Request for Proposals

Bipartisan Safer

Communities Act

*Stronger Connections Grant*

**Funds available from July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2026**

**(FY24 - FY26)**

This competitive grant process will award funds to high-need LEAs for allowable activities under the Safe and Healthy Students Section (section 4108) of Title IV-A in ESEA.

**Deadline for receipt of applications is 4:00 pm June 4, 2023**

A PDF of the complete application must be emailed to [Stephanie.Enos@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Enos@ride.ri.gov)

by this deadline.

Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA)

Stronger Connections Grant

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*Overview of the Grant*

Background

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act(BSCA) provided $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, of which, at least 95% must be awarded to high-need LEAs through a competitive grant process.

Per the BSCA award letter from Education Secretary Cardona, “research consistently shows that safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments are associated with improved academic achievement and emotional well-being of students, as well as with reductions in disciplinary actions.”[[1]](#footnote-2)

Students who experience a sense of belonging in school are also more likely to exhibit positive behaviors. This includes learning environments that:

* provide culturally and linguistically responsive practices,
* where students are surrounded by adults they can trust, and
* with adults who are committed to building strong relationships.

“Environments like these also help build connections that make students less likely to bring weapons to school and more likely to report the presence of weapons in school. Beyond the benefit to the individual student, safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments benefit their fellow students, educators, and the community at large.”[[2]](#footnote-3)

This commitment to increasing the percentage of students who experience a sense of belonging in school aligns to the Excellence in Learning Priority and Goals in RIDE’s 2021-2027 Strategic *Plan*[[3]](#footnote-4). LEA’s are strongly encouraged to submit a proposal that assists LEA’s in increasing students' sense of belonging.

The Rhode Island Department of Education anticipates awarding between 9 and 23 grants, with awards up to $500,000.

The following guidance has been created to assist LEAs with the proposal submission 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.[[4]](#footnote-5)

# Eligibility: RI Definition of High Needs

Rhode Island has defined high needs LEAs as:

* LEAs with at least one Title I-A participating school with 35% or more poverty and one or more Survey Works student risk factors[[5]](#footnote-6), 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. The School Health team also uses this data for its work.

Using this data provides LEAs with a ready set of data to use as part of their root cause analysis, while providing RIDE and the LEAs a uniform way to look at growth over time across the State, and provide a uniform metric for reporting to the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

The following LEAs are eligible to apply for this program: 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 and Woonsocket.

# 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.

# Awards

A total of $4.6 million dollars in funding is available for distribution. Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis, and with grants up to $500,000.

Funds will be distributed over three years. LEAs will determine how to split the award over that time as part of the application process. It is permissible to target funding to support planning (exploration phase) and ramping up (implementation phase) activities in the first year. For example, a LEA may request to use $150,00 the first year for start-up costs and $100,000 for the second and third years.

The full grant award will be awarded in the first year. The final amount of grant awards may be contingent upon negotiations and availability of funds, and the RIDE reserves the right to revise the budget amounts accordingly.

**Conditions of Subgrant Award**

*Period of Availability* - Funds are available through June 30, 2026. Funds are not eligible for carryover.

*Supplement Not Supplant* – These funds must supplement, not supplant, existing programs/projects within the LEA. In other words, funds may not be use used to pay for existing levels of activities or services if the costs of those activities would have otherwise been provided with state or local funds in the absence of the grant.

*Maintenance of Effort* - These funds must meet the maintenance of effort requirement in ESEA section 8521.

*Equitable Services* – The requirement to provide equitable services to private school students and personnel as outlined in ESEA section 8501 et seq must be met by LEAs with in-district schools.

*Evaluation of Grant Performance* – LEAs receiving state funds are required to meet all necessary reporting requirements of the grant. In awarding the grant, the state expects the grantees to conduct all activities and evaluation measures as written or negotiated in the approved grant proposal. Failure to provide the requested performance reports (reporting on and evaluating all activities as proposed and implementing the grant as written) may result in the loss of funding.

*Grant Amendments and Modifications* - Any changes to the original funded proposal (including modifications to goals and/or objectives) must receive prior approval by the RIDE.

