

American Indian Education Aid Guidance

The Minnesota Department of Education – Office of Indian Education is committed to supporting districts and schools to ensure that every American Indian student in the state has equitable access to programs that are specifically designed to meet their unique educational and cultural academic needs. The following information is designed to help district administrators and Indian Education staff make sound decisions about implementing appropriate, culturally responsive programming and support for American Indian students, using American Indian Education Aid revenue.

Please read the following information carefully, as this guidance has been recently updated.

Historical Overview

State grant programs designed specifically to support American Indian Education students enrolled in public school districts and Bureau of Indian Education-funded schools date back to the 1970s. In the year 2000, two successful grant programs – *Postsecondary Preparation* and *American Indian Language and Culture* – were combined to create the *Success for the Future* grant. *Success for the Future* was a limited, competitive grant that funded a maximum of 32 districts and schools each year. All grant recipients were awarded the same maximum funding amount, regardless of district size or number of American Indian students enrolled.

During the 2015 legislative session, the *Success for the Future* competitive grant was eliminated and replaced with the current **American Indian Education Aid** program. This aid program provides funding on a per-pupil basis to districts, charters, and Bureau of Indian Education-funded American Indian-controlled tribal contract or grant schools. This program provides districts with the opportunity to create comprehensive, sustainable Indian Education programs that serve the needs of all American Indian students in the district in pre-K through grade 12. American Indian Education Aid also creates greater continuity of Indian Education programming statewide, and allows newly-eligible districts access to appropriate funding in order to plan, operate, and evaluate Indian Education programming for the first time.

Minnesota Statute: American Indian Education Aid

A school district, charter school, or American Indian-controlled tribal contract or grant school enrolling at least 20 American Indian students on October 1 of the previous school year and operating an American Indian education program according to section 124D.74 is eligible for Indian Education Aid if it meets the requirements of this section. The commissioner shall prescribe the form and matter of application for aid, and no aid shall be made for a program not complying with the requirements of sections [124D.71 to 124D.82 \(Indian Education Act of 1988\)](#). [Minn. Stat. § 124D.81, subd. 1.](#)

Indian Education Program Plan (IEPP): Guidance and Submission

Step 1: Determining Eligibility and Aid Estimates

To find out if your district is eligible for funding, please review the FY18 American Indian Education Aid Estimate available on the [Indian Education page](#) of the MDE website. This spreadsheet contains a district-by-district breakdown of American Indian student counts, along with each district's applicable aid estimate.

If your district or school is cited as having 20 or more American Indian students enrolled as of October of 2016, you qualify for aid and you are **required** to submit a locally-designed Indian Education Program Plan in collaboration with your American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC).

Note: American Indian student counts are unique numbers generated by state data specialists, and may or may not match your MARSS number. Aid amount is strictly estimated, and final funding may vary.

Step 2: Submitting a Letter of Intent

Once you've identified your district/charter/tribal school as having 20 or more American Indian students, your next step is to file a **Letter of Intent**. This Letter of Intent serves as notification of your intent to submit an Indian Education Program Plan (IEPP) for American Indian Education Aid. Submission of this Letter is very important as it allows the funding to be authorized prior to the start of the school year. This Letter must include the signatures of the Superintendent, the Indian Education Program Lead person (title may vary), and the Chair of the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee.

IMPORTANT: Letters must be submitted annually by June 1st. If you have an approved plan for the 2018-2019 school year, you do not need to submit a letter of intent in 2019.

A **Letter of Intent Template** for your use is available on the [Indian Education page](#) of the MDE website. Simply open the PDF, print, fill it out, obtain signatures, and remit via email to: med.indian-education@state.mn.us. You may also submit the letter via traditional mail – see address below.

