

North Dakota Systemwide Literacy Improvement Grant 2022-2024 Program Application Guidance

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI), Office of Academic Support invites North Dakota public school districts to submit a North Dakota Statewide Literacy Improvement (NDSLII) grant application.

Application Eligibility

Any North Dakota Local Education Agency (LEA) who has not received a Striving Readers (SRCL) or Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant is eligible to apply.

Program Summary

The NDDPI is committed to literacy for all North Dakota children, from Birth through Grade 12. The NDSLII Grant, made available through ESSER III funds, is aimed at improving literacy skills through the development of systemic approaches that put in place scientifically-based best practices in literacy instruction driven by a continuous improvement plan. The grant opportunity utilizes [the North Dakota Comprehensive Literacy Plan](#) as a structure for improvement emphasizing systemwide administrator and instructor professional learning implementation.

The NDSLII grant is guided by the following goal:

- Improve instructional support to ensure all learners attain a level of literacy which allows them the lifelong ability to
 - Accurately communicate ideas to others, and
 - Independently access knowledge for self and world improvement.

The NDSLII has the following objectives which align with the ND PK-12 Strategic Vision

- Increase students who enter kindergarten prepared to learn
- Increase students who demonstrate reading proficiency in 3rd grade.
- Increase students who meet expected learning gains in literacy each year
- Increase students who graduate choice-ready

Application Process

An application will consist of three parts:

1. Letter of Application
2. Assurance & Signature Form
3. Certified Staff Surveys (Qualtrics survey will be emailed to staff members in your district)

Letter of Application Requirement

In no more than four pages, please address the following topics to demonstrate Applicant's need, interest, and capacity to engage in literacy improvement work through a grant award.

I. Literacy Instruction Birth – Grade 12 (25%)

- A. Why does your district need a systemwide literacy grant?
- B. Over the last three years, describe efforts to improve across your district.
- C. Where do you hope to see the most improvement through grant support?

II. Staff Engagement (15%)

- A. Discuss any challenges that could prevent 100% of your administration and staff from engaging in professional learning to improve learner literacy no matter their assigned role. What supports will you need to meet those challenges?
- B. Think about your collective staff in terms of leaders and followers. Explain how you think this systemwide team will approach the work of literacy improvement.

III. Systemwide Collaboration and Communication (25%)

- A. Describe structures and systems that are in place to support literacy across your district. (Examples: Professional Learning Communities, MTSS, Curriculum Alignment Committees)
- B. What structures and systems would you most like to see improved with the support of the grant?
- C. Discuss your district's philosophy, opportunities, and interests in the early learning years from birth to kindergarten entry.

IV. Data Use for Decision Making (5%)

- A. How is your system using data related to literacy instruction?
- B. Describe your administration and staff need for professional learning and continued support in data-informed decision making.

Application Scoring Formula

- Districts scoring the highest will be considered for an award

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|------------|--|
| 70% | Letter of Intent (Based on Need, Interest, and Capacity) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Literacy Instruction Birth – Grade 12 (25%)</i>• <i>Staff Engagement (15%)</i>• <i>System-wide Collaboration and Communication (25%)</i>• <i>Data Use (5%)</i> |
| 30% | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff Surveys will be emailed directly to staff through Qualtrics survey platform• Districts with less than a 50% return rate will receive 0 points in this category |

Applicant must assure the district will carry out the following actions:

- **Participate in a districtwide literacy audit**
 - The state will contract a provider to work with subgrantees between February and May of 2022 to conduct interviews, on site observations and surveys to identify the areas in which the district will work to improve literacy. The auditor will present the findings and provide a report with recommendations to the district.
- **Respond to audit findings**
 - District literacy team gathers to identify goals and action steps based on the literacy audit findings and engage in widespread implementation of those steps.
- **Assemble a Literacy Team**
 - District will assemble and maintain a team of representatives from all levels, birth through grade 12, to plan and manage the literacy improvement work.
- **Identify a lead teacher at both the elementary and secondary level**
 - Grant funds can support these roles through stipends or partial assignments. Position responsibilities encompass being the overall implementation leader for instructional improvement, engaging in professional learning related to effective literacy leadership, and being the point of contact for grant communication and reporting.
- **Participate in a State-approved curriculum review**
 - The NDDPI will contract a provider to train and support the district in reviewing current curriculum to determine whether alignment with how children learn to read is adequate or requires 1) replacement, or 2) supplemental enhancement. The determinations will inform the budget request. Districts needing reading curriculum replacement or supplements at the elementary level may be eligible for a portion of costs to be paid for through the grant.