*Continuation of Funding* - The state reserves the rights to:

* withhold funding, reduce funding, or terminate funding if the proposal is not meeting program reporting requirements, making substantial progress toward meeting identified performance goals and measures; is not expending funds in a timely manner; or does not demonstrate a clear need for the allotted level of grant support;
* add terms and conditions during grant negotiations; and
* modify annual awards based on the actual amount of appropriation towards this grant program.

*Unauthorized Activities* - The following prohibitions in ESEA Sections 8526 and 4001 also apply to these funds. Funds may not be used for:

* for construction, renovation, or repair of any school facility, except as authorized under this Act;
* for transportation unless otherwise authorized under this Act;
* to develop or distribute materials, or operate programs or courses of instruction directed at youth, that are designed to promote or encourage sexual activity, whether homosexual or heterosexual;
* to distribute or to aid in the distribution by any organization of legally obscene materials to minors on school grounds; to provide sex education or HIV-prevention education in schools unless that instruction is age appropriate and includes the health benefits of abstinence;
* to operate a program of contraceptive distribution in schools;
* for the provision to any person of a dangerous weapon, as defined in section 930(g)(2) of title 18, United States Code, or training in the use of a dangerous weapon[[6]](#footnote-7). (Dangerous weapon is defined in section 930(g)(2) as 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.);
* for medical services or drug treatment or rehabilitation, except for integrated student supports, specialized instructional support services, or referral to treatment for impacted students, which may include students who are victims of, or witnesses to, crime or who illegally use drugs, and
* no child shall be required to obtain a prescription for a controlled substance, as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substance Act (21 U.S.C. 802) as a condition of receiving an evaluation or other services described under this Title IV-A; attending a school receiving assistance under Title IV-A.

# Allowable Activities

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](https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=20+USC+7118&f=treesort&fq=true&num=7&hl=true&edition=prelim&granuleId=USC-prelim-title20-section7118). Applicants may also refer to the US Department of Education’s [BSCA Stronger Connections Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions (2023)](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2023/04/23-0083.BSCA-FAQs.pdf) for additional guidance, including question B-9.

The following decision-making tree can assist LEAs in their planning:

# Evidence Based / Evidence Informed Practices

Applications that use evidence-based or evidence-informed activities will receive additional points. The RIDE School Health Team curated the following 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.

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 Phase5**  **Resources** | **Implementation Phase**  **Resources** |
| Implementing comprehensive, evidence-based strategies that meet each student’s social, emotional, physical, and mental well-being needs; create positive, inclusive, and supportive school environments; and increase access to place-based interventions and services | [BRIDGE-RI (mtssri.org)](https://www.mtssri.org/)  [RIDE Universal Screening Guidance for Mental Health, Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Health](https://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Students-and-Families-Great-Schools/Health-Safety/Mental-Wellness/Universal-Screening-Guidance.pdf?ver=2021-12-20-120814-030)  [National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments-Engagement](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/engagement/relationships) | [Getting Started with PBIS](https://www.pbis.org/pbis/getting-started)  [Youth Restoration Project](http://youthrestorationproject.org/) (Youth Restoration Project of RI)  [The International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP)](http://www.iirp.edu/) (see [Restorative Practices in Schools: Research Reveals Power of Restorative Approach](http://www.iirp.edu/article_detail.php?article_id=NTUx))  [RULER](https://medicine.yale.edu/childstudy/services/community-and-schools-programs/center-for-emotional-intelligence/training/ruler/)  [YMHFA](https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/take-a-course/) |
| 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. | [PBIS Practice Brief Systemic Screening: Practicalities & Considerations](https://global-uploads.webflow.com/5d3725188825e071f1670246/640a3fbb96453b85baacdddf_FD8%20Screening%20Practice%20Brief%20(1).pdf)  [SISEP Exploration Tools](https://sisep.fpg.unc.edu/resources-and-tools) | [Relationship Building Toolkit](https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/Relationhip_Building_Toolkit.pdf) (OSSE)  [Supporting and Responding to Students Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Needs: Evidence-Based Practices for Educators](https://www.pbis.org/resource/supporting-and-responding-to-behavior-evidence-based-classroom-strategies-for-teachers) |

