School Mental Health and Safety and Security

Funding Announcement Q&A Tracker

Funding Announcement Link:

About this Document:

This guide will provide an overview of questions and answers regarding the School Mental Health & Safety and Security funding announcement and application process, which opened on Monday, August 1, 2022. Responses will be provided as staff is able to process questions through Wednesday, August 31, 2022.

Questions?

Please contact PCCD staff at RA-eGrantsSupport@pa.gov with ‘School Mental Health and Safety and Security’ in the subject line.
1. Eligible Applicants

a) Who is eligible to apply for this funding announcement?

**Answer:** This funding is open to School Districts, Intermediate Units, Area Career, and Technical Schools, Charter Schools, Regional Charter Schools, and Cyber Charter Schools. Please see [Appendix A of the Funding Announcement](#) which lists each eligible entity.

b) My school entity is not listed in Appendix A of the Funding Announcement. Are we eligible for this fund?

**Answer:** Appendix A of the Funding Announcement is inclusive of all eligible applicants. If your school entity is not listed in Appendix A, it is not eligible for this fund.

2. Eligible Activities

a) How may these funds be spent?

**Answer:** The list of eligible activities can be found on pages 5 – 8 of the Funding Announcement. Please see page 9 for ineligible activities.

b) Do we have to meet all Tier 1 standards of the baseline criteria in order to use these funds for items in Tier 2 or Tier 3?

**Answer:** Tier 1 represents the most basic physical and behavioral health safety elements a school entity should have in place. If your school entity does NOT meet all Tier 1 Baseline Criteria, you should utilize your grant funding on one or more of the available activities to meet the Tier 1 standard OR explain to PCCD how other resources are being utilized to satisfy the criteria.

Please use the text box included with the Tier 1 sections to provide any rationale, individual circumstances, or other information (e.g., explain how other resources are being used to satisfy the criteria) to justify or explain how your school entity has determined that you have met or not met certain Tier 1 criteria. PCCD staff and the SSSC remain open to a school entity’s explanation or justification of how they have satisfied the criteria based on their individual circumstances or any other extenuating factors.

c) As nurses are part of the Tier 1 baseline criteria, can they supported through this grant? There does not appear to be an eligible activity that corresponds to nurses.

**Answer:** Nursing services would be covered under the ‘other professional health personnel to provide services to students and school employees’ under Category 21 (I)(A).
d) Can funds be used on Early Intervention locations or only K-12?

**Answer:** The focus of the School Safety and Security Grant Fund Program is for facilities primarily serving K-12 students. We recognize, though, that some school entities may serve a range of students from pre-K through 12th grade. If a school entity/facility/program serves children in earlier grades (such as Pre-K programs) in addition to K-12 students, funds may be used to support physical security and mental health/behavioral health expenses. However, entities/programs/facilities that exclusively provide early childhood education programs would not be eligible under this funding announcement.

e) School districts in our county relatively small and rural. Only one district has a full-time social worker. The others are interested in possibly collaborating on sharing a full-time social worker to provide additional student support. It is understood that this is a one-time grant that would not be able to sustain personnel; however, the superintendents are interested as to whether this would be an allowable expense?

**Answer:** Yes, hiring a full-time social worker to provide additional student support is allowable under Activity 21. In the event a school entity does not have a single full-time person filling a personnel position and questions whether they meet the Tier 1 standard, the SSSC may consider a justification where the school entity explains how they make the respective personnel services available to students on a full-time basis (i.e., does not necessarily need to be a single FT employee but could be a combination of contracted services, PT employees, etc. to meet the standard that full-time services/“coverage” are available).

f) Are walkie talkies an allowable expense?

**Answer:** Security and communications equipment, such as walkie talkies, are normally eligible under Activity 12) Security Planning and Purchase of Security-Related Technology. Please note that inclusion of Activity 12 items requires school entities to attach documentation from their school board or board of directors demonstrating that the request for purchases related to security planning and the purchase of security-related technology is based on safety needs identified by the board. Types of acceptable documentation may include one of the following: a letter of support, a board resolution, or meeting minutes of the board or a subcommittee of the board discussing and/or approving the request for the item to address a safety need. This documentation should be attached to the application in Egrants.

