



# Wyoming Stronger Connections Grant

## Guidance Document



The Stronger Connections Grant is funded by the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022 to support activities under section 4108 of Title IV, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and provide students with safer and healthier learning environments.

### Wyoming Department of Education

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November 6, 2023

Dear Local Education Agency Colleague,

The Wyoming Department of Education has received \$4,833,025 as part of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) to competitively award to qualifying high-need local educational agencies. The BSCA specifies that State Education Agencies (SEAs) must make competitive sub-grants to high-need local educational agencies (LEAs), for activities to support safe and healthy students under section 4108 of ESSA. The fundamental requirements of Title IV, Part A also apply to these funds, including the supplement, not supplant requirement (ESSA section 4110); the maintenance of effort requirement (ESSA section 8521); and the requirement to provide equitable services to private school students and personnel (ESSA section 8501 et seq.), as described further in Section E of the [Bipartisan Safer Communities Act Stronger Connections Grant Program FAQs](#). Individual schools may not apply.

This guidance document contains the forms and instructions necessary to apply for the Stronger Connections Grant. Review the enclosed materials and carefully follow the instructions for completing the grant application. Important Dates and Information for the Wyoming Stronger Connections Grant:

- **Complete the Stronger Connections Grant application on Jotform.** A link will be emailed to applicants upon completion of the intent to apply form.
- Application Period- November 6, 2023 - February 9, 2024 (UPDATED)
- Submit completed application by 5:00 p.m. (MST) on February 9, 2024 via Jotform
- Awards announced by WDE: March 1, 2024 (UPDATED)
- Award Period - One time award to be obligated between March 1, 2024 and September 30, 2026.
- Minimum award is \$150,000 and maximum award is \$450,000.

The Wyoming Department of Education will host an informational webinar to review the application process and address questions on:

Tuesday, November 28, 2023, at 2:00p.m.

Zoom meeting invitations will be sent to applicants who complete the intent to apply form.

Thank you for your continued efforts to create safer and healthier learning environments for students.

Mary Bravo

Title II-A, Title IV-A, and Stronger Connections Program Manager

Wyoming Department of Education

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## What is the Stronger Connections Grant?

On June 25, 2022, President Biden signed into law the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) as an important first step toward reducing the risk of gun violence in schools and communities. Through this legislation, Congress authorized nearly \$1 billion in funding under Title IV, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 (ESSA) to State Educational Agencies (SEAs) to provide students with safer and healthier learning environments. Under BSCA, SEAs must award these funds competitively to high need local education agencies (LEAs) to fund activities that support safe and healthy students allowable under [Section 4108 of ESSA](#).

### Program Funds

Programs	Amounts
Stronger Connections Grant Total	\$4,833,025.00
Allocated to Districts	\$4,591,373.75
State Activities (4%)	\$ 193,321.00
State Administration (1%)	\$ 48,330.25

### Grant Purpose

To maximize the positive and lasting impact of these funds, the Wyoming Department of Education will prioritize funds for high-need LEA applicants that demonstrate a strong commitment to the following:

- Implement 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.
- 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.
- 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. (US Department of Education, 2022)

### Eligibility - Definition of High - Need LEA

The Wyoming Department of Education's definition of a high-need local education agency (LEA) for the purposes of determining eligibility for the Stronger Connections Grant is a district that meets two or more of the following criteria:

- The majority of schools within the LEA are at or above the 2022-23 state free and reduced lunch average of 34%;
- High student-to-mental health professional ratio;
- High rates of chronic absenteeism;
- High rates of exclusionary discipline;
- High rates of bullying/harassment;
- High rates of community and school violence;
- High rates of students experiencing homelessness.

- Students recently experienced a natural disaster or traumatic event;
- High rates of substance use/abuse;
- Other as determined by the district, please specify.

### **Availability of Funds**

- Congress has made available \$4,833,025, the majority of which will be used for local grant awards in Wyoming.
- One time grant award allocations will range from a minimum of \$150,000 up to \$450,000 based on identified needs and implementation activities that are justified and outlined in the budget narrative.
- These funds must be obligated by September 30, 2026.

