

Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA)

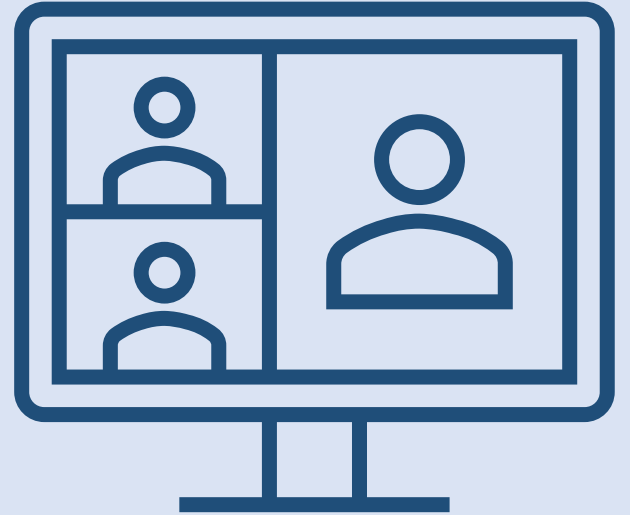
Stronger Connections Grant Information Session

Rhode Island Department of Education
Office of School & District Improvement
May 4, 2023

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ISLAND**

Reminders

- *Please mute*
- *All questions should be posted in the chat.*
- *This presentation will be posted and emailed on or before May 5, 2023*
- *Responses to questions during the presentation today will be posted on or before May 5, 2023*
- *Recording notice*



Agenda

- Program Overview
 - Purpose & Priorities
 - Eligibility
 - Equitable Services
 - Allowable & Prohibited Use of Funds
 - GEPA Statement
 - Evidence-Based Interventions
- Application Walkthrough
- Timeline

Overview

- The [Bipartisan Safer Communities Act \(BSCA\)](#) authorized \$1 billion in funding to support SEAs, LEAs, and schools in establishing safe, healthy, and supportive learning opportunities and environments through the BSCA Stronger Connections Grant program.
- The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) received \$4.8 million in funding for a three-year performance period, ending September 30, 2026.
- At least 95% must be awarded to high-need local education agencies (LEAs) through a competitive Stronger Connections Grant process.

Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of this competitive grant is to provide qualifying LEA's the opportunity to establish strategies and to carry out activities that will help to increase student's sense of belonging. LEAs are invited to compete for funding to support one or more of the following strategies established by:

- 1. Implementing comprehensive, evidence-based strategies** that meet each student's social, emotional, physical, and mental well-being needs; creating positive, inclusive, and supportive school environments; and **increasing access to place-based interventions and services.**
- 2. Engaging** students, families, educators, staff, and community organizations in the selection and implementation of strategies and interventions to **create safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments.**
- 3. Designing and implementing policies and practices that advance equity and are responsive to underserved students, protect student rights, and demonstrate respect for student dignity and potential.**

- [BSCA-Stronger-Connections-DCL 9.12 signed.pdf](#)

Eligibility Determination

“High-need” LEAs were determined based on a total composite score utilizing two metrics – poverty and Survey Works student metrics:

- LEAs with at least one Title I-A participating school with 35% or more poverty and one or more Survey Works student risk factors, or
- LEAs with at least one Title I-A participating schools and one or more Survey Works student risk factors ranked in the top ten.

RIDE used the student risk factors built into Survey Works, which all LEAs collect and have ready access to, that support the goal of improving conditions through student learning. Students in grades 6-12, Year 2020 Risk Factor Data: Worry about Violence at School, Seen a Weapon at School Last 12 Months, Been in Physical Fight Last 12 Months, and Dating Violence Victim Last 12 Months

High Need LEAs

Bristol Warren	Burrillville	Central Falls	Chariho	Cranston	Coventry
Cumberland	East Greenwich	East Providence	Exeter West Greenwich	Jamestown	Johnston
Lincoln	Middletown	Narragansett	Newport	New Shoreham	North Kingstown
North Providence	Pawtucket	Providence	Smithfield	Tiverton	Warwick
West Warwick	Westerly	Woonsocket			

