



## 2024-25 Targeted School Safety Grants for Nonpublic Schools Funding Announcement Q&A Tracker

**Updated on August 20, 2024**

**\*New Questions & Responses Added in Red**

Survey Monkey Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PATSS2024>

About this Document:

This guide will provide an overview of questions and answers regarding the [2024-25 Targeted School Safety Grants for Nonpublic Schools](#) funding announcement and application process, which opened on 8/8/2024. Responses will be provided as staff is able to process questions through 9/27/2024.

**Q&A for Municipalities, Law Enforcement, and Approved Vendors  
is located under section 4 of this document.**

Questions?

Please contact PCCD staff at [RA-CD-NPSEC-GRANT@pa.gov](mailto:RA-CD-NPSEC-GRANT@pa.gov) with '2024-25 Targeted School Safety Grants for Nonpublic Schools' in the subject line.

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## 1. Eligible Activities/Expenses – Nonpublic Schools

### 1.1. What types of activities or items can I apply for?

**Answer:** Funding may be used to support any eligible activity under [24 P.S. §13-1306-B\(j\)](#) and to fund programs that address school mental health, school violence, or enhance school security, including costs associated with the training and compensation of school security personnel.

Some general examples of eligible activities that align with [Baseline Criteria](#) standards can be found in the [Behavioral Health Baseline Criteria Standards with Grant Funding Examples](#) and the [Physical Security Baseline Criteria Standards with Grant Funding Examples](#) documents.

**NOTE:** Due to the competitive nature of these grants, PCCD cannot weigh in on allowable projects or expenses.

### 1.2. The Physical Security Baseline Criteria (2023) Level 1 examples give an appropriate eligible project activity as, “purchase and/or installation of external doors” and says to see Section 1306-B(J)(1-31) is Activity 12. However, I do not see door upgrades under number 12. Is this considered security-related technology and would upgrading/replacing regular glass windows with shatter resistant/proof at the front entrance of a school building fall under number 12 of this section too?

**Answer:** Yes. Activity 12 allows for the purchase of security-related technology, which includes a wide range of eligible physical security items, including door upgrades and glass window replacement with shatter resistant/proof glass. Please refer to the [Physical Security Baseline Criteria \(2023\) with Examples](#) document on our [Baseline Criteria webpage](#) for further examples of eligible items and their related project activities.

### 1.3. If a Resource Officer is allowable, what information will be required to be provided and can they use an agency of their choosing for an RO?

**Answer:** Applicants for the Targeted School Safety Grant Program for Nonpublic Schools are eligible to apply for funding to support school security personnel, which include school police officers, school resource officers, and school security guards. The requirements of [Article XIII-C](#) of the PA Public School Code apply to individuals filling these roles.

Professional Services, such as school security services, are exempt from procurement requirements providing the costs are reasonable.

### 1.4. Are schools required to have completed a Physical Security Assessment or Behavioral Health Assessment? If so, is this required to be completed by one of the state-identified providers?

**Answer:** Schools are not required to complete a [Physical Security Assessment or Behavioral Health Assessment](#), nor are they required to utilize an individual listed on the [School Safety and Security Assessor Registry](#), in order to apply for funding from PCCD under this solicitation. Having an assessment conducted does assist, however, in identifying gaps in security and behavioral health needs, and as such, is encouraged. Individuals listed on the [School Safety and Security Assessor Registry](#) are also required to provide an assessment that meets SSSC assessment standards.

In addition, PCCD will give priority consideration, under this competitive funding announcement, for requests to address gaps identified in physical or behavioral health assessments meeting

SSSC assessment standards completed by an individual on the SSSC assessor registry or to requests to meet [Level 1 Baseline Criteria](#) as identified in the funding announcement.

**1.5.** If we have not had a Physical Security Assessment in the last 3 years, how can we get one done in time to submit the grant? Who should conduct the assessment? Do they have to be registered school safety assessment vendors? Can it be conducted by a rep of Homeland Security? Do we need to submit it with our application?

**Answer:** Schools are not required to complete a [Physical Security Assessment](#) in order to submit an initial request for funding under this solicitation, nor are they required to utilize an individual listed on the [School Safety and Security Assessor Registry](#). Having an assessment conducted does assist, however, in identifying gaps in security needs. Individuals listed on the SSSC assessor registry are also required to provide an assessment that meets SSSC assessment standards.

