

Application Requirements

The application is available in Webgrants. Please review the format for which grant elements will be submitted. All applicants should review the grant Frequently Asked Questions.

Each grant application must contain the following completed components:

Grant Narrative (50 Points)

I. a. Project Description (15 points) Based on your data and current needs, describe how grant funds will align and be used to implement and support a comprehensive plan incorporating evidence-based strategies that meet each student’s social, emotional, physical, mental, and overall well-being needs through integrated student services; create positive, inclusive, and supportive school environments; and increase access to supplemental interventions and services.

b. Goals/Outcomes/Evaluation/Timeline/Data (25 points) Plan must provide a clear description that specifies goals, objectives, and student outcomes, and a timeline for the proposed project(s), as well as specific indicators of project benchmarks. The plan and timeline must be developed for the project period of **SY23/24, SY24/25, SY25/26** and should be discernable in your strategy map. The evaluation should clearly identify what data will be collected and the rationale for using this data and the frequency of monitoring for implementation effectiveness. The outcome of the evidence-based activities, programs, and practices should have a direct impact on students.

c. Evidence-based activities, programs, and practices (10 points) Identify proposed *evidence-based activities, programs, and practices used to meet the outlined goals. The product, strategy, or practice should be such that it will enable the applicant to reach the level of success proposed in the application. It could also include the use of grant funds to address a particular area that resulted in the school identification of CSI or TSI if applicable. To provide the most flexibility to districts while still meeting the supplement vs. supplant rule, we are providing the following guidance to districts. On the application when listing the program, activity, item, or position, you will be asked to identify the model of implementation: **New Implementation or Growth and Expansion.**

*Districts may use programs or strategies that align with all four Tiers of evidence: “strong” (Tier 1), “moderate” (Tier 2), “promising” (Tier 3), and “demonstration of a rationale” (Tier 4). **You must identify the level of evidence aligned with each product, strategy, or practice when possible.*

II. Stakeholder Engagement (10 points) Provide a description of how the LEA will implement strategies for all voices to be heard. Identify intended strategies for communications with and among school(s) and other stakeholders. Families and communities should know how their feedback was incorporated into final decisions to build and sustain trust. This engagement should begin early in the decision-making process and be ongoing and collaborative. This type of engagement should help facilitate selections of strategies based on a community’s values and designed for systemic change that can build long-term buy-in and capacity at the local level.

III. Budget (10 Points)

Include a cost-effective budget and justification to determine the allowability for line items that reflect the goals and priorities of this project. This budget must be for the project period of **SY23/24, SY24/25, and SY25/26**.

If the district has a participating non-public school in its boundaries, the budget should include the projected costs for equitable services in the application. (See **VIII. Equitable Services Section**)

IV. Sustainability Plan (10 Points)

Identify actions the LEA will take to continue the program and or activities beyond the life of the grant. Include sufficient resources (human, fiscal, operational, external partnerships, etc.) that support the implementation and sustainability of the evidence-based programs and or activities implemented through this grant.

V. Application Submission, Review, Project Award, and Timeline

The application must be completed and submitted in Webgrants. Due to the competitive nature of this grant, the deadline for applications will not be extended.

- Grant application open: **January 2023**
- Application Deadline: **April 6, 2023**
- Grant Recipients Announced and Awarded: **April 24, 2023**

VI. Reporting Requirements for Grantees

Recipients will submit progress reports to the NDDPI.

School Year 23/24

- Mid-year Status report (**due December of 2023**) will be in the form of a Status Report, which will be assigned through Webgrants. The progress report will show the district's goals and objectives and to what degree they are making progress.
- Recommended completion of a ***School Threat Assessment** (see special note) if the district has not completed such an assessment within the last three years.
- Completion of a culture climate survey (to be determined by district)
- Updated Strategy Map
- End of year report will include a detailed description of how the project goals were met, as well as any challenges that were encountered. Additionally, the final evaluation will include:
 - Impactful deliverables—data to support planning, implementation, and outcomes by the school—that align directly to the grant's identified need(s)
 - An explanation of sustainable practices—how partnerships functioned, including strengths and challenges, if applicable.
- Updated goals and objectives for the **24/25 SY**, which should be reflective of findings within the School Threat Assessment and or results of the Culture/Climate Survey.

School Year 24/25

- Mid-year Status report (**due December 2024**) will be in the form of a Status Report, which will be assigned through Webgrants. The progress report will show the district's goals and objectives and to what degree they are making progress.
- Updated Strategy Map
- End of year report will include a detailed description of how the project goals were met, as well as any challenges that were encountered. Additionally, the final evaluation will include:
 - Impactful deliverables—data to support planning, implementation, and outcomes by the school—that align directly to the grant's identified need(s)
 - An explanation of sustainable practices—how partnerships functioned, including strengths and challenges, if applicable.

School Year 25/26

- Mid-year report (**due December 2025**) will be in the form of a Status Report, which will be assigned through Webgrants. The progress report will show the district's goals and objectives and to what degree they are making progress.
- Updated Strategy Map
- End of year report will include a detailed description of how the project goals were met, as well as any challenges that were encountered. Additionally, the final evaluation will include:
 - Impactful deliverables—data to support planning, implementation, and outcomes by the school—that align directly to the grant's identified need(s)
 - An explanation of sustainable practices—how partnerships functioned, including strengths and challenges, if applicable.

VII. Fiscal Requirements for Grantees

- SCG funds must be tracked separately from its regular allocation under Title IV, Part A.
- Federal law requires the monitoring of Federal Title IV programs to ensure compliance with programmatic and fiscal regulations.

VIII. Equitable Services

Each eligible LEA receiving a Stronger Connections subgrant must, after timely and meaningful consultation with appropriate non-public school officials, provide eligible non-public school students and educators services and other benefits that are equitable in comparison to services and other benefits provided with Stronger Connections funds to public school students and educators. (ESEA section 8501(a)(1), (3)(A)). After timely and meaningful consultation, an LEA makes the final decisions with respect to the services it will provide to eligible non-public school students and educators.

An eligible LEA applying for a Stronger Connections subgrant must consult with appropriate private school officials before the entity makes any decision that affects the

opportunities of eligible non-public school children and educators to participate (ESEA section 8501(c)(3)). Such 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. Such consultation will allow the LEA to consider the needs of all students and educators—**both public and non-public—in developing its application and to include the projected costs for equitable services in the application.**

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

The LEA should calculate equal expenditures strictly based on the relative enrollments of public and participating non-public schools in the LEA on the assumption that these numbers accurately reflect the relative needs of children and educators in public and non-public schools.

***Special Note**

School Threat Assessment: NDDPI has prioritized **School Safety** within our set-aside portion of the grant. The set aside funds will be used for the specific purpose of supporting our awarded LEAs in conducting School Threat Assessments. It is **highly recommended** that each LEA awarded the Stronger Connections Grant complete a School Threat Assessment within the first year of the grant.

If awarded, the grantee will have the opportunity to complete an **Intent to Conduct** form in Webgrants by June 30, 2023. If LEA has a non-public within their boundaries, LEA must consult with them and discuss this option as required in the equitable share provision. If they wish to participate, that will be noted within the Intent to Conduct form in Webgrants.

Each LEA will work with a vendor of their choice to get an estimate and conduct School Threat Assessment. We hope to fund all requests for School Threat Assessments in full; however, these funds will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis and will be available as the funds allow.