Additional resources are also available on the RIDE website - [Evidence-Based-Interventions-Guidance.pdf (ri.gov)](https://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Information-and-Accountability-User-Friendly-Data/ESSA/Hub/Evidence-Based-Interventions-Guidance.pdf)

# Equitable Services Requirements

LEAs with in-district private schools must consult with private school officials before making any decisions that affect eligible private school children and educators' ability to participate[[7]](#footnote-8). Consultation might include a brief survey of private schools to gather the schools’ interest in participating and the potential population to be served. Such consultation will allow the LEA to consider the needs of all students and educators—both public and private—in developing its application, and to include the projected costs for equitable services for year one in the application[[8]](#footnote-9).

If an LEA is successful in receiving a Stronger Connections subgrant, it must continue to consult with interested private school officials on the specific services the LEA will provide students and educators, consistent with the LEA’s approved application.

ESEA[[9]](#footnote-10) requires an LEA to ensure that its expenditures for equitable services for eligible private school students and educators under covered ESEA programs are equal on a per-pupil basis to the expenditures for participating public school students and educators, taking into account the number and needs of the eligible private school students and educators. After timely and meaningful consultation with appropriate private school officials, an LEA could choose to calculate equal expenditures:

* based on the relative enrollments of public and private schools in the LEA (assuming that these numbers accurately reflect the relative needs of children and educators in public and private schools: OR
* use other factors relating to the needs of public and private school children. For example, targeting services to a specific group of schools/students based on the priority areas of the grant[[10]](#footnote-11).

Please see section E of the US Department of Education’s [BSCA Stronger Connections Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions (2023)](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2023/04/23-0083.BSCA-FAQs.pdf) for additional guidance.

# Evaluation and Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients will be required to provide yearly progress reports (for years one and two) and a final outcome report to RIDE describing progress in achieving the proposed project objectives. An independent external evaluation of proposed projects is not required.

Given the limited timeframe for implementation of this project, any focus on self-evaluation should focus on formative rather than summative results, emphasizing continuous improvement practices and a consideration of the success and challenges of the proposed practices and services.

Progress reports for years one and two should describe the progress to date and how this information is being used to support the next year, including:

* name of each activity,
* goals the LEA hoped to achieve from their activity plan for this grant,
* LEAs progress towards meeting the stated outcomes, and
* any course corrections made during the year or planned for the following year.

The final report for year three should include a description of:

* the progress/success the LEA had in meeting its overall goals, and
* how the LEA will sustain these supports for students/what next steps look like beyond the grant cycle.

# Submission Instructions

LEAs receiving funding through the BSCA Stronger Communities Grant program must:

* meet the eligibility requirements for the grant described within this document,
* provide all required assurances as documentation that it will comply with all program implementation requirements,
* meet stakeholder requirements,
* meet equitable services requirements, if applicable,
* carry out all program outcome and fiscal reporting requirements,
* implement the activities described in the LEA’s application within the required timeline,
* expend funds as described in the LEA’s application,
* uploaded the budget into AcceleGrants, if awarded a grant, and each year,
* participate in meetings or calls with RIDE, as needed, to discuss goals and objectives; implementation progress and; programmatic success and effectiveness,
* submit updated program narratives and budgets each year, including any required amendments,
  + ensure proposed activities meet the requirements of Title IV-A, Section 4108 of the ESEA, and
  + ensure all goods and services are received, and all activities and purchases for this budget period expended by the end of the grant period.

Completed applications are due to the RI Department of Education by

**June 4, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.**

Completed applications should be submitted electronically to: [stephanie.enos@ride.ri.gov](mailto:stephanie.enos@ride.ri.gov).

Applications received after this time will not be considered.

Submission of a grant application indicates acceptance of the appropriate federal and state requirements. All applicants submitting in a timely manner will receive a receipt of acknowledgement by email.

# Inquiries

This is a competitive grant. Staff will not be able to address individual questions.

LEAs will be given the opportunity to ask questions during the information session on May 4, 2023. A recording of the session will be posted after the meeting and posted on the RIDE website with the grant materials.