### **Prohibited Use of Funds**

- SCG funds must be used to supplement and not supplant currently funded activities and personnel. SEC. 4110. [20 U.S.C. 7120].
- All costs, including administrative costs, shall be reasonable and necessary to the program. (Title 2 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] sections 200.404, and 200.405)
- Construction is not allowed. An LEA cannot use funds for school construction, renovation, or repair of any school facility, except as authorized under this chapter; ESSA 8526.
- Funds cannot be used to purchase weapons or provide weapon training outside of current legislation. (ESSA section 8526)
- An LEA that receives a Stronger Connections award may not transfer funds out of that award to another authorized program.
- Individual schools may not apply.

### **Submission Instructions**

- Applicants must submit a completed application via Jotform. A link to the application will be emailed to districts upon completion of the intent to apply.
- The deadline for the Wyoming Department of Education's receipt of applications is 5:00 p.m. (MST) Friday, February 9, 2024.
- All applications must be received on or before the date and time stated above. The closing date and procedures for guaranteeing timely submission will be strictly observed.
- Applicants needing assistance with the Jotform application should contact Mary Bravo at [mary.bravo@wyo.gov](mailto:mary.bravo@wyo.gov).

### **Selection Process**

The Wyoming Department of Education will use the criteria located in the [Stronger Connections Grant Rubric](#), which includes the demonstration of need(s), the implementation plan (narrative, evidence-based activities, programs and practices, SMART goals), budget and budget summary narrative, and the evaluation and sustainability plan to evaluate the application for funding.

Each selection criterion is presented and explained in this guidance document. The points for each criterion are indicated in the grant rubric and in parentheses next to each criteria description. Reviewers will use a rubric based on these criteria to guide scoring.

Each proposal will be reviewed and rated by a grant review committee. The team will determine if an application is recommended for funding, recommended for partial funding, or not recommended for funding. Proposals will then be ranked and recommendations for funding will be determined. In general, proposals will be recommended for funding in rank order, depending on the amount of funding available. If there is a tie score, the process for selecting an awardee will be based on the following protocol:

- The application with the highest poverty level of the school(s) served within that district shall be awarded.
- If the applications have the same poverty level, the district with target school(s) with the lower state accountability classification shall be awarded.
- If the applications have the same accountability classification, the application from the district that has fewer awards relative to its public-school enrollment shall be awarded.

## Stronger Connections Competitive Grant Application

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### Application

After meaningful consultation with stakeholders, the Stronger Connections Grant application can be completed via Jotform. A link to the application will be emailed to participating districts that complete the intent to apply form. Please complete each component of the application. Further information about each component of the application can be found below.

### District Profile

Districts must identify a Stronger Connections Grant Coordinator in the District Profile section of the application to support the reporting and facilitation of activities related to the grant and provide contact information for the person coordinating the Stronger Connections Grant activities at the district level. Please provide student population totals for both public and participating private schools. Districts must follow equitable services requirements in ESSA section 8501(c)(3). List any participating private schools in the application. Equitable services will be calculated by the SEA based on awarded amount and student populations (public and participating nonpublic) following the formula calculation used for Title IV-A. This total will be presented in the award packet, if the LEA is selected as a sub-recipient of this grant.

### Non-Public Equitable Services Requirements

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 private school children and educators to participate (ESSA section 8501(c)(3)). Such consultation might include a brief survey of private 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 private—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 private school officials on the specific services the LEA will provide students and educators, consistent with the LEA's approved application, including any limitations or priorities established by the SEA.

## Engaging Students, Families, Staff and Communities

LEAs are required to engage students, families, teachers, school staff, and community members in meaningful and ongoing conversations to identify the highest safety and health needs and to address those needs within their district. Conversations should utilize local data (e.g, needs assessment, family and community survey data, school improvement plan, climate survey data, state and county health reports, and other sources of data) to create goals and activities that will support a comprehensive and integrated implementation approach for improving the health and safety of students and staff. Districts must complete the [SCG Constituency Participation](#) fillable pdf included in the Jotform application.

Districts shall retain copies of meeting sign-in sheets, any MOUs with community agencies or partners, and any other relevant evidence of consultation with stakeholders. These documents will be utilized for monitoring and reporting purposes.