3. Application Process

a) When can I create and submit an application?

**Answer:** The application period for this fund opened on 8/1/2022 and closes after 11:59pm on 8/31/2022.
b) How do I start an application?

Answer: Please see our Grant Guides for walkthroughs on each part of the application process.

c) Where do we confirm the allocation amount for our district? I do not see it in E-grants.

Answer: It is located in Appendix A of the written funding announcement document. As this written solicitation contains additional instructions and information not found in the Egrants application, all applicants are strongly encouraged to read it first prior to submitting their application in Egrants.

d) With the tight timeline, will we be able to send a tentative plan (may not have all the details such as identified vendors or board approval) and then update/revise after the August 31 date?

Answer: School entities need to submit an application to us by the August 31 deadline and we are requesting that the application be as complete as the is possible. If your information is incomplete or needs revision, PCCD staff will be reaching back out to you to resolve those issues past the August 31 deadline. Please note that this may delay the approval of the award.

4. Baseline Requirements

a) Do we have to meet all Tier 1 standards of the baseline criteria in order to use these funds for items in Tier 2 or Tier 3?

Answer: Tier 1 represents the most basic physical and behavioral health safety elements a school entity should have in place. If your school entity does NOT meet all Tier 1 Baseline Criteria, you should utilize your grant funding on one or more of the available activities to meet the Tier 1 standard OR explain to PCCD how other resources are being utilized to satisfy the criteria.

Please use the text box included with the Tier 1 sections to provide any rationale, individual circumstances, or other information (e.g., explain how other resources are being used to satisfy the criteria) to justify or explain how your school entity has determined that you have met or not met certain Tier 1 criteria. PCCD staff and the SSSC remain open to a school entity’s explanation or justification of how they have satisfied the criteria based on their individual circumstances or any other extenuating factors.

b) Under Tier 1 for physical improvements, what satisfies the requirement that doors are be able locked from the interior?

Answer: Please refer to the Physical Assessment Criteria for clarification on Tier 1 standards regarding locks on interior doors.

c) What is the difference is between a specific trauma (or trauma informed) plan and the emergency plans that the district would already have in place?
**Answer:** Please refer to the School Safety and Security Committee’s [Model Trauma-Informed Plan](#) webpage for information on trauma-informed plans, which are separate and distinct from emergency plans.

**d) Do we have to meet all the Tier 1 criteria in each building in the district, or can it be just within the building we are focusing on for the funding?**

**Answer:** Tier 1 criteria refers to the entire school entity. If a building in your district does not meet Tier 1 standard, you may not utilize this grant funding for purposes over and above Tier 1 for your school entity until such time that you satisfy Tier 1 requirements.

### 5. Budget Requirements

**a) The Funding Announcement states that two budgets need to be made in the application. How do I make two budgets?**

**Answer:** Please see the [Dual Budget Guide](#) for step by step instructions on how to correctly set up the budget of your application.

**b) I have started the budget, but the recipient agencies are incorrect. How do I correct this?**

**Answer:** Please contact RA-CD-SSSC@pa.gov with “Recipient Agencies” in the subject line for assistance.

**c) Can funds be used for items that have already been purchased?**

**Answer:** Grant money allocated through the School Safety and Security Grant Program shall be used to supplement and not supplant existing school entity spending on school safety and security. These funds may not be used for expenses incurred prior to the start date of the grant. The start date of the grant can vary dependent upon the grantee, but the earliest possible start date for this grant is 8/1/2022. As such, these funds cannot be used towards any expenditures prior to the 8/1/2022 or the start date of the grant.

**d) We are in the process of hiring a new position that we feel falls under both physical security and mental health. Are we able to use this position for both budgets?**

**Answer:** Yes. There are instances where certain eligible activities may overlap between the two budget allocations (e.g., Activity 23 – threat assessment teams is allowable in both budgets, etc.). Please provide justification in the budget narrative sections to clarify how the item requested meets the appropriate eligible activity under that particular budget.