Questions may be sent to [stephanie.enos@ride.ri.gov](mailto:stephanie.enos@ride.ri.gov), and responses will be sent to superintendents in eligible LEAs to ensure that no one has an undue advantage.

# Timetable

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

# *Instructions*

# Submission Packet

A complete proposal will include:

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 Descriptions (if applicable)

Year One Budget

* Completed Year One Budget with Signed Cover Page

A PDF of the complete application must be emailed to [Stephanie.Enos@ride.ri.gov](mailto: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.

# Application Narrative (include Signed Cover Page)

*Proposal details are outlined below. Templates are available at the end of this document. Additional guidance for completing the Title IV-A State Strategy Grant is incorporated in the Proposal Template and Scoring Sheet.*

Completed and Signed Coversheet

* A completed cover page includes grant contacts, their contact information, total amount of funds requested for each year, proposed start date and anticipated number of students' families and/or staff who will benefit.

See Appendix A for the Coversheet Template.

Table of Contents with Page Numbers

* Include a table of contents with page numbers.

Assurances

* Review and sign assurances, confirming that the LEA will adhere to all the grant requirements.

See Appendix B for the Assurances Template.

Abstract

* In 400 words or less, the abstract should describe the overall plan including: how the proposed project will enhance the LEAs current efforts in creating safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments that are associated with improved academic achievement and emotional well-being of students, who will benefit, and how the LEA will know if the intervention was successful.

Plan for Stakeholder Input

LEAs must involve required stakeholders in a review of the needs assessment and development of strategies and initiatives. LEAs should begin this process prior to submitting their grant proposal and continue as needed, throughout the development process, especially if year one of an LEAs plan includes a development phase.

In responding to this question, be sure to:

* List the stakeholders that were involved in the review of the needs assessment and development of strategies and interventions to create safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments.
* Describe how stakeholders were involved in the review of the needs assessment and development of strategies and interventions to create safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments.
* Briefly describe any partnerships formed and how they will support the programs to achieve outcomes for LEA staff and students.

See Appendix C for the Stakeholder Template.

Plan for Equitable Services

The BSCA Stronger Communities Grant program is a discretionary grant. As such, the rules for equitable services for eligible private school students and staff vary somewhat from the requirements from an LEAs annual Title IV, Part A funds. Refer to section E in the [BSCA Stronger Connections Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions (2023)](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2023/04/23-0083.BSCA-FAQs.pdf) for more information.

An LEA with in-district applying for this grant must consult with appropriate private school officials before the LEA makes any decision that affects the opportunities of eligible private school children and educators to participate (ESEA section 8501(c)(3)). Participation by private schools is not dependent upon its prior participation in any other federally funded programs with equitable provisions.

Consultation might include a brief survey of non-public schools or other information gathering to indicate the schools’ interest in participating and the population to be served and allow the LEA to consider the needs of all students and educators—both public and private—in developing its application. The projected costs for year one equitable services should be included in the budget.

In responding to this question, be sure to:

* List any in-district private schools within the LEA.
* Briefly describe how the LEA reached out to the private schools to determine if they are interested in participating and which private schools wish to participate as well as the potential population of students and educators to be served and their needs.
* Describe the method the LEA used to determine the funding set aside and how much was set aside for equitable services in year one.

See Appendix D for the Equitable Services to Private Schools Template.

Activity Plan(s)

LEAs must submit an activity plan for proposed year one activity that describes how the requests are aligned to one or more BSCA priorities as well as how the requests are reasonable, necessary, allocable, allowable under Title IV-A section 4108 and supplemental. LEAs may group activities together that support one another and have the same goals.

Extra points will be applied during scoring for plans that use evidence based / evidence informed practices. See the page 7 of the overview for additional guidance.

In responding to this question, be sure to:

* Submit a completed activity plan for each proposed activity,
* Include a job description(s), if applicable, and
* Include funding priority connections, when applicable.

See Appendix E for the Activity Plan Template.

