

## Using Federal Funds for National Board Activities: An Action-Planning Guide

### Overview

You do not need to be a federal funding expert or an experienced advocate to spark the right conversations to ensure that federal resources used in your school, district, or state are meaningfully impacting teaching and learning! The purpose of this action-planning guide is to support National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) and other teacher leaders in opening conversations to effectively use federal grants (e.g., Title I, Title II Part A, and IDEA) for use in supporting a range of activities related to National Board Certification and to growing all teachers to an accomplished level.

This guide is intended to be used alongside the webinar entitled, [“Opportunities to Use Federal Education Funds to Support National Board Certification and NBPTS Programs.”](#) NBCTs can use it individually or, ideally, as a team of NBCTs and other teacher leaders with a vision for scaling Board-certification in your district or school.

Additional NBCT advocacy resources may be found at <https://www.nbpts.org/practice-policy/advocacy-resources/>. If you have questions or would like support, please contact your local NBCT Network or Michelle Accardi, NBCT, at [maccardi@nbpts.org](mailto:maccardi@nbpts.org).

This guide is intended to break down into simple elements the process of advocating for federal grant funds for Board-certification. The guide is structured around 3 steps:

- Step 1. Know your funding application requirements
- Step 2. Identify Federal Funding Connected to State or U.S. Department of Education Desired Outcomes
- Step 3: Know Your Decision Makers

*Please note this guidance does not constitute legal advice.*

### **Step 1: Know Your Funding Application Requirements**

Federal grants in many cases have been used for the same purposes for decades, without consideration of whether they are being used in ways that positively impact student outcomes. Sometimes all it takes is a push to open the conversation to reconsider what is best for improving teaching and learning. To influence new and impactful decisions for how these funds are spent, an effective advocate must be equipped with knowledge of the funding requirements and must be ready with answers to have a conversation with decision makers.

Begin by considering the ideas and questions outlined below in Table 1.

Key ideas	Key questions
Applying for federal funding requires robust justification	What is the need and, importantly, what is the <i>evidence</i> of that need?
Justification must be research and evidence based	What would be the end result if the need was filled? (e.g., improved student outcomes)
Evidence of impact strengthens application	What are some impactful programs, professional learning or strategies that are grounded in research that could fill this need? (e.g., National Board Certification; National Board Certification facilitated support cohorts; Mentor/Induction programs pairing accomplished teachers with novice teachers)
<p>Funding sources can be ‘braided and blended’</p> <p>Some Title programs have rules about ‘supplanting’ and ‘supplementing’. This means that federal dollars cannot be used for a program that has previously been supported with state funds, but it can supplement those funds for greater impact.</p>	What other existing resources might be leveraged to support, amplify and sustain these ideas? (In addition to federal grant funding and state level funding, consider NBCT leaders, teachers on special assignment, collaboration time, state funding, union funding)
Know the interests of your decision makers and align your request or application to those interests	How might these ideas support the priorities articulated in the school or district improvement plan?
<p align="center"><b><u>Funding drives programs and funding determines numbers of individuals impacted. If there’s no funding, there is no program no matter how great or important it is.</u></b></p>	

**Table 1. Key Ideas and Key Questions to Understand Your Funding Application Requirements**

Next, watch the 60-minute webinar, [“Opportunities to Use Federal Education Funds to Support National Board Certification and NBPTS Programs.”](#)

In this webinar you will learn that not all funding is automatically sent to districts once the state department of education receives it from the federal source. It is available, but not all districts ‘opt in’ to apply for the funding. This means that in order to receive the funding, the district (or school) must submit an application including a needs assessment, a plan, rationale/justification for the plan and the appropriate research behind the evidence-based practices. Sometimes, the work to get money to fund a program is so arduous that districts decide that the application effort is not worth the funds. This is a place NBCT teacher leaders can help.

## **Step 2: Identify Federal Funding Connected to State or U.S. Department of Education Desired Outcomes**

Your State uses several documents to determine priorities for funding. Two important documents, most likely connected to your efforts to grow National Board support are:

- 1) *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan*
  - ESSA plan determines student learning outcomes and the measures for each
  - ESSA plan determines funding priorities
- 2) *State Educator Equity Plan*
  - Educator Equity Plan determines how state will close opportunity gaps for students with disproportionate access to effective educators

A third document and plan could be used for National Board activities that are geared toward teachers building capacity to better serve students with disabilities, perhaps working toward the Exceptional Needs Specialist Certificate. As more and more students with disabilities are served in the general education classroom, this is a key opportunity for general education teachers to access additional training in preparation to support ALL students.

