

**2013-2018 NYS Mentor Teacher Internship Program (MTIP)
Grant Competition**

Questions and Answers

Eligibility

1. My district currently has a locally-funded teacher mentoring program but we are not a designated high need district. Would we be eligible to apply for this funding?

Response: Yes.

The Release Time Requirement

1. Does the calculation for required release time include only student contact time or does it include lunch or preparations?

Response: Release time refers to reduction of student contact time. Mentoring activities which take place during the mentors' or interns' lunch or preparation periods, or before or after school meetings do not meet the requirement for release from instructional time which is mandated by law for teachers and their mentors who are supported by NYS MTIP funded programs

2. The district is planning a new teacher orientation to district procedures, technology, initiatives. Could this be considered in the 10% calculation as well?

Response: No. While an important professional development activity and good start to the mentoring effort, teacher orientation prior to the beginning of the school year may not accrue towards the 10% release time requirement.

3. The district has 5 days of Staff Development scheduled for next year. All are focused on developing mastery in the district's instructional and classroom management initiatives. Our new teachers and their mentors would be scheduled to spend the days together so that they would receive common information and also affording them time for reflection and discussion. Could this be considered as part of the required 10% release from instructional duties?

Response: No. Staff development days represent dedicated professional development time, not instructional time, from which the 10% release must be applied for the MTIP participants.

4. I need a clarification regarding the 10% release time requirement for mentors and interns. How is it calculated; per week or can the required time be averaged out over the year?

Response: It can be averaged out across the project year.

5. Does the term “Release time” in the MTIP program mean release time from teaching duties, when students are present?

Response: That is correct.

6. Is the position of mentor coordinator an allowable expense under MTIP?

Response: Yes, it is.

7. In completing the application for MTIP funding, what options are available for the release time requirement for mentors and interns? Would it be more effective for the mentors and interns, and instructionally more desirable, if there were options beyond being released one period per day?

Response: A variety of time configurations may be utilized in scheduling the mentors' and interns' time to work together; E.g., a portion of a period per day, one-half day per week, a day every 2 weeks, concentration of release time in the first semester of the school year.

8. If the release time is consolidated into numbers of days throughout the year, how many days would this be?

Answer: The comparable number of days will vary, depending on the number of hours in the instructional session of the school day in a district/BOCES..

Mentor Selection

1. If a qualified mentor is also a department chair and mentors an intern within the department, then that department chair can find herself/himself with a conflict of interest. A department chair in our school is responsible for curriculum and therefore, provides the very essence of what a new teacher needs in order to know exactly what to instruct. If that same department chair observes a problem with a new teacher jeopardizing the integrity of the curriculum or sees poor student scores, (s)he may be unable to fulfill both her/his responsibilities as mentor and as a department chair, as discussions of student data results with the principal or supervisor may well breach the level of confidentiality that is expected of our mentors. And what if the other member of the department does not desire a mentoring role or does not fill the criteria of being a strongly qualified or highly qualified teacher?

Response: (1) Unless contractually stipulated otherwise, MTIP mentors may not participate in the summative evaluation of interns.

(2) Mentors who provide support under MTIP in a part-time capacity may do so up to 40% of their time, the remainder of their duties must be in teaching

(3) A teacher must demonstrate a willingness to be a mentor. No one can or should be assigned to be a mentor who does not wish to be.

2. Is it possible for us to assign a mentor to an intern of a different certificate title if we find that the mentor candidate is a master of pedagogical skills, has excellent subject matter skills, superior teaching abilities, strong interpersonal qualities, and is willing to participate in the program?

Response: It is possible to assign a mentor to an intern in a different certificate title, if there is no in-title mentor available. A Request for Variance of Mentor Qualifications must be completed and submitted with the application or as soon as the need arises.

3. In Section V of the scoring rubric, the second bullet indicates that the narrative should include "demonstrable evidence for each of the following mentor characteristics" Will you further explain your expectations for this section?

Response: Reviewers will be looking for criteria or evidence which the district identifies as proof of the presence of the particular characteristic in the mentor candidate. For example: interpersonal relationship qualities may be demonstrated through peer recommendations, skills mastery through evaluative data, etc..

Multi-year funding

1. Now that the Mentor Teacher Internship Program has been established as a multi-year funding source, will a district that does not apply in 2013-2014 have an opportunity to apply in 2014-2015?

Response: No.

2. Our District expects to hire a number of new teachers in Years 2-5 due to expected retirements but does not project any new hires in Year 1. How do we apply for the 2013-2014 MTIP so that the District is not "shut out" of funding in 2014-2015, 2015-2016, or thereafter?

Response: The RFP requires that applicants identify interns in the first year of the grant

Maximum grant award requests

1. We hire between 30-40 new teachers every year...with the formula stated in the RFP for Tier 3 districts, this grant would only provide for 6 new hires (6 X 7200 = \$43,200) notwithstanding the size of our district (population 48,000). We are a high needs district with over 6200 students, the largest district in the area. As such, can I request funding for 30 to 40 new hires? If more than \$48,000 becomes available to Tier 3 school districts later on, will those schools who did not apply for more than the cap be at a disadvantage?

Response: \$48,000 is the maximum grant award available for Tier 3 category districts.

2. The grant refers to Median Teacher Salary...what is it?

Response: Median Teacher Salary is an estimated salary across the state at which half of teachers' salaries statewide are above and half are below, as reported in the 2011-2012 SED 655 Report. Ten percent of this figure is used in the determination of MTIP grant awards, reflecting statutorily prescribed reimbursement to districts for replacement teacher costs. Historically, the majority of costs to districts for MTIP programs goes for replacement teacher and other personnel costs associated with implementing the MTIP model of teacher mentoring. This does not mean that each new teacher is given or allocated \$7200. It is merely a means of calculating grant award amounts which will reflect actual costs to districts to implement these programs. Actual costs per teacher may be a little more or less, depending on other local features of the MTIP program, and may not, nor is it intended to, meet the entire need of the district in terms of teachers to be served.