# Year One Budget (include Signed Cover Sheet)

The proposed budget must provide clear evidence that the expenditures are appropriate and justified to support the proposed activities. If applicable, the LEA should include the amount of funds set aside for equitable services in year one.

LEAs may access the **BSCA Stronger Connection Grant Budget Template** on the grant page of the RIDE website.

Budget Cover Page

* The blue boxes indicate where information is required.
* **Project Period Start Date** – insert the date on which the district intends to start the project; if approved the earliest allowable start date is July 1, 2023.
* **Authorized Signature** – The budget cover page **must be signed** by an authorized representative of the LEA.

Budget Descriptions

* **Description of Services** – Indicate the position to be funded, service(s) to be provided, or items(s) to be purchased.
* **UCOA Number** – Provide UCOA number
* **Amount of Funds Requested** – Provide total amount of funds requested for this cost. For Budget Series 51000 & 52000, this is divided into compensation and fringe.
* **Cost Basis** - Provide a “number sentence” to provide detail for the cost.
* **Justification** - Describe how the request is specific to the program goals and why it is necessary to implement the program.

Note: Budget Series 51000 & 52000 also includes an FTE field, if applicable.

*Application Templates*

Appendix A: Cover Sheet Template

**BSCA Stronger Connections Grant**

**Cover Sheet**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **LEA Name** | |  |
| **Superintendent** | |  |
| **Phone** | |  |
| **Email** | |  |
| **Mailing Address** | |  |
|  | |  |
|  | |  |
|  | |  |
| **BSCA Coordinator** | |  |
| **Phone** | |  |
| **Email** | |  |
| **Mailing Address** | |  |
|  | |  |
|  | |  |
|  | |  |
| **Amount of Funds Requested** | **Year 1** |  |
| **Year 2** | |  |
| **Year 3** | |  |
|  | |  |
| **Proposed Start Date** | |  |
|  | |  |
| **# of Students, Staff and Families who will Benefit** | | |
| **Students** | |  |
| **Staff** | |  |
| **Families** | |  |

# Appendix B: Assurances Template

**BSCA Stronger Connections Grant Assurances**

**Civil Rights Assurances**

All recipients of assistance under these grants made pursuant to the ESEA shall comply with the following Federal and State civil rights statutes and regulations:

1. 42 USC, Sections 1981 and 1983 (...acts prohibited on the basis of race);
2. Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (...acts prohibited on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin);
3. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, 20 United States Code 1681 et. Seq. (acts prohibited on the basis of sex);
4. 42 USC, Section 1601 et seq. (...acts prohibited on the basis of age);
5. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 20 USC 794 (...acts prohibited on the basis of handicap);
6. 24 USC, Section 12100 et seq. [The Americans with Disabilities Act] (...acts prohibited on the basis of disability);
7. Section 16-38-1 of the Rhode Island General Laws, as amended (discrimination because of race or age);
8. Section 16-38-1.1 of the Rhode Island General Laws, as amended (discrimination because of sex);
9. Chapter 42-87 of the Rhode Island General Laws, as amended (Civil Rights of People with Disabilities); and
10. Sections 28-5.1-13 and 28-5.1-14 of the Rhode Island General Laws, as amended (Private education institutions – compliance with state policy of non-discrimination and affirmative action).

**General Assurances: ESSA Section 8306**

*In signing this application, the Superintendent of Schools assures that:*

In accordance with Section 8306 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the Local Educational Agency (LEA) assures the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) that this single set of assurances applicable to each program for which a plan is submitted under this application that:

(1) each such program will be administered in accordance with all applicable statutes, regulations, program plans, and applications;

(2) (A) the control of funds provided under each such program and title to property acquired with program funds will be in a public agency or in an eligible private agency, institution, organization, or Indian tribe, if the law authorizing the program provides for assistance to those entities; and

(B) the public agency, eligible private agency, institution, or organization, or Indian tribe will administer the funds and property to the extent required by the authorizing statutes;

(3) the applicant will adopt and use proper methods of administering each such program, including

1. the enforcement of any obligations imposed by law on agencies, institutions, organizations, and other recipients responsible for carrying out each program; and
2. the correction of deficiencies in program operations that are identified through audits, monitoring, or evaluation;

