

MAJOR IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY



COLORADO
Department of Education

EASI Route: District Designed & Led

Introduction

The District Designed and Led (DDL) route of the Empowering Action for School Improvement (EASI) application encourages districts to initiate and expand support for schools in need of improvement. This route includes two services including Implementation Support and Major Improvement Strategy (DDL-MIS). Both DDLs options are designed to support improvement implementation efforts.

DDL-MIS service is designed for districts and their schools that have a demonstrated need that can be served through the implementation of one of [CDE's Major Improvement Strategy \(MIS\) Guides](#)¹. Current guides include:

- Attendance Strategy Guide 2.0
- Coaching Strategy Guide 2.0
- Data Driven Instruction Strategy Guide 2.0
- Family-School-Community Partnerships (FSCP) Strategy Guide 2.0
- High Dosage Tutoring Strategy Guide 2.0
- Professional Learning Communities (PLC) Strategy Guide 2.0
- Trauma-Informed Education Strategy Guide 2.0
- Ninth Grade Success Strategy Guide 2.0

Eligibility & Prioritization

Prerequisites. Districts and their schools must demonstrate the need for a given improvement strategy through any of the following:

- External diagnostic review completed in the last two years from time of application
- Internal district diagnostic review completed in the last two years from time of application
- S-CAP review in the last two years from time of application
- Relevant school or district-level data trends for the last three years

The demonstrated need must clearly align to the selected Major Improvement Strategy Guide.

Eligibility. Schools that meet the following criteria are eligible to apply:

- Schools identified for improvement under ESSA as Comprehensive Support (CS), Targeted Support (TS), or Additional Targeted Support (ATS); and/or
- Schools with a state identification School Performance Framework plan type of Priority Improvement, Turnaround, or On Watch

Program Contact

Lindsay Cox, Ph.D.

School Transformation Grant Manager
School & District Transformation
(720) 728-7851

Cox_L@cde.state.co.us

Technical Assistance

easi@cde.state.co.us

¹ Refer to the Current UIP Major Improvement Strategy Guides website (<https://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/strategyguides>) for the most up to date list of approved guides. Archived Strategy Guides are in the process of being updated, as appropriate, and will be added as 2.0 versions when they may be used in for this grant opportunity.



Prioritization. If not all EASI proposals can be funded, proposals that meet grant expectations will be funded in the order of the EASI school-level prioritization list. Schools with the highest number of prioritization points will be funded first. District level supports that serve specific EASI-eligible schools will use the average prioritization of the included EASI eligible schools. Details on how prioritization points are calculated and the points for each EASI eligible school are available on the [EASI Resources and Technical Assistance](#) webpage.

Limitations. The EASI Route of District Designed & Led (DDL) is dependent on the capacity of a district to implement the selected major improvement efforts. If a district has active DDL funded initiatives from prior EASI cohorts or is applying for multiple DDLs, the number of funded DDL awards for a district may be taken into consideration in the final funding decisions.

Program Considerations & Fit

Program Considerations. Successful implementation of DDL-MIS requires district-level support and capacity to ensure adherence to the selected [CDE Major Improvement Strategy Guide](#). Each Major Improvement Strategy Guide includes necessary preconditions and contextual fit sections that should be considered in the selection of an aligned improvement strategy. CDE will also gather information about the interest of grantees in a learning cohort focused on the selected improvement strategy. If the grant funds multiple districts implementing a specific improvement strategy and CDE staff allows, additional professional learning opportunities or CDE-lead support may be provided to grantees.

Program Fit. DDL-MIS is designed to support the implementation of a selected Major Improvement Strategy Guide focused on a given improvement initiative. DDL-MIS is a good fit for districts who can demonstrate the need for the selected improvement strategy. The need may be demonstrated through a recent external diagnostic review, internal school review process, recent completion of an EASI support that includes diagnostic components (i.e. Transformation Network, Connect for Success, Rigorous Action through Redesign, District Strategic Planning, or Exploration Supports), or recent school data profile. DDL-MIS may not be a good fit for schools or a district currently receiving support or considering applying for Rigorous Action through Redesign, Connect for Success, Transformation Network.

Sequence of Program Support

The sequence of the work is determined and outlined in the selected Major Improvement Strategy Guide. Guides provide the sequence of implementation, core components, and provide sample implementation activities. Proposals detailing the sequence of the work must align to the selected Major Improvement Strategy Guide but may be adjusted based on the current state and context of the school or district.

