

Application for Grant

Student Support Services

Related to the Technical Assistance and Professional Development of Educational Teams and Families of Individuals who are Blind or Visually Impaired

Purpose

The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) is seeking proposals from qualified individuals or agencies (grantee) to improve local educational team’s capacities to implement research-based interventions and current best practices in the field of education. Grantee will provide technical assistance to individual students aged 3-22 and their educational teams, provide professional development training to educators and professionals in the field, and work in collaboration with other statewide consultants.

Process Timeline

Application posting: 6/23/2021

Proposals due: 7/7/2021

Estimated project start: 8/1/2021

Targeted Indicators

The Project Coordinator will work to support the following outcomes for students:

Indicators	Outcomes
Indicator 1	Percent of youth with IEPs graduating from high school with a regular diploma.
Indicator 3	Participation and performance of children with disabilities on statewide assessments: A. Percent of the districts with a disability subgroup that meets the State’s minimum “n” size that meet the State’s AYP targets for the disability subgroup. B. Participation rate for children with IEPs. C. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level standards, modified and alternate academic achievement standards.
Indicator 5	Percent of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21 served: A. Inside the regular class 80% or more of the day; B. Inside the regular class less than 40% of the day; and C. In separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placements.
Indicator 6	Percent of preschool children with IEPs who received special education and related services in settings with typically developing peers (i.e., early childhood settings, home, and part-time early childhood/part-time early childhood special education settings).

Indicators	Outcomes
Indicator 8	Percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.
Indicator 13:	Percent of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age-appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student’s transition services needs. There also must be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority.

Scope of Work

Grantee will provide the following services statewide to children ages 3-22, who are enrolled in Vermont school in support of the above indicators:

1. Direct and consultation services to assist with the education of students with visual impairments. Grantee will provide the following services to Vermont school districts: a. Direct instruction and/or consultation to students, schools and families in the area of the Expanded Core Curriculum (described below) as cited in the NASDSE (National Association of Special Education Directors) Guidelines (Appendix G) for Blind and Visually Impaired Students. [Supporting Indicators: 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, & 13]
2. Compensatory and Functional Academics (including all communication modes such as Braille, large print, tactile symbols, calendar systems, recorded material and so forth.)
 - a. All materials comply with the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard for the purposes of providing instructional materials to blind persons or other persons with print disabilities, in a timely manner after the publication of the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard in the Federal Register in accordance with 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(23)(A) and (D); 34 CFR §300.172. [Supporting Indicators: 1, 3, 5, 6, & 13]
3. Orientation & Mobility (to teach students how to travel independently) [Supporting Indicator: 13]
4. Social Interaction [Supporting Indicator: 13]
5. Independent Living [Supporting Indicator: 13]
6. Recreation & Leisure [Supporting Indicator: 13]
7. Career Education [Supporting Indicator: 13]
8. Assistive Technology (including everything from keyboard skills to talking or large print software to the SBAC and related alternate assessments) [Supporting Indicators: 1, 3, 5, 6, & 13]

9. Sensory Efficiency [Supporting Indicators: 1, 3, 5, 6, & 13]

10. Self-determination

- a. Accommodations for educating students with blindness or visual impairment.
- b. Development of Individual Education Plans (IEP) and 504 plans.
- c. Assessment and evaluation of children identified as visually impaired or functioning as visually impaired.
- d. Support for educational teams.

[Supporting Indicators: 1, 3, 5, 6, & 13]

11. Licensed teacher services: Grantee will employ licensed VT (AOE) Teachers of the Visually Impaired to work with schools and families to assist with providing appropriate educational services and supports for this population. The Grantee will provide:

- a. Instruction using techniques designed for students with blindness and visual impairments.
- b. Information on available resources and adaptive technology that are designed to ensure the successful development of children in the home, school and community.
- c. School staff and parents with information concerning their child's growth and development.

[Supporting Indicators: 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, & 13]

12. Statewide services: The Grantee will provide services statewide to schools to assist with providing a free appropriate public education for this population. [Supporting Indicators: 1, 3, 5, 6, & 13]

Services

Referrals – New referrals are initiated with a student observation(s) and report to school team/staff. Based on the observation(s), recommendations are made regarding required or necessary services in order for the student to participate in the general education classroom.

Consultation Services – Consultant services are based on student needs and articulated in the student's IEP or 504 plan. Services may include: direct services on site to provide continuous *direct* instructional service to a student; technical assistance and resources to the in-place educator; staff and/or peer in-service; observation with follow up contact with staff and/or student, other specialized equipment; academic content accommodations, and student/family services support.

Annual Monitoring – Student is monitored by consultant via distance technology or email with school staff to check on status/progress and provide recommendations/ technical assistance. Summer Services are contracted on an individual basis for additional fees and reflect the consultant's time for direct service (including home visit and preparation time) portal to portal and mileage.

Residential/Day Program Consultation – Consultant visits residential program for observation, IEP meetings, etc.

Population Served

Technical assistance and training will be provided, upon request, to Vermont school districts serving children and youth aged (3–22) who are blind or visually impaired.