## Demonstration of Need (25 points)

Districts must show a need for these funds in areas identified in the high-need LEA definition (see below). The district should provide clear descriptions outlining the selected need criteria and include multiple data points to support that selection. It is important to include school and community data in the application when providing justification of the district's selected high-need criteria. National data can also be included as evidence in the district's justification of need. Districts should refer to their needs assessment and climate survey data to determine and support selected needs criteria. Districts are encouraged to include data from community partners, or provide data identifying deficits in partnerships or services in their communities that are having a negative impact on the safety and health of students. Areas of focus in the State defined definition for high-need are:

- The majority of schools within the LEA are at or above the 22-23 state free and reduced lunch average of 34%:
  - School district data can be utilized to justify this criterion. Districts can also supplement this data with US Census poverty data.
- High student-to-mental health professional ratio:
  - The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Sec. 4102, defines a school based mental health services provider as "a state-licensed or state-certified school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker or other state-licensed or certified mental health professional qualified under state law to provide mental health services to children and adolescents." Districts can utilize district or HR data to justify this criterion.
- High rates of chronic absenteeism:
  - "Chronic absenteeism" refers to students who miss 15 days or more in the school year for any reason. Regular attendance is predictive of student and school success. Districts can utilize student information system (SIS) data to justify this criterion.
- High rates of exclusionary discipline:
  - "Exclusionary discipline" is any type of school disciplinary action that removes or excludes students from their usual educational setting. Common examples include in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions and expulsions. In-school and out-of-school suspension data is preferred, but not required. Please clarify what data is being included in the justification. Districts can use office discipline referrals, student information systems, behavior tracking systems, or other sources (please specify in application).



- High rates of bullying/harassment:
  - “Bullying” means any unwanted, aggressive behavior committed in person, or by electronic communication, directed toward a student or group of students that results in, or is reasonably perceived as being done with, the intent to cause negative educational or physical results for the targeted individual or group; and is communicated in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school’s educational mission or the education of any student; and is repeated or highly likely to be repeated. Districts can utilize SIS data.
- High rates of community and school violence:
  - “School violence” is youth violence that occurs on school property, on the way to or from school or school sponsored events, or during a school-sponsored event. A young person can be a victim, a perpetrator, or a witness of school violence. School violence may also involve or impact adults. Youth violence includes various behaviors. Some violent acts can cause more emotional harm than physical harm. Other forms of violence can lead to serious injury or even death. Districts in reporting counties can utilize [Uniform Crime Reporting data](#) or [Wyoming Crime Statistics data](#) to obtain community data. District data can be compiled from office discipline referrals, student information systems, behavior tracking systems, or other sources (please specify in application).
- High rates of substance use/abuse:
  - “Substance abuse” encompasses a harmful pattern of use of alcohol, tobacco products, and illegal drugs; this includes the presence of substance use and trade within school and campus environments and during school-related activities (National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environment, 2021). Data can be obtained from [Wyoming PNA data](#). District data can be compiled from office discipline referrals, student information systems, behavior tracking systems, or other sources (please specify in application).
- Students recently experienced a natural disaster or traumatic event:
  - “Trauma” refers to an event, series of events or circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or perceived as life-threatening. It can overwhelm the person’s ability to cope and have lasting adverse effects. Traumatic stress can affect an individual’s mental, physical, behavioral, emotional, and spiritual functioning, especially during childhood development. Traumatic stress can result from disaster, abuse, neglect, loss, life-threatening situations, acts of violence or anything that overwhelms a person’s ability to cope (Guarino and Chagnon, 2018; NCTSN, 2017; SAMHSA, 2014). Examples of traumatic events may include data collected after community disaster events such as flooding in a community, or events that directly impact a school community such as a student’s death. Other events and data can be defined by the district and included as justification for this criterion.
- High rates of students experiencing homelessness:
  - According to the McKinney Vento Act, homelessness can be defined as staying with friends or relatives due to economic hardship, living in hotels, motels, trailer parks, or camping grounds without a choice, staying in emergency or transitional shelters, living in public spaces such as parks or abandoned buildings, and migratory students. Districts can obtain data from their district Homeless Liaison.
- Other as determined by the district:
  - This determination can be utilized to identify a need such as high dropout rates, or high transient student populations that are significantly impacting the health and safety of students in the district.



### Implementation Plan (30 points)

Applicants are required to identify at least two and no more than five projects that will be funded with this grant to improve the safety and health of students and staff. Use the questions in the application to guide the implementation plan and prioritize the district's project selections. Provide a brief overview of your LEA's proposed projects, being sure to clearly indicate how they address the needs of your LEA (as evident in the "high-needs" criteria question) and a rationale for why these particular activities or strategies were selected. Please indicate a timeline for implementation, as this grant has a two and a half-year period of performance. Include the anticipated number of students that will be impacted by these projects.