(4) the applicant will cooperate in carrying out any evaluation of each such program conducted by or for the State Educational Agency (SEA), the Secretary, or other Federal officials;

(5) the applicant will use such fiscal control and fund accounting procedures as will ensure proper disbursement of, and accounting for, Federal funds paid to the applicant under each such program;

(6) the applicant will

1. submit such reports to the SEA (which shall make the reports available to the Governor) and the Secretary as the SEA and Secretary may require to enable the SEA and the Secretary to perform their duties under each such program; and
2. maintain such records, provide such information, and afford such access to the records as the SEA (after consultation with the Governor) or the Secretary may reasonably require to carry out the SEA’s or the Secretary’s duties; and

(7) before the application was submitted, the applicant afforded a reasonable opportunity for public comment on the application and considered such comment.

**BSCA Specific Assurances**

*In signing this application the Superintendent of Schools assures that the LEA will:*

1. use funds in accordance with the Title IV, Part A section 4108 of the ESEA: Safe and Healthy Students;
2. not use funds for prohibited activities in ESEA Section 8526 and 4001 also apply to these funds;
3. use funds to supplement, not supplant, existing programs within the LEA. In other words, funds may not use used to pay for existing levels of activities or services if the costs of those activities would have otherwise been paid with state or local funds in the absence of the grant;
4. meet the maintenance of effort requirement in ESEA section 8521;
5. meet the expenditure requirements under the grant. The LEA understands that the State reserves the rights to withhold funding, reduce funding, or terminate funding if the proposal is not meeting program reporting requirements; making substantial progress toward meeting identified performance goals and measures; expending funds in a timely manner; or does not demonstrate a clear need for the allotted level of grant support, The State may also add terms and conditions during grant negotiations, and modify annual awards based on the actual amount of appropriation towards this grant program;
6. expend funds by June 30, 2026, as funds are not eligible for carryover;
7. meet all necessary reporting requirements of the grant. In awarding the grant;
8. reach out to the State if the LEA wishes to make changes to the original funded proposal (including modifications to goals and/or objectives) and receive prior approval by the RIDE before implementing any changes; and
9. comply with section 8501 et seq of ESEA to provide equitable services to private school students and personnel, if applicable.

I hereby certify that all statements made herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and that all supporting data will be kept on file.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Superintendent Name |  |
| Superintendent Signature |  |
| Date |  |

# Appendix C: Stakeholder Input Template

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| --- | --- |
| List of Stakeholders | *List the stakeholders that were involved in the needs assessment and development of strategies and interventions to create safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments, including: students; families; teachers; specialized instructional support personnel; LEA leaders, staff and administration, community members and community organizations; local government representatives[[11]](#footnote-12); or others with relevant and demonstrated expertise in programs and activities designed to meet the purpose of the BSCA Stronger Connections grants.* |
| Process for Stakeholder Input | *Describe how stakeholders were involved in the review of the needs assessment and development of strategies and interventions to create safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments.* |
| Partnership Formed | *Briefly describe any partnerships formed and how they will support the programs to achieve outcomes for LEA staff and students.* |

# Appendix D: Equitable Services for Private Schools

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Private Schools | *List any in-district private schools within the LEA.* |
| Initial Consultation | *Briefly describe how the LEA reached out to the private schools to determine if they are interested in participating, which schools have chosen to participate, and the potential population of students and educators to be served and their needs.* |
| Funding Methodology | *Describe the method the LEA used to determine the funding set aside and how much was set aside for equitable services in year one.* |
| Ongoing Consultation | *Outline the process for continuing consultation if the LEA is successful in receiving a grant award.* |