- **Develop and Implement a Local Literacy Plan**

Districts will develop a plan aligned with the [North Dakota Comprehensive Literacy Plan's](#) Six Essential Elements:

- Leading for Impact
- Supporting Professional Development
- Engaging all Stakeholders
- Planning Standards-aligned Curriculum
- Instructing with Precision
- Assessing to Inform

- **Participate in training and work involving Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and/or North Dakota's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (NDMTSS)**

- Teachers at all levels will participate on teams to discuss literacy intervention pathways.
- District will ensure ELA curriculum is vertically aligned and encourage disciplinary literacy structures in all classrooms.

- **Comply with evaluation and reporting requests made by NDDPI to monitor progress**

- The district will provide annual reports on June 30, 2023 & 2024. Areas include but may not be limited to goal monitoring, and a summary of work completed.
- Cooperate with two progress monitoring visits annually conducted virtually or in person.

Budget Application and Process

The NDDPI has money reserved through ESSER III funds to grant to up to seven districts. NDSLII grants will focus on systemwide literacy improvement. The grant will support a district-wide literacy audit, a consultant-led curriculum review, and funds to support professional development, curriculum and supplies, and personnel funds as determined by the audit and curriculum review. Districts will complete a budget application in June of 2022 in response to the comprehensive literacy audit and elementary reading curriculum review. Awards are expected to be up to \$600,000 per district over the period of January 2022 - September 2024 depending on needs identified for improvement.

A third-party literacy audit and elementary reading curriculum review will be contracted through the NDDPI to take place during the spring of 2022.

The budget will include:

- Stipends for lead teacher work
 - Approximately \$5,000 a year for each lead: [1] elementary [1] secondary
- Aligning elementary reading curriculum to science of reading instruction
 - Funds toward elementary curriculum replacements and supplements
- PLC/MTSS Training and Workshops
 - Create pathways for intervention
 - Establish teams for continuous improvement
- PD for certified staff in areas determined for improvement by literacy audit
- Library enhancements
 - Training for both librarians and classroom teachers
 - Supplies for classroom and media center libraries
- Areas of need Identified for improvement through literacy audit and curriculum review

Application & Award Schedule

The following table lists the estimated application schedule the NDDPI will follow.

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| Funding Opportunity Announced | September 15, 2021 |
| Q & A Office Hours | September 23, 2021 @ 1:00 PM CST LINK |
| Q & A Office Hours | October 4, 2021 @ 3:00 PM CST LINK |
| Letter of Application Due | October 15, 2021 |
| Certified Staff Surveys Emailed Out | November 1, 2021 |
| Certified Staff Surveys Deadline | December 1, 2021 |
| Review of Applications and Scoring | December 2021 |
| Notice of Selection | January 10 - 14, 2022 |
| Post Award Call | January 24 - February 4, 2022 |
| Literacy Audits & Curriculum Reviews | February - April 2022 |
| Audit Response Budget Application | June 30, 2022 |
| Award Period | January 2022 - September 2024 |

Contact Information

Applicant must direct all communications regarding this Funding Opportunity to either point of contact listed below.

Taylor Olsen, Program Coordinator
Office of Academic Support
(701) 328-2629
tlolsen@nd.gov

Brenda Ehrmantraut, Project Director
Office of Academic Support
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Submission Information and Deadline for Receipt of Applications

Letter of Application and Assurance & Signature Form must be submitted via email to jmgratz@nd.gov by October 15, 2021 at 11:59:59 p.m. CST. NDDPI assumes no responsibility for delays caused by any delivery service. Failure to submit the application prior to the deadline may cause the application to be rejected. Late applications or amendments will not be accepted.

Successful applicants named in the Notification of Selection are advised not to begin work or purchase materials relating to the project until the grant award is fully executed by both the successful Applicant and NDDPI.

[Updates](#) regarding program expectations and more detailed information are available including a current [Question and Answer](#) document.