LEAs are encouraged to consider a comprehensive and integrated approach when designing the projects to be funded with this grant. Define the priority projects to address the root cause of the needs. A strong implementation plan will include a variety of data sources such as needs assessment data, climate and culture data, school improvement plan data, family and community survey data and more. By connecting the district's needs to the data and integrating the prioritized activities into the district's current activities and interventions (such as MTSS), these funds will have an even greater impact on students' health and safety.

LEAs are encouraged to utilize resources from both local and national organizations when planning how to best keep students safe and healthy. Some of these may include protecting kids online with help from the [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency \(CISA\)](#) or helping families and adults talk to students about substance use and abuse with resources from [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMSHA.gov\)](#). Excellent local resources can be found by connecting with community organizations or the [Wyoming Department of Health Community Prevention Specialists](#) to collect data, collaborate on solving issues impacting students and determining different approaches to more effectively meet students' health and safety needs. Be clear, creative, collaborative and intentional in your approach to this implementation plan and grant request.

Each project must coincide with a use of funds activity category from this list. The U.S. Department of Education will collect data from grant awardees based on these categories. Please indicate which category or categories align best with each of your proposed projects.

For each priority project, design a SMART goal for each project that will be utilized to measure the effectiveness of and sustainability of selected programs. For guidance with creating a SMART goal, [click here](#). Here are a few examples of SMART goals:

- By June 2025, as a result of SBIRT implementation, the number of student suspensions for grades 6th through 8th in Cowboy Joe School District will be 40 percent less than the 2022-2023 school year (from \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) as measured by district suspension data.
- By June of 2025, as a result of our work on restorative practices, Go Pokes School District will decrease the percentage of K-12 students who sometimes or never feel like they belong by five percent (39.1 percent to 34.1 percent) as measured by the district-wide school climate survey.

### Evidence-based Projects

Once you have utilized data and root cause analysis to identify the priority projects that this grant will focus on, determine which evidence-based activities will best meet the needs of students in the district. Identify the corresponding [ESSA Tier Level of Evidence](#) in the application.

Tier 1: Strong Evidence	Supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented randomized control experimental studies.
Tier 2: Moderate Evidence	Supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies.
Tier 3: Promising Evidence	Supported by one or more well-designed and well implemented correlational studies (with statistical controls for selection bias).
Tier 4: Demonstrates a Rationale	Practices that have a well-defined logic model or theory of action, are supported by research, and have some effort underway by an SEA, LEA, or outside research organization to determine their effectiveness.

Below and in Appendix D you will find additional resources to use when designing evidenced-based prioritized projects.

### Research Clearinghouses and Technical Assistance Center Resources

(To use when building implementation activities)

- [Evidence for ESSA](#)
- [National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments](#)
- [Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools](#)
- [SAMHSA Evidence-Based Practices Resource Center](#)
- [SAMHSA Disaster Technical Assistance Center](#)
- [Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports](#)
- [What Works Clearinghouse](#)
- [Best Practices Clearinghouse](#)
- [OESE Technical Assistance Centers](#)
- [School Safety](#)

### Budget (20 points)

In this section, clearly describe how the grant funds will be used to address identified priority projects during the grant project period. All implementation activities and funding must be tied directly to improving safe and healthy needs within the district.

- Complete and upload the provided budget template.
- In addition to the budget template, include a narrative.
  - A well written narrative will include a description of the costs associated with each project plan including staffing, training, curriculum, materials and supplies that are reasonable and necessary to implement the plan.
- All costs and expenses for this grant funding must be reasonable, necessary, and allowable under the Stronger Connections legislation and must follow the Uniform Grant Guidance found in 2 CFR 200.
- All budgeted expenses must follow the supplement not supplant requirements in section 4110 of the ESSA.

### **Evaluation and Sustainability Plan (25 points)**

Provide an evaluation plan for how the district will use data-based decision-making to monitor progress toward the SMART goals identified in the implementation plan, and who will be involved. The evaluation plan should clearly identify what data will be collected and the frequency of monitoring for effective implementation. Describe how the district will analyze final outcomes and communicate to stakeholders the direct impact the grant activities had on students.

Describe the plan to create sustainable implementation practices to further impact safe and healthy activities following the completion of the grant. How will these projects integrate into and continue to build on current practices?