**Appendix E: Activity Plan Templates**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Activity | *Create a name that will align to budgeted expenses* |
| Participating Schools | *List all of the participating schools* |
| BSCA Strategy | *Indicate which BSCA strategy this strategy support:*  *BSCA Strategy 1: Implementing comprehensive, evidence-based strategies that meet each student’s social, emotional, physical, and mental well-being needs; create positive, inclusive, and supportive school environments; and increase access to place-based interventions and services.*  *BSCA Strategy 2: Engaging stakeholders in the selection and implementation of strategies and interventions.*  *BSCA Strategy 3: Designing and implementing policies and practices that advance equity and are responsive to underserved students.* |
| Goal(s) | *Describe the LEA goal, SIP goal, or additional goal this activity supports. Be sure to label LEA Strategic Plan Goal or School Improvement Plan Goals.* |
| Data Source and Data Points | *Briefly describe the data that demonstrate the need for this activity.* |
| Activity Description | *Provide a description for each budgeted activity that shows how the request is reasonable and necessary, such as:*  *Identifying which students, families and/or staff will participate,*  *how/the criteria for selecting students, staff or families for participation;*  *the size and scope of the program to positively impact student academic achievement (e.g., 3 after school sessions – each 8 weeks x 2 hours a day serving 40 students, with 2 teachers and 2 teacher assistants);*  *how, when, where and by whom the services will be provided,*  *what budget items support this request; and*  *how this activity is supplemental activity?* |
| Outcome Measures | *Describe what success will look like/anticipated outcomes, and how the LEA will periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the activity.* |
| Amount of Funds Budgeted | *List the total amount of funds the LEA has budgeted to support this initiative in year one (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024).* |
| Related Job Description(s) | *List any position included in this request and include a job description with the application. For split funded positions, be sure to highlight which duties are allocable to the BSCA grant.* |
| Optional Information: Funding Priorities | |
| Evidence Based Practices | *Briefly describe what evidence-based practices are being utilized as part of this activity, if applicable.* |
| Student and Educator Mental Health | *Briefly describe how this activity will support student and educator wellness, if applicable.* |

# Template F: BSCA Stronger Connections Grant Score Sheet

*To be completed by proposal reviewers*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| LEA |  |  |
| Total points awarded |  |  |
| Total points awarded for activities |  |  |
| Required information included | q Yes q No |  |
| Recommended for funding | q Yes q No |  |

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

**Reviewer Comments**

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|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Reviewer Name |  | Date |
|  |  |  |
|  |  | |
| Reviewer Signature |  | |

