

TO: North Dakota K-12 Administrators, Elementary and Secondary Principals, and REA Directors

FROM: Taylor Olsen, Program Administrator, Office of Academic Support

DATE: December 10, 2025

RE: North Dakota Comprehensive Literacy Improvement through Measured Building Systems (ND CLIMBS) Grant Program Funding Opportunity 2 2024-2029

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI), Office of Academic Support, invites LEAs to submit a **North Dakota Comprehensive Literacy Improvement through Measured Building Systems (ND CLIMBS)** Grant proposal for any of the following public building levels:

- Elementary
- Secondary (Middle School, High School, or Combined Middle and High School)

Opportunities for Birth-Age Five-level grants have also been issued.

Updates about program requirements and more detailed information can be found at the following link: <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/education-programs/literacy/nd-climbs>.

Program Summary

The ND CLIMBS project aims to establish and sustain collaborative conditions for delivering high-quality, data-informed, evidence-based literacy instruction across North Dakota, focusing on four key goals:

1. Establish systems to sustain collaborative conditions for the delivery of high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.
2. Equip administrative building instructional leaders (ABIL) to create and sustain collaborative conditions for educators to deliver high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.
3. Support educators in delivering high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction to students.
4. Provide high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction to all students to achieve literacy skills proficiency.

The objectives include:

- Support school teams in planning and managing effective literacy systems to achieve student proficiency.
- Offer professional learning opportunities for administrative leaders to improve ELA leadership practices.
- Offer high-quality professional development aligned with the Science of Reading for educators to enhance instructional practices.
- Contract with external vendors to support educators in delivering high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.

The project addresses the four competitive priorities of the CLSD program:

- Priority 1- enhancing teacher education and student placement tools among institutions
- Priority 2 - addressing pandemic-related educational setbacks, particularly for underserved students
- Priority 3 - promoting educational equity and access to resources across all education levels
- Priority 4 - building educator capacity through professional development and supporting students through key educational transitions. The project also meets the invitational priority by designing projects that support effective transition practices for students moving through early educational stages.

To promote implementation accountability and fidelity, each building-level literacy team will develop a local literacy plan. This plan outlines expectations and protocols for the use of ND CLIMBS funds, guiding efforts to sustain literacy programs and activities over time. The plan will be grounded in student data and address the following focus areas:

- Professional Learning
- Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum
- Assessment and Instructional Pathways
- Family and Community Engagement
- Grade-level Student Transition

Application Information

The following documents and resources can be found on the [ND CLIMBS](#) webpage.

- **Application Platform** Applicants will complete an online JotForm application.
- **Application Webinar** A webinar regarding the online application process will be presented on December 17, 2025, from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. This webinar will be recorded and available on the [ND CLIMBS webpage](#). [Link to attend the webinar](#).
- **Application Scoring Tool** The ND CLIMBS [Scoring Tool](#) provides detailed information about the application scoring considerations.
- **Online Guidance** Documents related to the application, including a Q&A resource.
- **Eligible LEAS**

Application Review and Selection

Each application will undergo an independent review process to assess the relevance and quality of the information provided, as well as the applicant's ability to implement the program elements. The application has a possible score of 100 points. Those scoring the highest will be considered for an award, with 15% of all subgrantee funds going to Early Childhood programming, 40% to elementary schools, and 40% to secondary schools, including middle and high schools.

Application Schedule

The following is the estimated application schedule.

Funding Opportunity Announced	December 10, 2025
Application Webinar	December 17, 2025 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Central Time (link to attend)
Applications Due	January 21, 2026 @ 11:59:59 p.m. Central Time
Independent Review and Validation of Scores	January 26, 2026 – February 16, 2026
Approval and Notice of Selection	February 23, 2026

Application Specifications

Any eligible North Dakota Local Education Agency (LEA), as defined, may apply. A list of eligible LEAs is available on the [NDCLIMBS webpage](#). An eligible entity is defined in section [2221\(b\)\(2\)](#) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. LEAs should apply for each building that is interested in participating in the grant. If more than one building in a district is interested in the grant, a separate application must be submitted for that building.

Applicants will be required to make the following assurances:

- Prioritize at-risk children.
- Supplement, not supplant funding.
- Conduct a local needs assessment for the application process
- Cooperate and comply with state and national literacy evaluations, including responding appropriately to performance feedback and engaging in a continuous improvement process.
- The business manager will engage in grant process training and updates.
- Contract with Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) for new or continuing services.
- Administer North Dakota Academic Progression of Learning & Understanding of Students (ND A+) interim assessments.
- Ensure a 75% or greater completion of educator biannual survey(s)
- Maintain administrative instructional leaders' (principal's) engagement in the network improvement community.
- Maintain educator participation in the networked improvement model.
- Establish and submit a complete professional development plan.
- Develop and demonstrate implementation of a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (GVC) by the start of SY 2027-2028. Ensure the elimination of all resources and practices contrary to the Science of Reading.
- Develop and demonstrate implementation of an assessment and intervention pathway plan.
- Develop and demonstrate implementation of a family engagement plan.
- Develop and demonstrate implementation of a transition plan.
- Submit annual review and reapplication documentation.
- Allocate reasonable funds for evidence-based activities, including expenses for: personnel, consulting contracts, supplies, professional development, travel, etc., according to the needs and goals outlined in the program narrative, and account for all grant requirements.

Contact Information

The primary point of contact for this application process is Taylor Olsen, Education Program Administrator, Office of Academic Support. In correspondence, please cc Brenda Ehrmantraut, Assistant Director.

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Submission Information and Deadline for Receipt of Applications

Application and attachments must be submitted online by January 21, 2026, at 11:59:59 p.m. CT. Failure to apply before the deadline may result in its rejection.

Amendments

If an amendment to this Funding Opportunity is issued, it will be posted on the [ND CLIMBS](#) webpage.