### **Assurances**

By drawing down funds awarded under this Grant Award Notification, the Local Education Agency (LEA) assures the following:

- LEA ensures that SCG funds are used for activities allowable under section 4108 of the ESSA and follow all federal requirements of the Stronger Connections grant.
- LEA ensures that SCG funds are not used for the provision to any person of a dangerous weapon or training in the use of a dangerous weapon as prohibited under Section 13401 of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, which amends section 8526 of the ESSA.
- LEA ensures that SCG funds provide equitable services to students and teachers in private schools as required under section 8501 of the ESSA.
- LEA ensures that SCG funds follow the supplement not supplant requirements in section 4110 of the ESSA.
- LEA ensures that SCG funds are tracked separately from its regular allocation under Title IV, Part A of the ESSA.
- LEA will comply with the 2 CFR 200.328-329 (monitoring and reporting).
- LEA will participate, as requested, in any Department evaluation of the SCG program and will cooperate with any audit or examination of records with respect to SCG funds.
- LEA acknowledges that WDE reserves the right to collect additional data based on USED requirements that may be published after this grant is awarded.
- LEA is encouraged to develop comprehensive Emergency Operations Plans (EOP)/Comprehensive Crisis Plans for each building, if one is not already in place.
- LEA will maintain time and effort documentation for any staff paid with SCG funds.
- LEA agrees to abide by the federal funds grant assurances [found here](#), including Supplementing and not Supplanting federal funds, and Maintenance of Effort.

## Appendix A: Required Elements

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### What are the required LEA application elements?

The Stronger Connections Grant competitive application must be completed using the JotForm application.

Completed responses in Jotform application:

- District Profile
- Demonstration of Need
- Implementation Plan - Including evidence-based prioritized projects aligned to use of funds activities
- Budget Narrative
- Evaluation and Sustainability Plan

Uploaded documents in Jotform application:

- Documentation of Private School Consultation: Required Form Form
- Documentation of Students, Families, Staff and Communities Consultation Form (Titled: SCG Planning Constituency Participation Form)
- Budget Template
- Assurances - Signed by District Superintendent or designee

Please ensure that the applicant name is present in the title of all documents to be uploaded into the Jotform application. For example: "DistrictName\_SCG Constituency Participation"

### Equitable Share Determination\*

\*Note: Successfully funded school district applicants for which equitable services requirements would apply will only be required to complete additional documentation upon receiving notice of their award. Once approved, the LEA application will then be placed on a programmatic hold and the LEA will not be able to draw down funds until the equitable services process is completed.

These additional documentation will be made available in the award packet.

### Reporting Requirements:

Although the official reporting document has not been released by the United States Department of Education (USED), this is a proposed [reporting form](#) to collect annual data beginning in 2024. This document is for informational and planning purposes only at this time. Additional information will be required during annual reporting. This information will be provided to the grant recipients once all of the reporting requirements have been finalized by USED and shared with the Wyoming Department of Education.

## Appendix B: FAQs

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### **What are allowable activities that LEAs can fund with the Stronger Connections Grant?**

A local education agency (LEA) that receives a Stronger Connections Grant (SCG) award shall use the monies to fund activities that are reasonable, necessary, and allowable under section 4108 of the ESSA to provide students with safer and healthier learning environments. Examples of allowable services or activities include:

- Drug and violence prevention activities that are evidence-based
- School-based mental health services
- Comprehensive health education programs
- Integrating health and safety practices into school or athletic programs
- Nutritional education and physical education activities
- Implementation of schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports
- Bullying and harassment prevention
- Activities that improve instructional practices for developing relationship-building skills
- Prevention of teen and dating violence, stalking, domestic abuse, and sexual violence and harassment
- Mentoring and school counseling
- Establishing or improving school dropout and reentry programs
- Suicide prevention
- Crisis management and conflict resolution techniques
- School-based violence prevention strategies
- Reducing exclusionary disciplinary practices
- Establishing partnerships within the community to provide resources and support for schools
- Strengthening relationships between schools and communities
- High-quality training for school personnel in effective practices related to any of the above

In addition to the negotiated federal funds indirect cost rate, applicants may use a reasonable amount of funds for direct administrative costs. All costs, including administrative costs, shall be reasonable and necessary to the program. (Title 2 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] sections 200.404, and 200.405). Direct administrative activities must be tracked, charged, and allocated directly to the grant and may include, but are not limited to:

