**THE NATIONAL EXTERNAL DIPLOMA PROGRAM® (NEDP)**

**FY 2021 Competitive Grant Application**

**FY2021 National External Diploma Program® (NEDP)**

The Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor) will award federal and State NEDP funds to eligible applicants as part of the multi-year competitive FY2021 – FY 2023, Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Services grant, to facilitate the implementation of NEDP services across the state. NEDP funds will be awarded in accordance with WIOA Title II guidelines ensuring adequate representation for Maryland geographic regions and easy access for program participants across the state.

NEDP is owned by CASAS – Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems. NEDP must be administered in accordance with MD Labor NEDP Assurances and other guidelines and written directives provided by CASAS and MD Labor.

NEDP Application Checklist includes:

* Narrative Criteria and Documentation
* NEDP Budget
* NEDP Schedule (Projections)
* NEDP Assurances/ NEDP Roles and Responsibilities

Each section must be completed accurately and fully, as indicated. NEDP application submission must follow the guidelines indicated on the FY 2021 MD Labor Adult Instructional Services (AIS) Competitive Grant Application.

**NEDP Program Overview**

The National External Diploma Program**®**(NEDP) is a performance and competency-based assessment program that awards a high school diploma to adults who have acquired many high school level abilities through life experiences. NEDP provides an alternative option for adults 18 years and above to earn a high school diploma by demonstrating their abilities through a series of simulations equivalent to job and life situations, rather than through high stake tests. NEDP participants are evaluated against a criterion of excellence instead of through comparison to others. The web-based program is non-instructional; participants take responsibility for their learning by using existing community resources and achieve mastery of all required competencies as well as an occupational or specialized skill. Most participants are able to complete the program in six to twelve months.

NEDP offers scheduling flexibility and confidentiality. It assesses three (3) foundation content areas and seven (7) functional life skill content areas:

**NEDP Foundation Competencies**

* Communication and Media Literacy
* Applied Math/Numeracy
* Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

**NEDP Life Skills Contexts**

* Civic Literacy and Community Participation
* Consumer Awareness and Financial Literacy
* Cultural Literacy
* Geography and History
* Health Literacy
* Science
* Twenty-First Century Workplace

NEDP is aligned to the College and Career Readiness Standards.

**Two Phases of NEDP**

1. **Diagnostic-** Clients demonstrate that they possess high school level skills through standardized assessments in writing, reading, and math. They also self-assess their familiarity with the skills measured in the Generalized Assessment portion of the program and their ability to use technology, identify a college and career competency, and complete the Occupational Information Network (O\*Net) Interest Profiler (IP).
2. **Generalized Assessment-** Participants demonstrate their high school level abilities by applying them in simulated, academic, workplace, and life contexts. They must demonstrate mastery of 70 competencies in three foundational content areas and seven functional life skill content areas, all of which are aligned to the College and Career Readiness Standards.

**Participant Eligibility for NEDP**

Maryland adults without a high school diploma who:

* Are 18 years of age and older
* Are Maryland residents with valid Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) issued ID
* Meet cut scores on the prerequisite CASAS Diagnostic Assessment

**Prerequisites for Enrollment into NEDP**

An information session, conducted by intake staff or an NEDP Advisor, describing the requirements of the program prior to beginning NEDP is required of all participants in the program. The NEDP website (<https://www.casas.org/nedp>) contains resources for information sessions.

**Enrollment in NEDP Diagnostic Phase**

To begin this level, program should determine that the client is at the CASAS C/D level in Math and the D level in Reading. There are several ways to do this:

* CASAS Appraisal (paper/pencil) or Locator (eTests), **OR**
* TABE 7th grade or higher, **OR**
* Administer CASAS Reading- D level, Math- C/D level, clients who are near or meeting CASAS cut scores 230 Math and 236 Reading will be eligible to begin Diagnostics.

**Enrollment in NEDP Generalized Assessment Phase**

To complete the Diagnostic Phase and move into Generalized Assessment, clients have to demonstrate that their basic skills in Reading, Writing, and Math are high enough to successfully complete the work in Generalized Assessment. They do this by earning the following cut scores, which may only be determined using the specific CASAS testing forms and levels listed below:

* CASAS Reading GOALS level D 236 or higher
* CASAS Math GOALS level C/D 230 or higher
* CASAS Written Prompt writing sample score 3 or higher
* Additionally, clients complete four “open” diagnostics in this phase to assess their college and career goals and self-assessment of the competences they will need to demonstrate in Generalized Assessment.

**FY2021 NEDP BUDGET**

Use the NEDP state and federal budget forms for proposed NEDP activities and the local match.

Refer to the Budget Instructions contained in the FY 2021 MD Labor AIS Competitive Grant Application to complete this section.