Ultimately, it is up to the school to determine who would be the best person to conduct an assessment; however, for grant priority consideration under this competitive solicitation, the assessment should be conducted by an individual on the SSSC assessor registry. If an assessment is completed, PCCD requests that only the first page of the assessment that includes the date of the assessment and only the pages referencing the items or activities requested be attached to the initial request form.

**1.6.** If we have never had a behavioral health assessment, how can we get one done in time to submit the grant? Who should conduct the assessment? Do they have to be a registered behavioral health assessor on the SSSC's registry? Can it be conducted by a licensed psychologist who isn't on the registry? Do we need to submit it with our application?

**Answer:** Schools are not required to complete a [Behavioral Health Assessment](#) in order to submit an initial request for funding under this solicitation, nor are they required to utilize an individual listed on the [School Safety and Security Assessor Registry](#). Having an assessment conducted does assist, however, in identifying gaps in behavioral health needs. Individuals listed on the SSSC assessor registry are also required to provide an assessment that meets SSSC assessment standards.

Ultimately, it is up to the school to determine who would be the best person to conduct an assessment; however, for grant priority consideration under this competitive solicitation, the assessment should be conducted by an individual on the SSSC assessor registry. If an assessment is completed, PCCD requests that only the first page of the assessment that includes the date of the assessment and only the pages referencing the items or activities requested be attached to the initial request form.

**1.7.** Do items from Level 1 need to be completed/obtained/checked off before a school can request funding for level 2 items and upgrades?

**Answer:** It is not required to meet all the requirements in Level 1 Baseline Criteria before seeking funding for other eligible project activities under the Targeted School Safety for Nonpublic Schools grant; however, priority consideration under this competitive funding announcement will be given to support applicants seeking to meet 'Level 1' of the Baseline Criteria, which are standards that assist school entities in guiding their decisions about their physical security and behavioral health needs.

**1.8.** Are there specific vendors that are approved vendors to provide school security personnel services within nonpublic schools?

**Answer:** Eligible approved vendors are those that were previously approved by the [PA Department of Education](#) or are on the [PCCD's School Security Guard Vendor List](#).

**1.9.** Are schools able to apply for both physical and behavioral services? Or should they choose just one category to apply under?

**Answer:** Schools can apply for both physical and/or behavioral health items/services.

**1.10.** On personnel, can armed school security be employed by the school, or do they need to be municipal employees or, as in the past, employed by approved security vendors and contracted to the schools?

**Answer:** Please refer to [Article XIII-C of the PA Public School Code](#) for requirements regarding school security personnel.

**1.11.** If a municipality applies for \$75,000 grant on a nonpublic school's behalf for a School Resource Officer (SRO), can the nonpublic school ALSO apply for \$75,000 under this solicitation (Targeted School Safety for Nonpublic School solicitation) for something else?

**Answer:** Yes.

**1.12.** Can this grant pay for a school resource officer for upcoming school years, even though the school resource office has already been hired for the current school year?

**Answer:** Applicants may request funding for new, unbudgeted costs that are eligible for reimbursement under this grant program. More information about "Eligible Projects and Expenses" is available in the funding announcement.

**1.13.** If we asked for security guard expenses in our nonpublic grant but then our vendor receives the \$75,000 award to use on our behalf, can we remove the guard expenses from our award and move the money to another funded item? We want to apply for guards in our grant in case our vendor does not receive the award, but we won't need that budget item if the grant is won on our behalf.

**Answer:** Due to the competitive nature of these funds, only the items approved through the initial SurveyMonkey request submitted by the nonpublic school will be allowable. While expenses can be moved between approved budget line-item categories, please note that major scope changes are not allowed.

**1.14.** Is it possible to change the allocation of requested amounts after the grant is awarded if the quotes we receive from vendors change? For example, if we request \$30,000 for security cameras, \$5,000 for door access control, and \$40,000 for a building alarm system, and are granted an award, can we change the amounts to \$35,000 for security cameras, \$2,000 for door access control and \$38,000 for an alarm system, if our bids vary significantly after the awards have been made?