Equitable Services

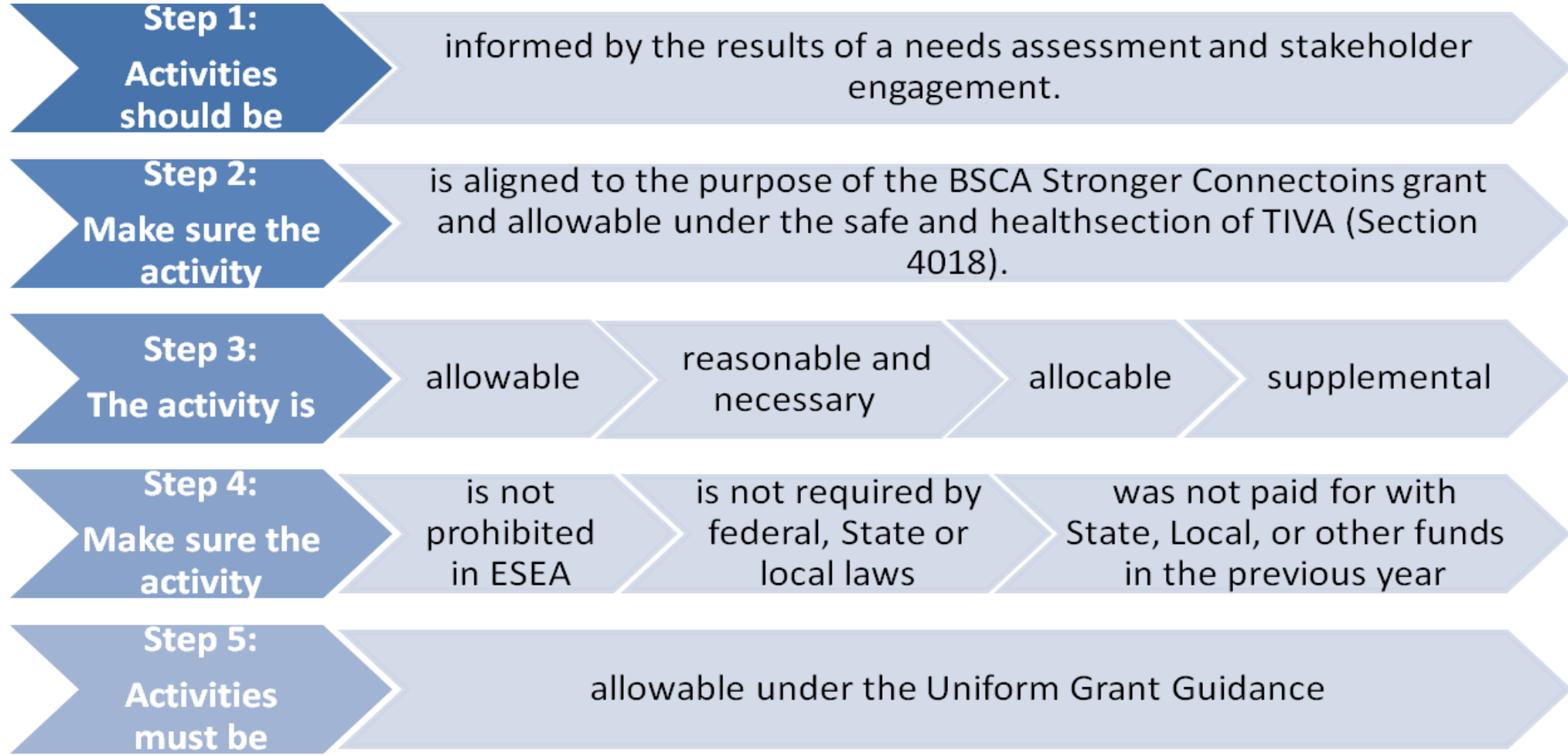
- An LEA applying for the Stronger Connections Grant must consult with appropriate non-public school officials before making any decisions that affect the opportunities of eligible non-public school children and educators to participate (ESEA section 8501(c)(3)).
- The LEA must ensure that timely and meaningful consultation has occurred and maintain a record of the process used. In addition, the LEA must submit written affirmation of the consultation, signed by a representative of the LEA and each non-public school, to RIDE.
- If an LEA is successful in receiving an BSCA award, it must ensure that expenditures for equitable services for eligible non-public school students and educators are equal on a per-pupil basis to the expenditures for participating public school students and educators. The LEA could also choose to base the equitable services on a specific need or group of students in alignment with the services being provided to public schools.
- The LEA must continue to consult with interested non-public school officials on the specific services the LEA will provide to students and educators, consistent with the LEA's approved application.

Allowable Use of Funds

Activities must align to one or more of the BSCA strategies and be allowable under Title IV, Part A Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant, Section [4108 of ESEA](#).

Applicants may also refer to the US Department of Education's [BSCA Stronger Connections Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions \(2023\)](#) for additional guidance, including question B-9.

Allowable Use of Funds



Prohibited Use of Funds

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) prohibit the use of these funds for things such as:

- Food
- School construction
- Providing any person with a dangerous weapon or training in the use of a dangerous weapon.*



*A “dangerous weapon” as defined in section 930(g)(2) of title 18 of the United States Code is a weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury, except that such term does not include a pocket knife with a blade of less than 2 1/2 inches in length.

GEPA

- Section 427 of the United States Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) requires each applicant for funds to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its federally assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs.
- GEPA highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age.
- Based on local circumstances, applicants should determine whether these or other barriers might prevent students, teachers, families etc., from such access or participation in the federally funded project or activity within the Stronger Connections Grant application.

Evidence-Based Interventions

Applications that use evidence-based or evidence-informed activities will receive additional points.