Allowable expenditures

1. I am retiring as Mentor Coordinator. I have had this full-time position for a number of years and I know that July, August and September are critical times for the developing and initiating the program. This is the time to consider and make matches, introduce the aspects and requirements of the program, discuss confidentiality and, often, the beginning of the year brings many questions and concerns. I would like to include a stipend into the grant for me to serve as a mentor for the new coordinator during those critical months. Is this a permissible expense under the salaries section?

Response: Yes. Program coordination costs are allowable expenditures and since the project year begins July 1, expenditures could be charged to MTIP, once the district receives notification that a grant has been awarded under the 2013-2014 competition.

2. Travel Expenses - Can we include costs of conferences and workshops for mentor/intern pairings or is this strictly for mentor coordinators? What can and can not be included?

Response: Professional development costs, such as workshops, conferences, seminars for mentors and interns can and should be supported by MTIP funds, as indicated by the project assessment of mentor and intern needs. Appropriate registration fees, mileage, airfare, lodging and meals all may be charged to the MTIP budget

Eligibility of participants

1. Our district implemented a Mentor Teacher Internship Program in 2012-2013. During the second semester of that school year, the district hired three new teachers who participated in the program since February 2013. Can those teachers who have participated for only a portion of a school year be included in our estimates of the number of intern teachers to be served through MTIP funds in 2013-2014?

Response: Yes. Those teachers could be supported by MTIP funding up through December 2013 only, that is, the first half of the following project year.

2. May a teacher who has taught previously in another district be considered an “intern” if he or she is in his or her first or second year at a district applying for a 2013-2014 Mentor Teacher Internship Program grant?

Response: If the teacher is in his or her first or second year in teaching, the teacher may be supported by MTIP funding in the applicant district. However, if the teacher has had two or more years of teaching in any district, he or she is not eligible to be served through MTIP funds and should not be included in the estimated number of interns to be served in a 2013-2014 MTIP project. These teachers should be supported through local efforts and funding.

3. In the RFP, the definition of “intern” states that she or he must be full-time with no greater than a 90% instructional assignment and be in her or his first or second year of service. Does this mean that interns supported in a 2012-2013 NYS Mentor Teacher Internship (NYS MTIP) project can be supported with a 2013-14 NYS MTIP project in the same district as second year interns?

Response: No. A teacher can only be supported with NYS MTIP funding for one year. If the district deems additional years of support desirable, this support needs to be provided through local district resources.

4. Our Mentor-Teacher Program is a 2-year program. According to the Part 85 Regulations, an intern is a person who has not participated in the mentor teacher-internship program in the previous year. Can you further define this in relationship to a 2-year program? In other words, if a district has a 2-year program, can we ask for support with stipends for mentors of the same intern for 2 years?

Response: No. MTIP funds can only support a teacher for one year. Local district funds must be used for additional years to support another new teacher.

5. Our District was awarded the Mentor Teacher Internship grant for the previous five-year cycle and had some difficulties meeting the terms for direct contact time between intern and mentor, resulting in a partial give back of funds. In meeting with my new teachers and planning the program for next year, I’ve identified a need for new pupil personnel service providers; psychologists, speech language pathologists, social workers and/or guidance counselors to receive very individualized mentor support by mentors with the same certification areas and believe I would have far greater success with meeting the 10% weekly meeting time with this group. Would the grant be considered if it targeted one subgroup of professionals rather than all new teachers?

Response: Yes, but, as stated in RFP Program Narrative item VIII, local discretion as to the beginning teachers in the district who will be “targeted” for support through MTIP funding must give priority to shortage areas: e.g., teachers of English language learners, especially in bilingual classrooms and secondary grades and subjects; teachers of students with disabilities, especially in secondary grades and subjects; teachers of STEM disciplines in secondary grades; and Common Branch teachers with strong math and science pedagogical and content knowledge in high-need elementary schools.

Beginning teachers holding certificates in a pupil personnel services area; e.g. school counselor, school psychologist, may be served through MTIP providing all compliance provisions are met. CAUTION: If serving individuals in the PPS titles, the district needs to adhere to any professional standards in place for these student support providers, particularly pertaining to student confidentiality in counseling situations where replacement PPS staff might periodically be assigned responsibilities pertaining to the students assigned to PPS professionals.

Application format

1. With the 12 page narrative limitation are the pages to be single or double-spaced; may a 10 or 11 point font be used; may Arial Narrow be used; may footnotes/references be in 8 and 10 point?

Response: It is suggested that a 10 or 12 point Arial type font or 12 point Times New Roman type font be used for the proposal narrative. It may be single or double-spaced.

2. I have some documents that I believe would clarify or enhance the text of the grant. However, if I embed them in the document, it will take considerable space from the allowable twelve pages. If I use a supplemental section of the grant, am I interrupting the flow of reading for the Reader? Which is the best format to use when adding documents to the grant?

Response: The Proposal Narrative should be completed in 12 or fewer pages (single spaced.) Additional documents intended to clarify or enhance the text will not be read

Proposal Narrative

1. When answering grant questions that require mentioning committees, such as advisory/ selection, is it necessary to list the members for each question every time, or can the list of members go in the appendices, to be referred to by the reader?

Response: It is not necessary to list the names of any advisory or steering committee for every question. For an advisory/steering committee, it is recommended that you list the membership once, either in Program Management, if they are involved in program coordination or as an appendix. For Mentor Selection Committee members, their names must be placed in the appropriate form, as provided in the RFP (application).