**NEDP FUND USE AND LIMITATIONS**

Local programs receiving NEDP funds must comply with WIOA Title II local administrative cost limits, fund use and limitations as described in the FY21 Competitive Application. Federal and State NEDP budget funding lines must only be used for NEDP related activities, and to support NEDP program implementation in all phases of the program, including:

* NEDP Advisor/Assessor salaries/benefits
* Facilitation of intake and assessment of prospective NEDP clients
* Professional development for NEDP staff
* Procurement of NEDP program materials

**FY2021 NEDP PROJECTIONS**

Use the FY 21 MD Labor-AELS NEDP Schedule to complete projections for your NEDP program for the FY 2021 program year. This document must be completed accurately and fully, including all appropriate budget funding lines.

**NEDP NARRATIVE**

**NEDP Outreach, Recruitment, and Enrollment**

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| --- |
| **Narrative Criteria:** |
| Describe your outreach plan to identify eligible participants in your local area. The plan should include specific steps and the expected outcomes. |
| Describe your NEDP intake and assessment process, including standardized assessments that will be used to determine eligibility for the Diagnostic phase. |
| How will your local program assist individuals who are unable to meet CASAS cut scores to transition to Generalized Assessment, including English language learners? |

**NEDP Client Retention and Completion**

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| --- |
| **Narrative Criteria:** |
| Outline your action plan for promoting strong retention and completion rates and for assisting clients needing remediation at different phases of the program. List specific resources available to NEDP clients in your area. |

**NEDP Staff Professional Development**

A minimum of two (2) staff, including a lead assessor devoting time to operating and growing NEDP is vital to successful program implementation. NEDP staff are required to obtain a minimum of 10 hours of professional development hours in FY 2021.

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| **Narrative Criteria:** |
| Describe your NEDP staffing level, staffing needs, and your plan for meeting professional development needs. |

**NEDP PERSONNEL**

List the primary and (one) secondary contacts for your NEDP program, as required by CASAS and MD Labor.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Primary contact | Secondary contact |
| Name |  |  |
| Phone |  |  |
| Email |  |  |

**NEDP Staff Responsibilities**

**NEDP Advisor**

**Primary Purpose of Position:**

*The Advisor works with NEDP clients through the initial stages of the NEDP program, the Diagnostic phase.  The advisor is responsible for intake, initial assessment, and goal development of NEDP clients and serves as a resource for all staff.*

**Job Competencies:**

* Knowledge of learning theories relevant to adults
* Knowledge of adult NEDP intake and assessment requirements
* Knowledge of CASAS and TABE assessments
* Knowledge of professional development and training procedures for the administration and interpretation of approved assessments
* Knowledge of community resources to assist prospective clients in need of remediation

**State Duties Include:**

* Attend NEDP statewide professional development meetings

**Local Program Duties Include:**

* Work as a team member with the local Program Administrator, the MIS Specialist, the IAS, and the IS to meet NEDP program goals and performance measures
* Introduce NEDP to  prospective clients through NEDP information session
* Administer all Appraisal and Diagnostic instruments
* Score (or oversee the scoring) and evaluate the CASAS Reading and Math Diagnostic Instruments
* Interpret writing diagnostic test results and provide learning recommendations according to NEDP Policies and Procedures
* Complete remediation forms as required, and provide learning recommendations.
* Promote NEDP client retention strategies
* Refer NEDP applicants learners to support services and/or community resources
* Assist clients in identifying a College and Career Competency (CCC) option
* Facilitate client entry into the Generalized Assessment phase

**Qualifications:**

* Bachelor’s degree; Master’s degree preferred
* Strong organizational and interpersonal skills
* Previous experience administering standardized tests
* Experience advising learners

**Employment Terms:**

* + - Complete NEDP Advisor/Assessor certification requirements as required by CASAS and MD Labor
    - Work with one client in Diagnostic and Generalized Assessment annually to remain certified

**NEDP Assessor**

**Primary Purpose of Position:**

*This position works with a client in Generalized Assessment through completion of portfolio and graduation.*

**Job Competencies:**

* Knowledge of learning theories relevant to adults
* Knowledge of generalized assessment requirements
* Knowledge of community resources to assist prospective clients in need of remediation.