- Overall program management, including salaries and related costs
- Activities concerned with paying, transporting, exchanging, and maintaining goods and services
- Activities concerned with establishing and administering policy, preparing reports, etc.
- Activities related to the program requirements of grantees

### **Are there any activities that are prohibited and cannot be funded with the Stronger Connections Grant?**

Yes. Any activity or program that would require construction is prohibited. Construction means “(A) the preparation of drawings and specifications for school facilities; (B) erecting, building, acquiring, altering, remodeling, repairing, or extending school facilities; (C) inspecting and supervising the construction of school facilities; and (D) debt service for such activities” (20 U.S.C. § 7713(3)). Construction is not allowed except as authorized under this chapter; ESSA 8526.

In addition, LEAs cannot use funds for the provision to any person of a dangerous weapon or training in the use of a dangerous weapon as prohibited under Section 13401 of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, which amends Section 8526 of the ESSA. Furthermore, LEAs must ensure that the activity is not one of the prohibited activities described in ESSA Section 4001(b) or Section 8526 as amended by the ESSA.

SCG funds must be used to supplement and not supplant currently funded activities and personnel. SEC. 4110. [20 U.S.C. 7120] SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.

Stronger Connections Grant awardees may not transfer funds out of that award to another authorized program.

### **Can we hire staff?**

Yes. Staff hired must directly address the safety and health needs of students and the school community, and must be licensed or certified. Examples include, but are not limited to: School Resource Officer, School Psychologist, Counselor, Social Worker, LMHP or LPC, Nurse, Recreational Therapist, Prevention Specialist, Emergency Medical Responder and Behavioral Health Aid.

Districts must identify a Stronger Connections Grant Coordinator in the District Profile section of the application to support the reporting and facilitation of activities related to the grant. These responsibilities can be included in the activities for new personnel hired through the grant or as a stipend for current personnel that will be coordinating the Stronger Connections grant activities in addition to their current roles and responsibilities.

### **Can a school send staff to national conferences?**

Yes. Professional development and related costs are allowable as long as the conference content aligns with safe and healthy activities and addresses stated needs. You will need to outline how participants will relate the training back to staff post-conference.

### **Are there any specific requirements that must be met for a use of BSCA funds to be “allowable” for an activity?**

Yes. When preparing the competitive application, each entity must determine if the activity is allowable for BSCA funding under the following requirements:

- The activity must be authorized under section 4108 of the ESSA.
- The activity must be reasonable and necessary for the performance of the grant.
- The activity must be allocable to the BSCA grant.
- Supplements, and does not supplant other non-federal funds that would otherwise be used to pay for authorized activities.
- The activity(s) are not one of the prohibited activities in ESSA section 4001(b) or section 8526.
- The activity is consistent with any other applicable Uniform Guidance provisions (see 2 CFR 200 et seq., in particular 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E).

### **How can the LEA monitor and evaluate evidence-based interventions?**

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA) calls for the use of evidence-based interventions which demonstrate a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes. The Regional Educational Laboratory Central has created a Program Evaluation Toolkit which can be found [here](#).

### **Can BSCA funds be used for safety or health related capital construction projects?**

No. BSCA grants are appropriated for carrying out activities under subpart 1 of Part A of Title IV of the ESSA, specifically for activities under ESSA section 4108. ESSA section 8526(1) 32 prohibits using funds under the ESSA “for construction, renovation, or repair of any school facility, except as authorized under [the ESSA],” and there is no specific authorization for construction, renovation, or repair in ESSA Title IV, Part A. Accordingly, BSCA funds may not be used for school construction.

### **Are the LEAs receiving BSCA funds required to reserve funding per the formula for equitable services?**

Yes. LEAs must complete a separate timely and meaningful consultation process with the appropriate school officials and provide private school students and educators services and other benefits that are equitable in comparison to the services and other benefits provided with BSCA funds to public school students and educators.

If awarded, the Wyoming Department of Education will calculate the equitable services amount for the district based on the award and inform the district of that amount. This will be done with the formula that is used to calculate the Title IV-A equitable services amount.

### **How does the WDE plan to use the SCG funds reserved for state-level activities?**

The WDE is developing a plan for use of state-level funds. Look for more information to be released soon.

### **Where can I find more information about the Stronger Connections Grant?**

Other FAQs can be found in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act Stronger Connections Grant Program FAQ document by clicking [here](#).