**Answer:** Estimates are allowed during the initial request process through SurveyMonkey. If selected for an award, applicants will work with PCCD staff on finalizing their budget requests to match actual expenditures. While expenses can be moved between approved budget line-item categories to better align with actual expenses, please note that major scope changes are not allowed.

**1.15.** For the grant application is partial funding a possibility for an award? For example, if we have multiple priorities under the same grant application can one receive funding but not the other, or is it all or nothing? Just wanted to know how we may need to focus our application efforts.

**Answer:** The School Safety and Security Committee, in its discretion, may award in whole or in part a request made by a school entity in its grant application based upon the merit of a specific item requested.

**1.16.** This question applies to grant applications from nonpublic schools. Can you please explain #18 in the eligible activities list which allows funding towards "costs associated with the training and compensation of school security personnel"? Can the personnel being funded work directly through the school's payroll or does this require the hiring of guards through approved vendors?

**Answer:** Yes, the school security personnel, which includes school police officers, school resource officers, and school security guards, may be funded directly through the school's payroll.

## 2. Application Process/General Questions

**2.1.** Will nonpublic schools have to go through their local IU if they are recommended for funding?

**Answer:** No. Per Act 55 of 2024, nonpublic schools no longer need to formally apply through their Intermediate Unit (IU) if approved by PCCD for funding. If an applicant's initial funding request submitted via SurveyMonkey is recommended for funding by the SSSC, the applicant will be contacted to finalize a formal application within PCCD's Egrants system.

**2.2.** Can you clarify what you mean by non-supplantation of funding?

**Answer:** Per the PA Public School Code, grant funds shall be used to supplement and not supplant existing spending on school safety and security. Requested funds should be used to enhance and add to security within each school entity. The following provides examples to assist in determining whether the requested activities are considered supplantation.

Supplantation is NOT:

- Requesting school safety funding in a subsequent year for the same purpose and amount awarded in a previous grant.
- Requesting items/personnel that are currently funded but not currently included/reoccurring in the school entities budget (e.g. other grant funds, temporary funds, etc.).
- Requesting additional funding to increase the hours of personnel currently part-time or increase program/activity capacity (e.g. adding additional cameras above and beyond what is currently budgeted).

Supplantation is:

- Requesting funding for activities/personnel/items currently included in the school entity's yearly budget.
- Utilizing grant funds to retroactively support expenses already procured (e.g., using grant funds to pay ongoing expenses as part of a previously executed contract or purchase order).

**2.4.** In terms of application, if we have multiple locations, can we submit an application as an organization or we would submit different applications for our different sites.

**Answer:** If each campus of the nonpublic school is recognized with a separate AUN, they are each eligible to submit an application for up to \$75,000 for each location.

**2.5.** We currently consult regularly with a Homeland Security Protective Security Advisor. Is there any way for him to apply to be a security assessor for purposes of this grant and have his application approved in time for him to assess our facility? It sounds like the process can take some time.

**Answer:** Per Section 1304-B of the PA Public School Code, the School Safety and Security Committee has established a set of criteria for registrants with knowledge and experience in matters of school safety and security that qualifies a person to conduct assessments based upon the Committee's adopted assessment criteria (see [Registration Criteria](#)). Any individual interested in applying to be included on the provider registry should refer to the [School Safety Provider Registry Guide](#) (PDF) and visit the [School Safety Provider Registry Application](#) webpage to submit their initial application for consideration by the Committee. School entities interested in locating an approved assessor can refer to the [Provider Registry](#). Please note that PCCD staff cannot guarantee that an application for an individual to be considered for the registry received at this time will be processed prior to the end of this solicitation's application period.

**2.6.** I am currently working on several applications for nonpublic schools in my region. After I submitted the first application, I am receiving an error in SurveyMonkey that states that I already answered the survey. What should I do?

**Answer:** The SurveyMonkey initial request form is formatted to only accept one survey per IP, or per computer. To work around this issue, you can try to utilize different web browsers (e.g., Google Chrome, Mozilla Fox, Opera, Safari, Microsoft Edge, etc.) or deleting the browsers' cookies. If those options do not work, you may need to utilize another computer to create and submit another application.