Available Funds & Duration

Available Funds. Applicants may request up to the maximum award amount for each school included in the selected Major Improvement Strategy. Award may be:

- Up to \$20,000 per school in Year 1 (2024-25)
- Up to \$80,000 per school in Year 2 (2025-26)
- Up to \$80,000 per school in Year 3 (2026-27)

Note: All District Designed & Led (Implementation Support and Major Improvement Strategy combined) awards for a single district may not exceed \$1,000,000 in EASI Cohort 8 (2024-25 to 2026-27).

Duration. Program support is designed to support a district led initiative for a period of 2.5 years (2024-25 to 2026-27).



Allowable Use of Funds

Funds are intended to support the implementation of a selected Major Improvement Strategy Guide and budgets must align tightly to the core components in each guide. Allowable use of funds includes costs associated with:

- Implementation of core components of the selected MIS Guide
- Hiring an external provider to support implementation
- Visiting other sites with successful or promising implementation of the selected MIS Guide
- Stipends for teachers and support staff to design, develop, or implement activities aligned with the core components of the MIS Guide
- Stakeholder engagement (stipends, translation, childcare, etc.)
- Evaluation or progress monitoring
- Other activities directly related to the core components of the selected MIS Guide

Budget Recommendations. For the application submission, a draft budget should clearly demonstrate a clear plan for implementing the selected MIS Guide. Each budget line should specify activities and the connection to core components in the guide. It is acceptable, however, to use a general placeholder in the budget if the activities are sequential and dependent on the outcome of initial activities. District-level implementation of DDL-MIS is acceptable, but any school-specific expenses (i.e. staff stipends, substitute pay, supplies, etc.) may only be for schools eligible for EASI support.

Any expenses related to an external provider must be supported by a scope of work (draft version acceptable) that clearly outlines timelines, deliverables, and costs for the eligible school. Scope of work must also clearly align to the selected MIS guide.

Note: If entering indirect costs, the total request amount may not exceed the maximum allowable amount.

Fund Considerations.

- Funds from this opportunity must be used to **supplement and not supplant** any federal, state, and local funds currently being used to provide activities.
- Post-award revisions must be approved by 06/30 and funds drawn down by 09/30 of each respective fiscal year.
- A school or district may carry funds forward in alignment with funding source restrictions and with CDE approval. At the end of the grant performance period, any non-requested federal funds are reverted and any unspent state funds must be returned to the state.
- CDE may terminate a grant award upon thirty days' notice if it is deemed by CDE that the applicant is not fulfilling the requirements of the funded program as specified in the approved project application, or if the program is generating less than satisfactory results.
- Multi-year or future award year amounts are contingent on allocations of state and federal funds to CDE in each respective fiscal year.

Important Program Dates

Program Dates	Activity
September- December	Meet with CDE School Transformation Manager to discuss interest in applying for support and outline a proposed budget
December	Application due
January	Award notifications
March-April	Meet with CDE DDL Program Contact to set performance targets and implementation milestones
Fall & Spring Year 2 & Year 3	Participate in two check-ins per year with CDE DDL Program Lead



Evaluation and Reporting

Each grantee of the program must, at a minimum, agree to the following evaluation, reporting, and/or progress monitoring components:

- Development of an implementation plan including implementation milestones and performance targets
- Progress monitoring check-ins twice per year
- Annual Financial Report (AFR) each fiscal year by 09/30

Note: All data collected will protect personally identifiable information (PII) protected and is only reported on an aggregate level for purposes of evaluating the EASI support and/or supporting future program improvements.

Program Assurances

LEA Commitments:

- Designate a program contact person or small working team who will be responsible for the implementation of the supported improvement effort
- All grant requirements are met in a timely manner
- Participate in the development, tracking, monitoring, and sharing of implementation benchmarks and performance targets with CDE staff through the duration of the grant
- Participate in two implementation check-ins each year of the grant with designated CDE staff
- Ensure that funds are being leveraged with other local, state, and federal funds (e.g., Titles I, II, III, V, and IDEA) and that accountability for cost-effective management is provided.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- **Current UIP Major Improvement Strategy Guides, Implementation Guides, and Implementation Worksheets**
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/strategyguides>