**State Duties Include:**

* Attend NEDP statewide professional development meetings
* Communicate and train local program staff on assessment administration and other pertinent information, if serving as lead NEDP Specialist

**Local Program Duties Include:**

* Collaborate with other NEDP staff and the local program administrator to meet NEDP program goals and performance measures
* Promote awareness of NEDP within the local adult education program, among program staff and in the community
* Provide procedural information to assist client in navigating the Web-based assessment system
* Activate NEDP competency areas
* Conduct In-Office Checks after Generalized Assessment activities have been submitted
* Evaluate activities and In-Office Checks completed by clients using the assessment manual and guidance pop-ups
* Provide evaluation results to the client along with instructions on how the Post-Task Assessment will be conducted
* Conduct and evaluate Post-Task Assessment
* Organize and implement the Individualized Assessment process, resulting in the demonstration of the Individualized Assessment
* Review and approve portfolios completed by other Assessors, following portfolio review procedures and guidelines

**Qualifications:**

* Bachelor’s degree; Master’s degree preferred
* Strong organizational and interpersonal skills
* Previous experience administering standardized tests

**Employment Terms:**

* + - Complete NEDP Advisor/Assessor certification requirements as required by CASAS and MD Labor
    - Work with one client each in Diagnostics and Generalized Assessment annually to remain certified

**NEDP ASSURANCES**

**National External Diploma Program® (NEDP) Assurances**

By receiving NEDP funds under this grant award, I hereby agree, as grantee, to comply with the following terms and conditions:

1. **GENERAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

The following requirements must be followed:

* Ensure that all potential clients are properly screened using approved assessment instruments.
* If a client does not meet minimum requirements to enter the NEDP program, they are provided with information about learning options within their education agency or referred to another appropriate adult education agency.
* Limit NEDP services to clients who are eighteen (18) years of age or older.
* Potential clients, who are eligible for K-12 services, must be officially withdrawn from school in order to participate in the NEDP.
* No part of the NEDP may be used with in-school youth or students.
* Provide reasonable accommodations when administering NEDP assessments as documented in the CASAS NEDP Assessment Accommodations Policy.
* Implement the exact model defined by the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor) and the National External Diploma Program® for all phases of the National External Diploma Program®.
* Conduct a planned, targeted promotional effort at a level to generate a sufficient number of inquiries and qualified candidates to reach the graduation goal.
* The National External Diploma Program® is designed as an integral system and, in order to guarantee the validity of the assessment, the grantee must ensure the program is used in its entirety.
* If the grantee delivery entity changes, the grantee must ensure that all records, equipment, materials, and all items purchased with NEDP grant funds are moved to the new service delivery entity.
* No partnership agreements shall be entered into nor shall any agreement for services beyond the scope approved in the initial application be enacted unless approved by MD Labor
* Recommend all clients who successfully complete the NEDP requirements to MD Labor for credentialing
* All applicants’ and clients’ records are kept secure and confidential.
* Ensure that updated NEDP Policy and Procedures Manual, procedures for requesting diplomas, transcripts, and verifying client records are accessible on site.

**MARYLAND RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS**

* NEDP clients must verify their identity and establish Maryland residency prior to enrollment in the Diagnostic Phase of the program by presenting **ONE** of the following government issued photo IDs:
* A current (not expired) Maryland driver's license
* A current (not expired) Maryland learner’s permit issued by the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
* A current (not expired) Maryland identification card issued by the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
* A current *active duty* dependent’s military ID card
* If none of the forms of identification and residency identified above are attainable, the applicant must present **at least two (2) documents** from the following list ***(one of the two documents presented must be a government issued photo identification card)*.** \*If one of the documents being submitted is a CASA ID card, the other document MUST be a Passport:

1.\* Passport (must contain photo, name, DOB and signature)

2.\* CASA ID (must contain photo, name, DOB, address and signature)

3. Payroll check stub issued by an employer within the last 2 months

4. U.S. Internal Revenue Service tax reporting W-2 form or 1099 form (not more than 18 months old)

5. U.S. or Maryland income tax return from the previous year

6. Monthly bank statement not more than 2 months old issued by a bank

7. Annual Social Security statement for the current or preceding calendar year

8. Utility bill, not more than 2 months old, issued to the applicant (examples include gas, electric, sewer, water, cable or phone bill) – cellular phone and pager bills are not accepted

9. Receipt for personal property taxes or real estate taxes paid within the last year

10. Current automobile or life insurance bill (cards or policies are not accepted)

11. Voter registration card (current with address)

12. Current homeowner’s insurance policy or bill

13. Cancelled check (not more than 2 months old) with both name and address imprinted

* A copy of the NEDP client's photo ID must be kept with the client's record; a copy of the photo ID must be submitted to MD Labor along with other documents for the award of diplomas/initial transcripts.
* High School Diplomas and Transcripts issued by MD Labor will reflect NEDP client's name as it appears on the photo identification.
* All documentation submitted by the NEDP program to MD Labor for the issuance of transcripts and the award of diplomas must match client's name as it appears on the photo ID, including LACES screenshot, CASAS Client Status, Diploma Request Form, a copy of client's photo ID, and the Transcript.
* If the client has a legal name change during duration of the program, clients must be advised to submit updated government issued photo ID.

1. **FACILITIES**

The grantee must provide acceptable facilities to administer the National External Diploma Program®.