**2.7.** Will you get priority funding if you do a self-assessment and need funding to meet level 1 criteria? Or do you need to have an approved assessor to get the priority funding?

**Answer:** As noted on the funding announcement, priority consideration under this competitive funding announcement will be for requests to address gaps identified in physical or behavioral health assessments meeting SSSC assessment standards and requests to meet 'Level 1' of the Baseline Criteria. Self-assessments are certainly encouraged, but for the purposes of this solicitation, will not count toward priority consideration if the assessment was not conducted by an individual on the SSSC registry, who are required to conduct assessments to SSSC standards. However, meeting a Level 1 Baseline Criterion still merits priority consideration under this solicitation.

**2.8.** With SurveyMonkey can we save drafts to come back to before submitting?

**Answer:** Yes, you can continue to work on your SurveyMonkey application until it is formally submitted. You will need to utilize the same computer to access the survey.

**2.9.** I already submitted an initial request in SurveyMonkey but forgot to include some information and/or want to include more information. Can I resubmit?

**Answer:** Yes, you may resubmit requests in SurveyMonkey at any time up to the 11:45 PM deadline on Thursday, September 26, 2024, but ultimately only one request per nonpublic school will be reviewed. PCCD will use the last submitted request from the nonpublic school in the review process and will not consider earlier submittals. Please note that requests are competitive so applicants should make every attempt to ensure that their initial request

submittal is accurate and complete. Please also reference Question 2.6 above in case you run into any difficulties submitting multiple requests from the same computer.

**2.10.** Can you explain the procurement process that nonpublic schools will engage in during this new round of funding?

**Answer:** All procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner that provides open and free competition. Grant recipients must follow all applicable Commonwealth of Pennsylvania procurement guidelines applicable to school entities or the entity's own procurement guidelines if those are more restrictive. School entities must maintain documentation to support all procurement transactions and adherence to all applicable guidelines. Supporting documentation must be provided when requested.

Current thresholds are:

Less than \$12,600 is considered a micro-purchase and there are no requirements.

\$12,600-\$23,200: price/rate quotes must be obtained from at least three qualified sources.

\$23,200 or more, public solicitation of bids. Firm fixed price contract awarded to the responsible bidder lowest in price.

Professional services, such as counseling and school security personnel, are exempt from procurement requirements providing the costs are reasonable.

Procurements by noncompetitive proposal are strongly discouraged and must demonstrate an economic benefit or lack of alternate resources to be justified. If a request is made, the prospective applicant must identify the request as a procurement by noncompetitive proposal and provide a substantial justification for the request within their funding request (See PCCD's Applicant's Manual for Procurement by Noncompetitive Proposal Approval Procedure).

Please note that using a cooperative purchasing mechanism does not, itself, comply with bid requirements. It is the responsibility of the school entity to retrieve the minimum number of quotes or solicited bids required. Documentation must be maintained and made available upon request to support compliance.

**2.11.** What is the start date of the funding?

**Answer:** If recommended for funding, projects will begin January 1, 2025 and be up to 18-month projects. Grant expenditures must be incurred during the project period of the grant. PCCD will not be able to reimburse the grantee for expenses prior to that date.

**2.12.** If we are funded for a certain dollar amount per item, can we amend the budget if the actual expenses are different from what was quoted?

**Answer:** If you submit an estimate with your initial request form within SurveyMonkey, and you are selected for an award, you will receive additional instruction as to how to develop your final budget request through your respective IU and PCCD.

**2.13.** Is it possible to print a copy of the application we submit? If so, where/how?

**Answer:** PCCD will not be able to provide you with a copy of your SurveyMonkey application. We suggest that you develop your application in a Word document and/or print off each page of the survey prior to your submission if you want a copy.



**2.14.** If an organization had a threat assessment conducted by a non-approved assessor, such as an Emergency Management assessor or a Homeland Security Officer, can we upload the relevant pages to show our level 1 gaps? Can we give you their name, even if they aren't approved? We would like to back up our need with law enforcement expertise, even if it wasn't conducted by someone on the approved assessor list.

**Answer:** Please limit any assessment attachments and responses to those that relate to an assessment conducted by an individual recognized to perform such assessments on the PCCD School Safety and Security Assessor Registry or the PA State Police Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Team. Nothing precludes you, however, from providing that information as part of your project narrative.