Step 3: Creating and Submitting an IEPP

The American Indian Education aid is completely **supplemental** and is specifically designated for approved activities that support American Indian education programs. Funding from this revenue source **cannot be used to supplant** current state and federal educational or co-curricular programs and funding of the district or school. All funding must support components of American Indian Education programs which are outlined in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.74. If your district has previously committed funds from general education revenue to support Indian Education staff positions and programming, please continue that commitment. The intent of the American Indian Education aid is to allow districts and schools to scale up current initiatives and to build sustainable programs.

To qualify for aid, an eligible district, charter school, or tribally controlled grant school must develop and submit an Indian Education Program Plan (IEPP) for approval to the Director of Indian Education at MDE that shall:

1. Identify the measures to be used to meet the requirements of sections [124D.71 to 124D.82](#).
2. Identify the activities, methods, and programs to meet the identified educational needs of the children to be enrolled in the program.

3. Describe how district goals and objectives as well as the objectives of sections [124D.71 to 124D.82](#) are to be achieved.
4. Demonstrate that required and elective courses as structured do not have a discriminatory effect within the meaning of section [124D.74](#), Subdivision 5.
5. Describe how each school program will be organized, staffed, coordinated, and monitored; and
6. Project expenditures for programs under sections [124D.71 to 124D.82](#).

The plan addresses all of the requirements of the new law by requiring district and school leaders to set district-level **SMART goals** along with **detailed** targets for American Indian students. These are the same five goal areas found in the World's Best Work Force Plan, but the IEPP is its own distinct plan for American Indian Education. The plan requires **specific** strategies that fulfill the requirements of the Indian Education Act of 1988 ([124D.71 to 124D.84](#)) along with a brief budget and justification.

In order to receive Aid, each district must commit to **submitting a fully-executed program plan by October 1, 2018** to the Minnesota Department of Education Office of Indian Education. The Office of Indian Education must approve plans no later than January 30, 2019. Plans approved for the 2018-2019 school year will continue for the 2019-2020 school year as long as the district or school remains eligible and will not need to be reapproved by the Office of Indian Education. A district or school may submit a plan amendment for the 2019-2020 school year to amend plan goals, objectives, or projected expenditures unless 2019 legislative changes would require plan resubmission for conformity with the changes. Districts and schools that are newly eligible in in school year 2019-2020 will need to submit a plan.

In addition to program implementation strategies and budget information, this plan will include specific baseline data from the 2016-2017 school year and district-wide goals for American Indian students in the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years. Districts and schools are encouraged to align the goals in the district's American Indian Education Aid plan with the 5 goal areas developed as part of the district's World's Best Workforce plan. Failure to submit an American Indian Education Aid plan by the deadline may jeopardize the district's American Indian Education Aid funding.

For your convenience, we will provide an IEPP Template for use. This template will include a cover page along with a fillable form in which you may type your district plan. This template has been newly updated and can be found on the [Indian Education page](#) of the MDE website.

The annual IEPP requires districts to report baseline data from the previous school-year and to then develop goals for the 2018-2019 school year utilizing that data. MDE will publicly release accountability test data August.

For your reference, we have provided a sample IEPP on the [Indian Education page](#) of the MDE website. This sample program plan provides examples of goal statements, along with appropriate strategies that are aligned with the intent of the Indian Education Act of 1988. It also includes specific ways in which trends over time are tracked and communicated.

Note: Although the sample form includes a goal, strategy, and budget listed for each of the five goal areas, it is not necessary for a qualifying district to develop a goal under each area. For example, a district may choose to utilize all of the allocated aid to focus on the specific needs of your American Indian students, and should write appropriate goals, strategies, and budget for that specific area only. These statements are included as general guidance only.

Submission of Materials:

All IEPPs submitted by October 1, 2018 will be reviewed by the MDE Office of Indian Education and approved by January 30, 2019. Plans approved for 2018-2019 school year will continue for the 2019-2020 school year. Timelines for IEPP applications for the 2020-2021 school year will be announced at a later date.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Funding is to be used exclusively for American Indian students and programming directly servicing those students. Funds can only be used to supplement, not supplant already established district-wide programming.