## Appendix C: Examples

### Implementation Plan and Budget - Use of Fund Activity Categories:

Please follow this example when selecting the Activity Categories to correspond with projects outlined in the budget template.

Prioritized Project Sample Activities	Corresponding Activity Category
<b>Project #1</b> Installing a perimeter fence to promote physical safety for students.	#12 School safety, including the purchasing and installation of security equipment/devices, safety personnel, and implementation of threat assessment systems, teams, or protocols. Construction is prohibited.
<b>Project #2</b> Creating quarterly parent engagement events by partnering with local law enforcement, medical professionals, and Community Prevention Specialists, focused on informing parents of risks and solutions to these common factors impacting students: internet safety hazards including cyberbullying on sites your child might use daily, substance use prevention, recognizing and preventing dating violence, and mental health concerns increased by social media.	#1 Drug use prevention/reduction programs #3 Family engagement strategies #4 Community partnerships, including wraparound supports to address physical and mental health, well-being, and basic needs #5 Community partnerships, including wraparound supports to address physical and mental health, well-being, and basic needs #6 Mental health and well-being education and interventions
<b>Project #3</b> Creation of new intervention groups led by the social worker to support students whose feelings of anxiety are disrupting their learning and the learning of those around them. One to one services may also be provided based on student success in group interventions.	#6 Mental health and well-being education and interventions and #8 School Counseling

### Sample Budget

Please view the sample budget on the second tab of the SCG Budget Template in Jotform.

## Appendix D: Resources

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### Emergency Planning

- K-12 School Security Guide Product Suite: Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
  - <https://www.cisa.gov/k-12-school-security-guide-product-suite>
  - The K-12 School Security Guide Product Suite is designed to provide K-12 districts and campuses with resources, tools, and strategies to improve school physical security. With these products, schools and districts will learn the steps necessary to assess vulnerabilities, strengthen security, and better protect K-12 communities.
- Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans/Multiple agencies
  - [https://rem.s.ed.gov/docs/REMS\\_K-12\\_Guide\\_508.pdf](https://rem.s.ed.gov/docs/REMS_K-12_Guide_508.pdf)
  - This guidance provides information to school administrators on school emergency management planning. It includes a process for developing, implementing, and refining a school Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) with community partners.

### Student Safety and Well-Being

- Strategies for School and District Leaders/Multiple Agencies
  - [https://t4pcenter.ed.gov/Docs/Fact-Sheets/Supporting\\_Students\\_School\\_and\\_District\\_Leaders\\_508.pdf](https://t4pcenter.ed.gov/Docs/Fact-Sheets/Supporting_Students_School_and_District_Leaders_508.pdf)
  - This fact sheet is one of four developed by a collaboration of U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Office of Safe and Supportive Schools technical assistance centers to enhance state and district implementation of the Guiding Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive, Supportive, and Fair School Climates to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn in environments that are safe, inclusive, supportive, and fair.
- Guiding Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive, Supportive, and Fair School Climates/US Department of Education
  - <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf>
  - All students deserve learning environments that are safe, inclusive, supportive, and fair. Schools can both keep their school community—including students and school staff—safe while ensuring every student is included, supported, and treated fairly. Consistently applied, evidence-based approaches to discipline are important tools for creating learning environments that are foundational to the success of all students.

### Chronic Absenteeism and Attendance

- The Wyoming Department of Education Average Daily Attendance Data 2022-2023
  - [https://reporting.edu.wyo.gov/ibi\\_apps/run.bip?BIP\\_REQUEST\\_TYPE=BIP\\_RUN&BIP\\_folder=IBFS%253A%252FWFC%252FRepository%252FPublic%252FAttendanceandMembership%252F&BIP\\_item=AttendanceAndMembershipHTML.htm](https://reporting.edu.wyo.gov/ibi_apps/run.bip?BIP_REQUEST_TYPE=BIP_RUN&BIP_folder=IBFS%253A%252FWFC%252FRepository%252FPublic%252FAttendanceandMembership%252F&BIP_item=AttendanceAndMembershipHTML.htm)
  - This resource is searchable by district and school.