**2.15.** Are all expenses reimbursed? Or will schools be granted the full award upfront?

**Answer:** Grant funds are paid by PCCD to grantees on a reimbursement basis. PCCD allows grantees to submit reimbursement requests as frequently as necessary to alleviate possible cash flow issues that may arise with multiple expensive purchases. PCCD will work with grantees to ensure that any cash flow concerns are addressed in a timely manner.

### 3. Eligible Applicants

**3.1.** Who is eligible to apply under the **2024-25 Targeted School Safety Grants for Nonpublic Schools?**

**Answer:** This competitive funding announcement is specifically for the following eligible entities:

- **Nonpublic schools**, which are defined by [Section 923.3-A of the PA Public School Code](#) as “any school, other than a public school within this Commonwealth, wherein a resident of this Commonwealth may legally fulfill the compulsory school attendance requirements of this act and which meets the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352, 78 Stat. 241),” which also include **Approved Private Schools** and **Private Residential Rehabilitative Institutions**, to support activities allowed under 24 P.S. §13-1306-B(j) or programs that address school violence by establishing or enhancing school security, including costs associated with the training and compensation of school security personnel; and
- **Municipalities, law enforcement agencies, and approved vendors** to support school security personnel services for public school entities and nonpublic schools.

**3.2.** Can a child day-care provider apply for funding under this solicitation?

**Answer:** No, only nonpublic schools, which are defined by [Section 923.3-A of the PA Public School Code](#) as “any school, other than a public school within this Commonwealth, wherein a resident of this Commonwealth **may legally fulfill the compulsory school attendance requirements of this act** and which meets the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352, 78 Stat. 241),” are eligible to submit an initial request survey form directly to PCCD via the SurveyMonkey.

**3.3.** Would a kindergarten-only school be eligible to apply? Or is this limited to schools with grades one and up?

**Answer:** A kindergarten-only school is not eligible since it serves students who are not covered under Pennsylvania’s compulsory school attendance laws. Per [Section 1326 of the PA Public School Code](#), compulsory school age attendance begins no later than age six (6) in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Per [22 Pa. Code § 51.62. Admission of students](#), the minimum entry age for beginning students is grade 1. Since the definition of eligible nonpublic schools require the legal fulfillment of compulsory school attendance requirements, only those

nonpublic schools providing grade 1 and above are eligible to submit an initial request survey form directly to PCCD via the SurveyMonkey.

**3.4.** Are early education centers that provide PA Department of Education licensed Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten eligible to apply for this grant?

**Answer:** Early education centers that provide pre-K and kindergarten-only school are not eligible since the center serves students who are not covered under Pennsylvania's compulsory school attendance laws. Per [Section 1326 of the PA Public School Code](#), compulsory school age attendance begins no later than age six (6) in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Per [22 Pa. Code § 51.62. Admission of students](#), the minimum entry age for beginning students is grade 1. Since the definition of eligible nonpublic schools require the legal fulfillment of compulsory school attendance requirements, only those nonpublic schools providing grade 1 and above are eligible to submit an initial request survey form directly to PCCD via the SurveyMonkey.

**3.5.** Are [Neglected & Delinquent facilities](#) eligible for the nonpublic school safety grant or the competitive school safety grant?

**Answer:** Eligibility for the Targeted Nonpublic School Safety solicitation is for nonpublic schools, which are defined by [Section 923.3-A of the PA Public School Code](#). Nonpublic schools can utilize PDE's [EDNA](#) to determine if they meet the this definition.

**3.6.** I work at a High School, and we've been the recipient of the Targeted School Safety Grants this past year (awarded in the spring and needs to be fulfilled by 2026). Are we eligible to apply for this again this September with an additional project, or do we have to wait one full cycle until the project is completed?

**Answer:** Entities that have received an award in a prior year may submit a request for funding, but prior awards may be taken into consideration during the competitive review process.

