milestones are not provided or do not align to outcomes.</p> |

STRATEGIES

| Level 3 Exceeds Criteria | Level 2 Meets Criteria | Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria |
|---|--|--|
| <p>The proposal provides several rationales for selecting specific, evidence-based strategies, and precisely how they will be implemented to ensure outcomes are achieved.</p> <p>Multiple broad strategies are identified with detailed and systematic methods, procedures, or techniques for successful implementation.</p> | <p>The proposal provides a clear rationale for selecting a specific strategy and how it will help achieve the outcome.</p> <p>Applicant provides broad strategies and includes the methods, procedures, techniques for implementation.</p> | <p>No rationale for selecting specific strategies and how they will help achieve the outcome.</p> <p>Applicant only states some of the strategies, but does not include the necessary methods, procedures, or techniques for implementing.</p> |

PLAN OF OPERATION, KEY PERSONNEL AND TIMELINE

| Level 3 Exceeds Criteria | Level 2 Meets Criteria | Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria |
|---|---|---|
| <p>The proposal includes a steering committee and partner plan that identifies individuals from a variety of backgrounds with extensive experience toward ensuring successful implementation.</p> <p>All relevant activities listed chronologically indicating a comprehensive management plan throughout the grant period.</p> | <p>The proposal includes a steering committee and partner plan that appears adequate for ensuring implementation.</p> <p>The proposal includes a time-specific management plan.</p> | <p>The proposal does not include a steering committee or partner plan that is adequate for ensuring implementation.</p> |

EVALUATION AND DISSEMINATION

| <p>Level 3 Exceeds Criteria</p> | <p>Level 2 Meets Criteria</p> | <p>Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria</p> |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Evaluation questions are included for each goal with considerable guidance toward implementation of aligned strategies and can be effectively and meaningfully evaluated.</p> <p>Clear evaluation strategy that includes alternative scenarios and criteria to ensure comprehensive evaluation.</p> <p>Multiple relevant, logical data types and collection methods are identified.</p> <p>Evaluators and their qualifications are indicated.</p> <p>Applicant provides a comprehensive plan for ensuring the ongoing success of the proposal beyond the funding cycle that includes identification of additional resources. A detailed plan for maintaining partnerships and their contribution to sustainability is described</p> | <p>Evaluations questions are based around the goal(s) and outcomes, provide guidance on the implementation, and can be evaluated.</p> <p>Clear evaluation strategy</p> <p>Clear data type(s) and collection method(s) are identified.</p> <p>Evaluator is identified.</p> <p>The dissemination plan includes how the findings will be shared to stakeholders, committee members, and the public. Applicant provides a continuation plan beyond the funding cycle and describes how partnerships will be maintained.</p> | <p>Limited or no examples of evaluation questions.</p> <p>No evidence of evaluation strategy</p> <p>The data type and collection method are unclear.</p> <p>Evaluator is not identified.</p> <p>The dissemination plan does not clearly identify how findings will be shared. The application does not include a plan to exist after the funding cycle.</p> |

BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

| <p>Level 3 Exceeds Criteria</p> | <p>Level 2 Meets Criteria</p> | <p>Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria</p> |
|--|---|---|
| <p>The budget narrative is detailed and comprehensive of all activities necessary for successful implementation of proposal. The budget aligns directly to the proposal and does not rely entirely on grant funds for successful implementation. There are no mathematical errors, and all expenses are cost effective and appear necessary.</p> | <p>The budget narrative is complete. The budget aligns to the proposal and is free of mathematical errors. Expenses are reasonable and allowable.</p> | <p>Budget does not align with the proposal, includes cost that are not reasonable or allowable, or has several mathematical errors.</p> |

Reporting Requirements

Grantees must comply with the following reporting requirements:

| Date | Reporting Requirements for Each Year |
|------------------|--|
| Ongoing | Fiscal and program monitoring; all invoices must be accompanied with supporting documentation. |
| January 31, 2025 | Interim Progress Report (C-1-25 C) and interim Progress & Cumulative Variance reports are due. |
| August 15, 2025 | Final invoices submitted. |
| August 31, 2025 | Final Progress Report (C-1-25 D) and final Progress & Cumulative Variance reports are due. |

Note: Any requests for amendments must be submitted at least 45 days before the grant period ends, and must be submitted using the C-125-B form found in the [Grant Budget Forms Workbook](#) on the [MSDE grants webpage](#).

Grant Application Timeline

This funding opportunity, including all attachments and updates, can be downloaded from the [MSDE Office of Grants Administration and Compliance website](#) and the Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils [webpage](#).

| Date | Timeline Event |
|-----------------------|--|
| April 25, 2024 | The Grant Information Guide and the application for participating are released. |
| May 15, 2024 | MSDE will hold a virtual customer service support session for interested applicants. |
| May 16, 2024 | MSDE will hold a virtual customer service support session for interested applicants. |
| May 23, 2024 | MSDE will hold a virtual customer service support session for interested applicants. |
| May 31, 2024 | The grant application period closes. |
| May 31, 2024 | MSDE begins reviewing applications for completeness and minimum requirements. |
| May 31- June 24, 2024 | MSDE Review Committee will evaluate proposals. |
| July 1, 2024 | MSDE will notify applicants of the award status. |
| July 1, 2024 | The grant period begins. |
| June 30, 2025 | The grant period ends. |

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Maryland State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry/national origin, color, disability, gender identity/expression, marital status, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. For inquiries related to Department policy, please contact:

Equity Assurance and Compliance Office
Office of the Deputy State Superintendent for Finance and Operations

Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street - 2nd Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2595

(410) 767-0123 - voice

(410) 767-0431 - fax

Deaf and hard of hearing use Relay.

The General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Sect 427

Each application must develop and describe the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the project or activity to be conducted with such assistance, by addressing the special needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to overcome barriers to equitable participation.

Customer Service Support Sessions

MSDE will hold three customer service support sessions for interested applicants. During these sessions, MSDE personnel will provide an overview of the application process. The sessions will be on:

Wednesday, May 15, 2024

2:30pm – 4:00pm

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/aqq-rvie-vwo>**Thursday, May 16, 2024**

11:00am – 12:30pm

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/eac-nwdh-woh>**Thursday, May 23, 2024**

9:00am – 10:30am

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/xaf-phjn-fym>

MSDE staff will also be available to provide technical assistance throughout the grant application process. If you have questions about the application or the process, please contact:

PROGRAM CONTACT**Dr. Paige Bradford, Ed.D.**

Section Chief, Specialized Instruction

(410) 767-3186

paige.bradford@maryland.gov

This funding opportunity, including all attachments and updates, can be downloaded from the [MSDE Office of Grants Administration and Compliance website](#).

Attachment

Maryland Elevates Fiscal Year 2025 Application for Funding