The RIDE School Health Team curated a set of interventions to assist LEAs with their intervention selection process which align with the allowable uses of funds under Section 4108 of Title IV-A. LEAs that are currently working on grants with RIDE's School Health Team are strongly encouraged to submit an application that builds upon / expands their existing supplemental initiatives.

Evidence-Based Interventions

This is not an exhaustive list, rather illustrative examples of evidence-based practices implemented in current RI Social Emotional Based Mental Health (SEB-MH) grants. Most resources may also be used to support more than one strategy.

BSCA Strategies	Exploration Phase ⁵ Resources	Implementation Phase Resources
<p>Implementing comprehensive, evidence-based strategies that meet each student’s social, emotional, physical, and mental well-being needs; creating positive, inclusive, and supportive school environments; and increasing access to place-based interventions and services</p>	<p>BRIDGE-RI (mtssri.org) RIDE Universal Screening Guidance for Mental Health, Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Health National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments-Engagement</p>	<p>Getting Started with PBIS Youth Restoration Project (Youth Restoration Project of RI) The International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) (see Restorative Practices in Schools: Research Reveals Power of Restorative Approach) RULER YMHFA</p>
<p>Engaging students, families, educators, staff, and community organizations in the selection and implementation of strategies and interventions to create safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments.</p>	<p>PBIS Practice Brief Systemic Screening: Practicalities & Considerations SISEP Exploration Tools</p>	<p>Relationship Building Toolkit (OSSE) Supporting and Responding to Students Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Needs: Evidence-Based Practices for Educators</p>



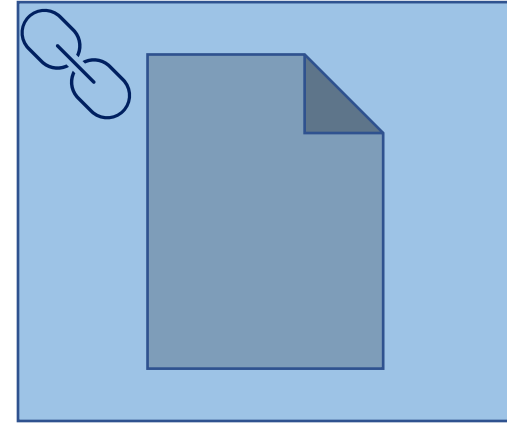
Application Walkthrough

[BSCA Stronger Connections RFP](#)

[BSCA Stronger Connections Budget Template](#)

Application Sections

- ❑ Application Narrative
- ❑ Completed Coversheet with Signature
- ❑ Table of Contents
- ❑ Signed Assurances
- ❑ Abstract
- ❑ Plan for Stakeholder Input
- ❑ Plan for Equitable Services (if applicable)
- ❑ Activity Plan(s)
- ❑ Job Description (if applicable)
- ❑ Year One Budget
 - ❑ Completed Year One Budget with Signed Cover Page



Please refer to the RFP with specific guidance & templates.



A PDF of the complete application must be emailed to Stephanie.Enos@ride.ri.gov by the deadline. Be sure that all of the required budget pages are included with the submission. Incomplete applications will not move forward in the competition.

Timeline

Successful applicants will have up to three years to expend funds.

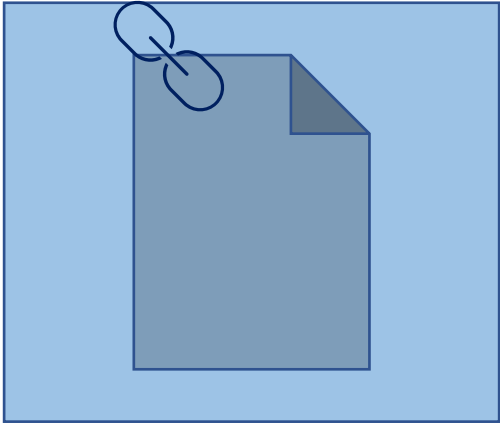
Activity/Action	Date (subject to change)
Informational/Technical Session	May 4, 2023 at 2:00 PM
Proposal Due Date	June 4, 2023 at 4:00 PM
Announcement of Awards	Week of June 19 th
Year Two Activities and Budget Due	May 15, 2024
Year Three Activities and Budget Due	May 15, 2025
Deadline for all Program and Fiscal Reports	October 30, 2023

Period of Performance: The grant period is July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2026. Grants will be awarded by the summer of 2023 for fiscal years FY24, FY25, FY26. If selected for an award, LEAs will be required to upload their annual budget into AcceleGrants and provide quarterly expenditure reports and reimbursement requests.

Subgrantees must spend all funds by June 30, 2026.

Scoring

Category	Total Points Available
Overview and Organization	15
Year One Narrative	50
Year One Activity Plans	60
Budget	20
Bonus Points	10
Total Points	155



Please refer to the RFP with comprehensive rating criteria & scoring template.

[BSCA Stronger Connections RFP](#)

[BSCA Stronger Connections Budget Template](#)