## 4. Municipalities, Law Enforcement, and Approved Vendors Q&A

**4.1.** What activities can Municipalities, law enforcement agencies, and approved vendors apply for?

**Answer:** Municipalities, law enforcement and approved vendors are limited to apply to provide school security personnel services within schools. School security personnel services include school police officers, school resource officers, and school security guard services. Applicants should be aware that all provisions of Article XIII-C (relating to school security), including training requirements, are applicable to projects supported under this solicitation.

**4.2.** If a nonpublic school applies for \$75,000 grant for a School Resource Officer (SRO), can an approved vendor ALSO apply for \$75,000 under this solicitation to provide SRO services on the nonpublic schools behalf?

**Answer:** Yes.

**4.3.** Can you clarify what you mean by non-supplantation of funding?

**Answer:** Per the PA Public School Code, grant funds shall be used to supplement and not supplant existing spending on school safety and security. Requested funds should be used to enhance and add to security within each school entity. The following provides examples to assist in determining whether the requested activities are considered supplantation.

Supplantation is NOT:

- Requesting school safety funding in a subsequent year for the same purpose and amount awarded in a previous grant.
- Requesting items/personnel that are currently funded but not currently included/reoccurring in the school entities budget (e.g. other grant funds, temporary funds, etc.).
- Requesting additional funding to increase the hours of personnel currently part-time or increase program/activity capacity (e.g. adding additional cameras above and beyond what is currently budgeted).

Supplantation is:

- Requesting funding for activities/personnel/items currently included in the school entity's yearly budget.
- Utilizing grant funds to retroactively support expenses already procured (e.g., using grant funds to pay ongoing expenses as part of a previously executed contract or purchase order).

**4.4.** I already submitted an initial request in SurveyMonkey but forgot to include some information and/or want to include more information. Can I resubmit?

**Answer:** Yes, you may resubmit requests in SurveyMonkey at any time up to the 11:45 PM deadline on Thursday, September 27, 2024, but ultimately only one request per nonpublic school will be reviewed. PCCD will use the last submitted request from the nonpublic school in the review process and will not consider earlier submittals. Please note that requests are competitive so applicants should make every attempt to ensure that their initial request submittal is accurate and complete. Please also reference Question 2.6 above in case you run into any difficulties submitting multiple requests from the same computer.

**4.5.** What is the start date of the funding?

**Answer:** If recommended for funding, projects will begin January 1, 2025 and be up to 18-month projects. Grant expenditures must be incurred during the project period of the grant. PCCD will not be able to reimburse the grantee for expenses prior to that date.

**4.6.** Is it possible to print a copy of the application we submit? If so, where/how?

**Answer:** PCCD will not be able to provide you with a copy of your SurveyMonkey application. We suggest that you develop your application in a Word document and/or print off each page of the survey prior to your submission if you want a copy.

**4.7.** Are all expenses reimbursed? Or will schools be granted the full award upfront?

**Answer:** Grant funds are paid by PCCD to grantees on a reimbursement basis. PCCD allows grantees to submit reimbursement requests as frequently as necessary to alleviate possible cash flow issues that may arise with multiple expensive purchases. PCCD will work with grantees to ensure that any cash flow concerns are addressed in a timely manner.

**4.8.** Can a vendor apply on behalf of multiple schools? And if so, can they ask for \$75,000 per school?

**Answer:** Yes, if you are an approved vendor. A separate application should be submitted for each school entity.

**4.9.** Are counties considered a municipality under this solicitation and thus are able to apply?

**Answer:** A county is an eligible applicant under this solicitation.

**4.10.** How do I know if I'm an approved vendor?

**Answer:** Eligible approved vendors are those that were previously approved by the PA Department of Education or [PCCD's School Security Guard Vendor List](#).

**4.11.** While looking through the SurveyMonkey form, when we get to completing the school information, it asks for contact information and addresses. What would you suggest a local municipal government fill out for this information (Questions #2-15) since we would be applying for the grant instead of the school district. Our local municipality intends on submitting for a school resource officer for the local school district.

**Answer:** The attached SurveyMonkey form is inclusive of all questions that may be asked within the survey. Once an applicant selects that they are either a nonpublic school or a municipality, law enforcement agency, or approved vendor, SurveyMonkey will skip all questions that are not relevant for their group. Once you select that you are a municipality in question 1, SurveyMonkey will automatically skip to question 35. You are not required to answer questions 2-34.