**Rating Guidelines**

*Each section of the application will be scored separately. All pertinent information must be fully addressed in the appropriate section.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Rating | Measure | 10 Point Scale | 5 Point Scale |
| Excellent | Specific and comprehensive. Complete, detailed, and clearly articulated information as to how the criteria are met. Well-conceived, thoroughly developed with promising program impact. | 9-10 | 5 |
| Good | General but sufficient detail. Adequate information as to how the criteria are met, but some areas are not fully explained and/or questions remain. Some minor inconsistencies and/or weaknesses. | 6-8 | 3-4 |
| Marginal | Vague, not clearly or explicitly stated. Criteria appear to be minimally met, but limited information is provided about approach and strategies. Lacks focus and detail. | 3-5 | 2 |
| Inadequate | Does not meet the criteria, fails to provide information, provides inaccurate information, or provides information that requires substantial clarification as to how the criteria are met. | 1-2 | 1 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Overview and Organization** | **Criteria** | **Maximum Score** |
| Project Overview | Does this one page include a concise and understandable abstract detailing the project in 400 words or less? | 10 |
| Table of Contents and Page Numbers | Does the table of contents refer to numbered pages in the grant and is easily used by the reviewer? | 5 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year One Narrative** | **Criteria** | **Maximum Score** |
| Alignment to Intent and Purpose of the Grant | Is there a clear and reasonable explanation for how the proposed project will enhance the LEAs current efforts in creating safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments are associated with improved academic achievement and emotional well-being of students? | 10 |
| Need for Support: Current Efforts | Is there a clear explanation of the current efforts being used to support students/educators and why are they inadequate to meet the identified gap? (supplement not supplant) | 10 |
| Need for Support: Gap(s) in Student Support Identified | Does the application explain what gap(s) in targeted support for students/educators this proposal is trying to meet? | 10 |
| Measuring the Need for Identified Supports | Was the measurement or process used to determine the need for the support identified above well documented and adequate? | 10 |
| Equity | Do the activity plans describe activities of sufficient size, scope and quality to ensure that identified students/educators get what they need? Is this explained clearly and seem reasonable? | 10 |
| Equitable Services | For LEAs with in-district private schools, does the plan describe how the LEA gathered initial input from private schools to determine their interest in participating, and the needs of students and teachers? For those that were interested in participating, does the proposal describe what the plan is for working together with private school and how services will be provided to eligible students/educators? | Met / Not Met / NA |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity Plans** | **Criteria** | **Maximum Score** |
| Required Components | Does each activity plan include all of the required components: name, participating school, related budget requests and, if applicable, job descriptions? When applicable, are the job descriptions included in the grant? | 10 |
| Alignment to BSCA Strategy | Do all of the proposed activities clearly support one or more of the BSCA strategies? | 10 |
| Goal(s) | Do the activity plans have SMART+ E goals: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely and equitable? Are these goals aligned to the LEA’s Strategic Plan and/or School Improvement Plan(s)? | 10 |
| Data Source and Data Points | Does the data for each activity clearly demonstrate the need for this activity? | 10 |
| Activity Description | Are the descriptions clearly written and do they describe activities that are reasonable, necessary, allocable, allowable and supplemental? Does the proposed dosage seem sufficient to meet the goals? | 10 |
| Outcome Measures | Do the plans describe what success will look like/how the LEA will measure success for each activity and how the LEA will periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the activity? Do the descriptions seem realistic and achievable? | 10 |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Budget** | **Criteria** | **Maximum Score** |
| Project Budget | Does the *Year One* *Program Budget* account for costs for the first year of the proposed project? Are the costs reasonable, necessary and adequate to complete the work? | 10 |
| Budget Justifications | Does the justification adequately and realistically explain the budgeted requests? | 10 |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Funding Priority Bonus Points** | **Criteria** | **Maximum Score** |
| Evidence Based / Evidence Informed Practices | Do the activity plans clearly identify which practices are evidence-based (Tiers 1-3) / evidence informed (Tier 4)? Are the descriptions reasonable and clear? | 5 |
| Student and Educator Mental Health | Do the proposed activities support student and/or educator mental health and wellness, including underserved students? Is this explained well and reasonably? | 5 |

1. [BSCA-Stronger-Connections-DCL\_9.12\_signed.pdf](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2022/09/BSCA-Stronger-Connections-DCL_9.12_signed.pdf#:~:text=Research%20consistently%20shows%20that%20safe%2C%20inclusive%2C%20and%20supportive,fellow%20students%2C%20educators%2C%20and%20the%20community%20at%20large.) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [BSCA-Stronger-Connections-DCL\_9.12\_signed.pdf](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2022/09/BSCA-Stronger-Connections-DCL_9.12_signed.pdf#:~:text=Research%20consistently%20shows%20that%20safe%2C%20inclusive%2C%20and%20supportive,fellow%20students%2C%20educators%2C%20and%20the%20community%20at%20large.) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. [RIDE Strategic Plan, 2021-2027 | RI Department of Education](https://ridesandbox.ecms.ri.gov/inside-ride/additional-information/ride-strategic-plan) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [BSCA-Stronger-Connections-DCL\_9.12\_signed.pdf](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2022/09/BSCA-Stronger-Connections-DCL_9.12_signed.pdf#:~:text=Research%20consistently%20shows%20that%20safe%2C%20inclusive%2C%20and%20supportive,fellow%20students%2C%20educators%2C%20and%20the%20community%20at%20large.) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. 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   
    [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. On June 25, 2022, the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, Section 13401 of the Act, amended the ESEA Section 8526 to add this prohibition. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. ESEA section 8501(c)(3) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. [BSCA Stronger Connections Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions (2023)](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2023/04/23-0083.BSCA-FAQs.pdf), Question E-3 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Section 8501(a)(4) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. [BSCA Stronger Connections Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions (2023)](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2023/04/23-0083.BSCA-FAQs.pdf), Questions E-4 and E-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Examples may include, local health department and/or health care providers, local law enforcement, juvenile justices agencies, and child welfare agencies [↑](#footnote-ref-12)