### 3) *Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)*

IDEA ensures that students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate education (FAPE) based on IEP decisions that allow them to access and progress in grade level learning standards that will lead to postsecondary education, employment and independent living.

These three plans are required from each state through the United States Department of Education. Each state's plans are available online.

## **Title I – Overview**

Title I dollars are intended to support student programs; the ultimate goal of these dollars is to increase student outcomes. Districts often use Title I to fund staff positions.

### **Title I questions teacher leaders may ask schools or district leaders:**

- Is your school a School-wide Title I program?
- Is your 'program' a Title I program within your school or district?
- What are your funding sources? What funding pays for your salary? (local levy/tax base funding sources; state and or federal)

## **Title II; Part A: Teacher and Principal Quality - Overview**

Title IIA funds are intended to mitigate student opportunity gaps by determining to what degree underserved student populations are served by "inexperienced," "out-of-field" or "ineffective" teachers. These funds often are used to provide professional learning experiences. Some key notes include:

- States define and measure “inexperienced”, “out-of-field” or “ineffective” teachers in their ESSA plan
- States determine priorities for Title II state level funds
- States produce an ‘allowable uses for funds’ document in their ESSA plan. These rules vary depending on the federal source, and sometimes, the state ‘interprets’ the guidance in ways that are actually more restrictive than the federal source intended. As such, a conversation with those who control the funding decisions equipped with a rationale about the impact of National Board Certification, can support the repurposing of these funds.
- States may use 5% of the total grant package from the federal award for state level work. Of that 5%, the state department of education can also pay for Full Time Equivalent (FTE) to run the Title II office at the state level. The rest of the 5% not used for staffing can be used for state level work. This is another place where state wide work with National Board can be funded. For example, these funds can pay for state level National Board Cohort training, or mentor training.
- The state also drives funds to districts to provide professional learning programs. This funding that is distributed to districts is at least 95% of the total grant package sent to the state.
  - Some states choose to drive out funds through a grant application. In the grant the district identifies professional learning and programing needs and articulates how funding will be spent. The state Title II office monitors the use of funds for compliance of appropriate use of funds.

**Title IIA questions teacher leaders may ask as schools or district leaders:**

- Where is your state ESSA plan located?
- Consider reading the Title II; Part A section: What do you want to accomplish to boost teacher capacity that the state has determined is an ‘allowable use’?
- What programs in your district are funded through Title II?

**Step 3: Know Your Decision Makers**

Introduce yourself to the key federal grant decisionmakers at the state, district, and building level. Their titles may be “federal funding manager,” “Director of Title I,” Director of Federal Programs” or other similar titles. Ask them:

- Who is on the state committee to determine how state Title II funds are used?
- Who is on the district committee (or is it one person) that determines how the district Title II funds are used?
- Might there be an opportunity for an accomplished teacher leader to be part of this decision-making? How is that person selected?

**Questions teacher leaders may ask schools or district leaders:**

- What funding sources does your district ‘opt out’ of receiving? (possibly due to burdensome reporting or application processes)
- Are there Title funds in your district that are not yet allocated to a specific program or activity?

## Additional Opportunities

Your district may have access to additional federal resources that could be used to support activities related to National Board Certification. While less focused on teacher efficacy than Title I and Title II Part A, these include:

- Title I, Part C—Migrant Education
- Title I, Part D—Neglected and Delinquent
- Title I, Part G—Advanced Placement
- Title II, Part A—Teacher/Principal Quality
- Title II, Part B—Mathematics and Science Partnerships
- Title III—Migrant and Bilingual Education Office
- Title IV, Part A—Student Support and Academic Enrichment
- Title VI, Part B—Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) Flexibility
- Title VII, - Impact Aid Federally Connected Students
- Title IX—McKinney-Vento/Homeless Education

## Acknowledgments

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards wishes to acknowledge Cindy Rockholt, NBCT, for her support in developing this guide. We also wish to thank Melissa Junge, J.D., and Sheara Krvaric, J.D., of the Federal Education Group for sharing their expertise to support NBCTs in advocating for a stronger profession.

Many thanks to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for its generous support of this project and funding to support meaningful engagement of NBCTs as change agents.