

## ND CLIMBS FAQ

### ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY GRANTS

This FAQ is based on questions the NDDPI has received regarding the ND CLIMBS grant. If you have any questions not addressed in this document, please email Taylor Olsen at [tlolsen@nd.gov](mailto:tlolsen@nd.gov).

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#### **Building Assets Reducing Risks (BARR)**

**Q: Is BARR required, or can our school use a different contracted service?**

A: BARR is a required part of this grant. All grant award amounts will include the amount for a contract with BARR. For more information, or to speak with someone directly at BARR, contact Tagwana Webster at [tagwana.webster@barrcenter.org](mailto:tagwana.webster@barrcenter.org).

**Q: Is the BARR National Conference 2026 a requirement for the grant?**

A: Attendance is not required at the 2026 National Conference, but the funding timeline will allow interested grantees to send representatives.

**Q: Will awarded schools be required to attend professional development in the summer of 2026?**

A: Schools will need to plan for two professional development days with BARR before the start of the 2026-27 school year. These dates are scheduled by each school with BARR. The dates are not predetermined.

**Q: Is the BARR coordinator a full-time role?**

A: Each school will identify a staff member as the coordinator and estimate the percentage of time dedicated to the role as coordinator for BARR. Buildings can consult with BARR to determine a reasonable amount of time that should be reserved for this person to carry out the coordinator's responsibilities. Applicants will estimate the funding required for salary and benefit expenses and include this amount in the application. ND CLIMBS funding can support this position; however, it is allowable if the district prefers to cover it through alternative funds.

**Q: Can the grant funds be applied to BARR if a school is already contracting with them?**

A: ND CLIMBS funds have a supplement, not supplant, provision. Therefore, the prior funding source used for BARR will have to be evaluated to determine the allowable use of funds toward the BARR contract. If the contract was purchased with federal funds, ND CLIMBS could assume the contract. If the contract is paid with local funds, it may not be possible to pay the BARR contract. However, the school can still receive funds for the literacy improvement work portion of the grant.

**Q: Are schools currently or previously engaged in BARR, eligible for the grant?**

A: Yes. This grant focuses on systemic improvements in literacy. Schools working with BARR will also benefit from the literacy plan work and the principal and educator improvement networks.

**Q: Will BARR replace our Professional Learning Committees (PLCs)?**

A: No. PLCs address curriculum, assessment, and data. The BARR coaching supports the implementation of these processes; hence, it is not a replacement for this work, but rather a strong complement.

**Q: Is it required to implement BARR schoolwide, or can we select certain grade levels to participate?**

A: The grant's primary focus is that BARR will be utilized for schoolwide system alignment, and buildings must enter the contract with this intention. However, it is important to note that BARR supports every building, keeping its current resources and processes at the forefront of implementation considerations. Therefore, after careful consideration with BARR representatives, buildings may establish a plan to implement BARR in phases over the life of the grant.

**Q: When the CLIMBS grant ends, will schools be burdened with the cost of continuing the BARR program?**

A: No. BARR is designed as a three-year coaching support structure that helps schools align their processes for staff and student success. BARR plans for schools to be independently managing their systems at that time. However, schools may opt to continue as part of the BARR network if they find the support activities valuable.

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## **Use of Funds**

### Personnel

**Q: Can this funding be used for a literacy coach or literacy personnel salary?**

A: While a literacy coach can be a desirable role to have in place, it is not the intention of this grant to fund that role. This is not a personnel-forward grant. A formula is being used to award funds for this grant; therefore, it is unlikely there will be funds to support additional personnel.

## **Application**

### Eligible Entities

**Q: Who is eligible to apply for this grant opportunity?**

A: This funding opportunity is open to elementary and secondary buildings that are in an eligible LEA.

**Q: Can a LEA submit one application for all its buildings?**

A: No. The district must submit a new application for each building that would like to participate in grant activities. This process requires each building principal to submit a Letter of Application, demonstrating interest and commitment to the grant's goals and activities. The district officials are involved in the application process.

**Q: Our K-12 is all in one building, can we submit just one application?**

A: No. The district will need to submit separate applications, as the funding is allocated separately. The funding may look different in a K-12 building, though, as only one BARR contract may be needed to serve the whole K-12 building. Applicants are advised to discuss the school configuration in their narratives and principal letter of application as relevant to inform the reviewers that linked applications are being submitted.

**Q: Which grade levels can apply for a secondary grant?**

A: Any eligible middle school, high school, or building configuration that includes middle through high school grades can apply for the secondary grant.

*Budget*

**Q: How do applicants submit a budget request for this grant?**

A: Applicants are not required to submit a budget. Budgets will be based on a formula that includes the size of the school (in terms of the number of teachers and students) and certain fixed expenses, such as the BARR contract, travel, and participation in the educational and leadership network. After grants are awarded, the district fiscal representative, in collaboration with building leadership, will assign the specific line items to the budget.

**Q: How will the BARR contract be paid?**

A: Local districts will secure a contract directly with BARR for a specific school. NDDPI has negotiated a flat rate, so schools will not need to negotiate a contract amount. Grantees will pay BARR directly and then claim the funds through the WebGrants claim reimbursement process.

**Q Will awarded schools have any funds with which to make spending decisions?**

A. Yes. Each school will receive an amount based on the number of educators and students at the building. Grant administrators will be able to use these funds for evidence-based professional development and supplies that will help schools advance toward their grant goals in improving literacy outcomes.

### ELA Proficiency Score

**Q: Where do we find the ELA proficiency score for our building, and how do we report it?**

A: The ELA proficiency rate can be found on [ND Insights](#). Consult the ND CLIMBS Funding Opportunity Scoring Rubric for how the points are awarded. Applicants do not need to enter scores; the reviewers will identify those scoring points. However, applicants should reference these scores in their narrative of the needs assessment.

It is noted that [ND Insights](#) grade levels may differ from those represented in the ND CLIMBS application (i.e., ND Insights 9-12 vs. ND CLIMBS 7-12). In this instance, the applicant should use local data to represent grades 7-12 in the needs assessment.

### Principal Letter of Application

**Q: If we know that the principal in the building is retiring, how can we competitively address the Principal Letter of Application component?**

A: In this situation, a district leader should write the letter and include an explanation of why a principal is not submitting the letter. It should include information about how the work will be guaranteed during the hiring process and supported throughout their initial years as a building principal.

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## **Other Grant Requirements**

### Educator Network

**Q: What is the educators' network, and what will be required of teachers?**

A: The educators' network is a virtual implementation network for all educators during years two through four of ND CLIMBS. Marzano Resources is the contracted agency responsible for leading this work. A design team, led by Marzano, is currently working on the structure and expectations for the network. There will be opportunities for live and asynchronous learning.

### Principal Network

**Q: What is the leader/principal network, and what will be required of principals?**

A: The leadership network is an implementation network for all principals during years two through four of ND CLIMBS. RTI International is the contracted entity responsible for creating the structure and establishing expectations for this network.

### Administrative Building Instructional Lead Role

**Q: Could the instructional leader also be an instructional coach?**

A: No. This leader must be a principal or vice principal with authority in the building.

*North Dakota Academic Progression of Learning & Understanding of Students (NDA-PLUS or NDA+)*

**Q: Is NDA+ required three times per year?**

A: Yes. However, those grade levels taking a summative assessment (grades 3-8 and 10) do not take a spring interim.

**Q: Is NDA+ required for all grades, or can it be certain levels?**

A: All grades represented in the ND CLIMBS grant must participate.

*Higher Education*

**Q: Are Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) eligible to apply for this grant?**

A: No. IHEs are not eligible to apply for the grant.