



# Tuition Support for Students Pursuing Minnesota Licensure: Blind/Visually Impaired 2018-2019 Application Form

## Tuition Support Project

The Minnesota Low Incidence Projects have funds available to support students pursuing special education licensure in Blind /Visually Impaired who are taking Blind/Visually impaired specialization courses from an accredited University program during the 2018-2019 school year. These funds are made possible with a grant from the Minnesota Department of Education. The source of the funds is federal award Special Education—Program to States, CFDA 84.027A.

## Intent of Tuition Support

The intent of this tuition support program is to increase the number of available teachers licensed in Blind/Visually Impaired (BVI) throughout our state. ***The expectation is that teachers who benefit from this tuition support would then pursue BVI licensure upon completion of course requirements, and actively pursue and/or be available for employment in this capacity.***

## Applicant Requirements

The number of students selected for support will depend upon the number of qualified applicants for any given year. Applicants must be current residents of Minnesota who are either currently employed as teachers in Minnesota, or plan on teaching in Minnesota. Applicants must have the signature of their Regional Low Incidence Facilitator *and* their Director of Special Education (not a coordinator signature) on the application to assist in placement of licensed teachers following program completion. Participants must be enrolled in an approved University and accredited program that provides coursework toward BVI licensure. The amount of the award is \$200 per graduate credit for ***approved Blind/Visually Impaired-specific courses***. Awards will be granted upon completion of the course(s) and following submission of proof of enrollment and program of study, as well as required documentation indicating course completion/transcript and receipt of paid tuition at the end of the grant's fiscal calendar year (end of August for September 30<sup>th</sup> year end).

## Course Requirements & Related Tuition Support

Course requirements for BVI licensure are dependent upon the applicant's current teaching credentials. If a candidate has other special education licensure, prior transcripts will need to



be reviewed by Licensure to identify any additional courses needed to meet overall special education licensure requirements. If an applicant has no teaching license or has no special education license, coursework to meet licensure standards (outside of the core BVI courses) are the responsibility of the candidate. ***Additional coursework required for MN licensure outside of the core BVI courses is not eligible for tuition support. Additionally, payment of dropped courses and/or courses that do not meet grade requirements are the responsibility of the applicant. Any financial support received by the applicant outside of the Low Incidence Tuition Support Program must be reported on the application, as the Low Incidence Grant cannot be used to supplant other funds.***

## Timelines

You may apply at any time during the current school year, although it is strongly recommended that applications are submitted prior to enrollment for courses that are subject to grant support. Applications are reviewed and/or accepted on a first come/first served basis. Regional representation will also be considered. If available funds are depleted for the current school year, new applicants will be put on a waiting list.

## Application Directions

1. A completed electronic application packet consists of:
  - a. A **cover letter** to the application presenting the reasons why you would be a good candidate for support as you pursue Blind/Visually Impaired licensure. This includes a brief description of your experiences with students and others with disabilities, particularly those with vision impairment. Letters that contain spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors will negatively affect the evaluation of your application. The letter should be a minimum of one typed page in length.
  - b. A completed and signed **application form**.
  - c. **Signatures** on the application from your Regional Low Incidence Facilitator (RLIF) and your Director of Special Education (not a coordinator or local supervisor).
  - d. A **statement of financial support** describing any tuition, books, fees, etc. supported from other resources. You must report all supports on your application to avoid supplanting funds.
  - e. One **letter of reference** addressing your skills or potential for working as a teacher of students in Minnesota who have vision impairments. This reference should be written by an educational administrator (e.g., special education director, supervisor, principal, Regional Low Incidence Facilitator, or other administrator).



2. Collect all components of the application packet and email to:

Barb Lhotka, MN Low Incidence Projects

[barblhotka@embarqmail.com](mailto:barblhotka@embarqmail.com)

phone: 612 618-5718

To assure that your application has been received, contact Barb Lhotka if you have not heard back within 7 business days of emailing the information.

*Applications will receive priority consideration based on the date of receipt for the given year, as well as geographical representation and other identified criteria outlined below. If funds are limited, applicant requests will be awarded in the order in which they were received.*

3. Only completed electronic application packets will be reviewed. The quality of the applicant is a necessary condition for an award. As the primary judgment of quality, reviewers will consider:
  - a. your potential to succeed in rigorous special education coursework in vision impairments;
  - b. your course grades in the vision-specific courses, which must be a letter grade of A or B (or Pass) to qualify for tuition reimbursement; and
  - c. your potential, upon completion, to be an effective special education teacher for students in Minnesota who have vision impairments.

Your status in an accredited Blind/Visually Impaired licensure program will also be a factor in the decision. Preferences will be given to:

- a. applicants who received similar support from the Minnesota Low Incidence Projects earlier;
- b. those applicants who are starting their programs;
- c. those who have already started their programs and are teaching with special permissions from PELSB in Blind/Visually Impaired; and
- d. those who have already started their programs but are not yet teaching in this area *in this order*.

Finally, your geographical location will also be considered in order to support applicants from around the state.

4. Once a candidate submits an application, they will be notified of the status of their application within two weeks of receipt.
5. The process for receiving tuition support for the applicants who are selected will be as follows. Students will:



- a. pay for the courses themselves;
  - b. complete the courses through the accredited University;
  - c. provide the Minnesota Low Incidence Projects (Barb Lhotka) with an electronic *proof of payment and course completion/university grade report* by no later than September 1, 2019. Documentation can include scanned registrar web documents, which must then be electronically sent as an email attachment. The MN Low Incidence Projects will then process and reimburse the students for the awards specified prior to September 30<sup>th</sup>, unless a special request is made by the student to be reimbursed as soon as a course is completed.
6. If an individual's application was previously approved, it is *not* necessary to complete a new application for succeeding school years.

*Complete the information requested on the following pages.*

(Revised 8/18)