How are American Indian student counts generated?

American Indian student counts are unique numbers generated by data specialists at the Minnesota Department of Education, and may or may not match your MARSS number. Aid amount is strictly estimated, and final funding may vary.

Can an IEPP include programs that are utilized by non-American Indian students?

To the extent it is economically feasible, a district or school may allow the voluntary enrollment of non-American Indian children in the instructional components of an American Indian education program in order for them to acquire an understanding of the cultural heritage of the American Indian children for whom the program is designed. **However, American Indian children must be given priority in eligibility and enrollment.** For example, if a district or school uses its American Indian Aid to fund an American Indian Studies course, it must give priority to American Indian students seeking enrollment in the course. If there are seats remaining in the course after American Indian students have had an opportunity to enroll, those seats may be filled by non-American Indian students.

If non-American Indian students participate in an American Indian education program, is the district or school required to provide proportional funding from non-American Indian Education Aid sources in their IEPP?

The American Indian Program and Aid statutes do not require proportional non-American Indian Education Aid expenditures if non-American Indian students participate in the program. However, districts and schools are encouraged to blend and braid funding sources to target the benefits of American Indian Aid to American Indian students.

Is there a cap on the amount of American Indian Education Aid a district or school can allocate to staffing in their IEPP?

The American Indian Program and Aid statutes do not place caps on the amount of American Indian Education Aid that can be expended on staffing.

We would like to partner with a neighboring district to host a year-end event; may we pool funds to provide this service?

Yes, as long as the Aid that you're using is pulled from the appropriate area of your IEPP.

Are we allowed to make changes to our IEPP after it has already been submitted and approved?

Efforts must be made to spend Aid according to your IEPP, however, if you find that you will be unable to spend Aid allotted to a certain area, you may submit an amended IEPP to the Office of Indian Education for review. If approved, this new IEPP would replace the previous submission. In addition, any school or district amending their IEPP may be subject to an audit by the Minnesota Department of Education. Contact the Office of Indian Education for further clarification or if you have specific questions.

Do American Indian Education Aid funds have to be spent by a certain date?

By statute, all funds not expended by June 30, 2019 will be returned to the state.

Who keeps track of how much money we have spent in any given area of our IEPP?

Each district, charter, and tribal contract school is responsible for accurately tracking funds that are spent, ensuring that funds are aligned to the correct area of the IEPP, and maintaining appropriate records of these expenditures along with applicable receipts. By accepting American Indian Education Aid, you are subject to monitoring by the Office of Indian Education to ensure that all monies are being spent in accordance with your IEPP.

We received our American Indian Education Aid prior to the approval of our IEPP. Can we begin spending our Aid right away, or do we wait until our IEPP has been approved?

American Indian Education Aid can only be spent on the items within your IEPP. If you would like to begin spending funds prior to October 1, you should plan accordingly. Your plan can be submitted to the Office of Indian Education prior to the deadline.

We currently do not have an Indian Home-School Liaison (IHSL), but would like to hire one; Are there training resources available?

The Indian Home School Liaison Program is offered through the Special Education Department at the Minnesota Department of Education. Please call Elizabeth Watkins at (651)582-8678, or email her at elizabeth.watkins@state.mn.us. The Office of Indian Education participates in IHSL training through the Special Education department.

What role does the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC) have in the development of our IEPP?

The district staff are required to work in close collaboration with AIPAC to develop the strongest possible IEPP that maximizes educational programming and opportunities for American Indian students. The AIPAC chairperson is required to sign the IEPP, along with district staff.

NEW: The district must submit a complete roster of the AIPAC members along with the by-laws attached to the IEPP.

What if we don't have an AIPAC in place yet? Can we still submit and IEPP?

If your district, charter, or tribal contract school has 10 or more American Indian students, as cited within the FY18 American Indian Education Aid Estimate, you are required to have an established AIPAC. If you have not yet formed this committee, please call the Office of Indian Education for guidance on getting started.