The NEDP site is required:

* To provide suitable facilities to ensure confidentiality and privacy during meeting with advisors and assessors and the administration of NEDP instruments.
* To have suitable facilities for persons with disabilities.
* To have adequate office space so that advisors/assessors can monitor the assessment of clients.
* To have secure storage space for NEDP materials, client documents, other files, equipment andassessment instruments.
* To have access to adequate, onsite technology for client use including internet access.
* To be located in a facility that has year-round activity with day and evening hours centrally located in a population area large enough to produce the projected number of graduates.
* To be located with convenient parking that is well lit and secure.
* To have space for information sessions large enough to seat 15-20 individuals.
* To have adequate heating/air conditioning with convenient access to restroom facilities.

Preferably, the site should have other adult education and related support services on site or nearby, and provide private space to seat people for individual oral assessment and client work.

1. **HARDWARE/SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS**

The grantee must provide necessary hardware and software equipment, materials, and supplies to operate the National External Diploma Program® site. The web-based NEDP must meet the minimum operating system and hardware requirements:

* Windows 10, or later versions.MAC OS X, Chrome OS, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Apple safari, Opera *(Note: safari used with MAC OS will not support the In-Office Check recordings. Google Chrome on a MacBook will support the In-Office Check Recordings*)
* Internet access (100 kbps upload bandwidth)
* Adobe Acrobat Reader
* Monitor screen resolution of 1024 x 768 pixels or higher
* Microphone, built in or accessory (stand-alone desktop or headset)
* Video card
* Printers
* Dedicated NEDP equipment: computers, printer, scanner, telephone, copier, headphones, furniture, audio/visual equipment
* Materials and supplies: printing, office supplies, postage, advertising/public relations, client materials

1. **STAFF REQUIREMENTS**

The following staff requirements must be followed:

* A minimum of two (2) advisors/assessors are required to be trained and certified for each site; however three or more are recommended depending on program size/number of clients being served.
* The advisor/assessor assigned to a client should not serve as portfolio reviewer for the same client.
* One advisor/assessor is designated as the NEDP Coordinator and Lead Assessor. It is preferable that this position is full-time.
* All advisors/assessors must hold, at minimum, a four-year college degree from an accredited post-secondary institution and be able to evaluate writing and critical thinking demonstrations.
* Advisor/assessors may not teach any client assigned to them in the Generalized Assessment phase of the program.
* All advisor/assessors must satisfactorily complete the NEDP Implementation Training provided by CASAS and become certified prior to serving clients. Staff must maintain certification based on the CASAS training policies.
* NEDP staff must attend all required local, regional and MD Labor professional development trainings.
* Advisors/assessors must serve at least one (1) client in Diagnostics and one (1) client in General Assessment phases each fiscal year. Staff not meeting this requirement will complete refresher training in Diagnostic/Generalized assessment training or both. The local program will be responsible for training costs.

1. **STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

All NEDP Advisors/Assessors are required to complete a minimum of ten (10) professional development hours per program year. NEDP State Trainers provide training and technical assistance to NEDP Advisor/Assessors and staff on behalf of MD Labor. In addition, state trainers:

* Providing representation at all National External Diploma Program® administrative and trainer meetings as required by MD Labor.
* Ensure that annual portfolio reviews within assigned local programs are conducted.
* Provide training for new staff and/or refresher training for active staff as needed, to ensure program content and processes are implemented and followed.

1. **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The following reporting requirements must be followed:

* Submit Yearly Statistical Report (YSR) directly to CASAS at the close of the fiscal year.
* Submit all required narrative and financial reports to MD Labor as scheduled.

1. **PROGRAM FEES**

The program may collect registration fees from clients to participate in the program. The program must ensure that:

* Fees do not exceed $225 per client, per active enrollment period.
* Registration fees collected from clients for participating in the National External Diploma Program® be set aside and reinvested in Program. These fees can be used in any means deemed necessary to directly support the program; .e.g. materials, supplies, Advisor/Assessor salaries, etc.
* Fees are not funneled into the grantee’s general funds.
* There are no additional charges to the client for items considered being an integral part of the program (e.g. assessments,) or that would create a barrier to participation.
* Clients reentering the program after a period of inactivity may be required to pay NEDP program fees

1. **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

In order to ensure the integrity of the NEDP, grantees are required to participate in the review and monitoring process. Each grantee must:

* Participate in regularly scheduled evaluation and monitoring visits.
* As an adopting agency, appoint a NEDP site representative who will be the official contact person to monitor programmatic issues. This representative must have completed the National External Diploma Program® training and must provide direct service to clients as an Advisor/Assessor.

Failure to comply with the above assurances, in addition to the NEDP policies and procedure set forth by CASAS and MD Labor, may result in withholding grant funds or termination of grant.

I have read the above assurances in entirety and agree to execute the assurances and the NEDP program as established by CASAS.

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Signature of Head of Grantee Agency Date

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Signature of Program Administrator Date