General Requirements

1. Services are provided by licensed educators, qualified by training and experience to work with children who are blind or visually impaired.
2. Must have skills and knowledge related to the population served and in areas of collaborative teamwork, creative problem-solving, inclusive education to improve access to general education curriculum, distance-based consultation, systematic instruction, adult learning, assistive technology, related services cross-disciplinary, interagency resources and VT’s Multi-Tiered System of Supports (VTmtss) Field Guide and the components of the implementation of an effective MTSS framework within a K-12 school environment.
3. Support practices that promote universal design for learning, differentiation, and the inclusion of all students in the general education curriculum and classroom.
4. Coach and facilitate the collection, analysis and skillful use of data to inform decision-making on instructional practices and resource allocation at the student, class, and grade level in the targeted school and supervisory union/supervisory district levels.
5. Remain current in recommended practices for students who are visually impaired, and be able to support teams in the implementation of these practices by providing technical assistance, training, and teaching to adults.
6. Collect data and analyze feedback on individual technical assistance and trainings delivered throughout the year. Report this information annually to Agency of Education by June 30.
7. Grantee staff services: Are in alignment with the 7 comprehensive special education services as listed within the VT AOE TVI endorsement (#5440-67). The 7 areas of the new VT AOE TVI endorsement are:
 - i. Understanding learner development and individual learning differences.
 - ii. Creating safe, inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments.
 - iii. Recipient’s federal tax identification number,
 - iv. Detailed description of how the funds will be used,
 - v. Grant budget (consistent with Grant Object codes),
 - vi. Description of costs to LEA’s for services.
 - vii. A description of the grantee’s organizational structure,

8. Experience and familiarity with current best practice and evidence-based resources in field (including but not limited to; collaborative teamwork, creative problem-solving, inclusive education to improve access to general education curriculum, distance-based consultation, systematic instruction, adult learning, assistive technology, related services cross-disciplinary, interagency resources, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Positive Behavior Interventions Support),
9. Experience with Supervisory Union/District leadership teams, and
10. Experience with professional development related to current best practice and evidence-based practices.

Proposal Response Format

The successful grantee will describe in a cover letter and demonstrate via their individual resumes their experience with special education in Vermont as well as experience with educational systemic improvement strategies.

In the cover letter, the successful grantee will include statements/examples outlining their applied experience and related training aligned with the referenced Scope of Work.

This letter should also include:

1. Legal name of the recipient,
2. Address of the recipient,
3. Type of entity the recipient is (non-profit corporation, school district, etc.),
4. Recipient's federal tax identification number,
5. Detailed description of how the funds will be used,
6. Grant budget (consistent with Grant Object codes).
7. Description of costs to LEA's for services.
8. A description of the grantee's organizational structure,
9. Experience and familiarity with current best practice and evidence-based resources in field (including but not limited to; collaborative teamwork, creative problem-solving, inclusive education to improve access to general education curriculum, distance-based consultation, systematic instruction, adult learning, assistive technology, related services cross-disciplinary, interagency resources, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Positive Behavior Interventions Support),
10. Experience with Supervisory Union/District leadership teams, and
11. Experience with professional development related to current best practice and evidence-based practices.

Grant Amount and Duration

1. **Maximum Amount:** In consideration of the services to be performed by grantee or subgrantee, the AOE estimates the granted sum not to exceed \$636,606.00, subject to appropriation in the final State budget.

2. Grant Term: The period of Subrecipient’s performance shall begin on **August 1, 2021** (date application was approved at VT AOE for competitive grants or received at VT AOE in a substantially approvable form for formula grants, but not prior to July 1) and end on **June 30, 2022**.
3. Source of Funds: Federal 0% State 100% with 0% Indirect.
4. Grant to be issued with State of Vermont Grant Agreement.

Form of Grant

The grant between AOE and the selected bidder(s) will be required to be in the form of the Standard Vermont State Grant, including but not limited to standard provisions.

Please note the minimum insurance requirements, although for sole proprietors, AOE has discretion to accept proof of individual automotive insurance in lieu of the usual State Grant’s requirements for auto insurance.

Bidder Selection Process

The Agency will review proposals and evaluate their merits using the criteria and score points below. A review panel will score the proposals according to the criteria below. Depth and breadth of experience specific to content and educational leadership, as well and applied experience with the implementing current best and evidence-based practices.

CRITERIA	POINTS
<p>Prior Experience</p> <p>A. Satisfactory completion of projects of similar scope or complexity</p> <p>B. Experience is providing leadership in educational settings</p>	<p>A. 15</p> <p>B. 15</p>
<p>Quality of Response</p> <p>A. Responsiveness to each bullet in the general requirements and scope of work above</p> <p>B. Degree to which the bidder has the credentials sought</p> <p>C. Evidence of cost saving measures for LEA’s</p> <p>D. Creative solutions/ideas</p>	<p>A. 20</p> <p>B. 20</p> <p>C. 20</p> <p>D. 10</p>

Submission of Application

Proposals should be emailed by July 7, 2021 to:

Alex Langevin, Coordinator of Instructional Strategies at alex.langevin@vermont.gov.