- Chronic Absenteeism in the Nation's Schools/US Department of Education
  - <https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/chronicabsenteeism.html>
  - Students who are chronically absent—meaning they miss at least 15 days of school in a year—are at serious risk of falling behind in school. The data from the CRCD is drawn from nearly every public school in the country and helps us understand who is chronically absent, at what grade levels chronic absenteeism tends to occur, and how chronic absenteeism compares community-by-community and state-by-state.
- Handout: Strategies to Address Chronic Absenteeism/Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest
  - <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/pdf/training-coaching/SWC-CR5115-HO2a-508.pdf>
  - The handout contains specific intervention or type of strategy intended to directly improve attendance among K–12 students, especially those students who are chronically absent. Each intervention strategy includes what the strategy or practice is, what population it serves, how it works, what are the expected outcomes, and additional resources aimed at supporting implementation.

## Mental Health

- Protecting Youth Mental Health/US Department of Health and Human Services - Office of the U.S. Surgeon General Advisory
  - <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-youth-mental-health-advisory.pdf>
  - Mental health challenges in children, adolescents, and young adults are real, and they are widespread. But most importantly, they are treatable, and often preventable. This Advisory shows us how.
- Additional information can be found at:
  - <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/priorities/youth-mental-health/index.html>
  - Mental health challenges are the leading cause of disability and poor life outcomes in young people. Unfortunately, in recent years, we've seen significant increases in certain mental health disorders in youth, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. It is especially important to protect the mental health of minority and marginalized young people. Due to factors beyond their control, these groups are at a higher risk for mental health difficulties. This document provides a more in-depth look at these issues.
- Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health/American Academy of Pediatrics
  - <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/media-and-children/center-of-excellence-on-social-media-and-youth-mental-health/>
  - This National Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health will serve as a centralized, trusted source for evidence-based education and technical assistance to support the mental health of children and adolescents as they navigate social media.
- Wyoming Project AWARE/Wyoming Department of Education and Substance and Mental Health Services Administration
  - <https://edu.wyoming.gov/for-parents-students/project-aware/>
  - The Project AWARE Grant is designed to supplement existing mental health services within the community and remove potential barriers to care: financial, transportation, etc. by providing funding through the grant. More information can be found on this website.

- Know the Signs/Take Action for Mental Health Campaign
  - <https://www.suicideispreventable.org/>
  - Pain isn't always obvious, but most suicidal people show some signs that they are thinking about suicide. The signs may appear in conversations, through their actions, or in social media posts. This website provides readers with information on the signs of suicide and ways to intervene.

## **Bullying/Harassment**

- Stop Bullying.gov/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
  - <https://www.stopbullying.gov/>
  - <https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/laws/wyoming>
  - Strategies for parents, school staff, and other adults in the community that can help kids prevent bullying by talking about it, building a safe school environment, and creating a community-wide bullying prevention strategy.
- How parents, teachers, and kids can take action to prevent bullying/American Psychological Association
  - <https://www.apa.org/topics/bullying/prevent>
  - Strategies for teachers, parents and students for preventing and stopping bullying. It involves a commitment to create a safe environment where children can thrive, socially and academically, without being afraid.
- Bullying and Cyberbullying/Multiple Agencies
  - <https://www.schoolsafety.gov/bullying-and-cyberbullying>
  - Resources for schools to work together to create an environment where bullying is not acceptable.

## **Community and School Violence**

- Improving School Safety Through Bystander Reporting: A Toolkit for Strengthening K-12 Reporting Programs/U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, and the United States Secret Service
  - [https://www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2023-05/ci-sa-ussc-k-12-bystander-reporting-toolkit-508\\_final\\_0.pdf](https://www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2023-05/ci-sa-ussc-k-12-bystander-reporting-toolkit-508_final_0.pdf)
  - To ensure the academic success and emotional wellbeing of all students, schools must foster a safe and nurturing environment where students feel empowered to express their concerns and where student voices are heard. This toolkit represents the latest effort in CISA's and USSS's shared school safety mission, which includes providing schools with actionable, practical, and cost-efficient steps toward preventing harm or acts of violence among our most important populations.
- The Power of Hello/Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency
  - <https://www.cisa.gov/topics/physical-security/non-confrontational-techniques/power-hello>
  - This website describes how alert employees can spot suspicious activity and report it. Used effectively, the right words can be a powerful tool. Simply saying "Hello" can prompt a casual conversation with unknown individuals and help you determine why they are there. This approach may help prevent instances of school and community violence.

- Safe 2 Tell Wyoming/Partnerships with Wyoming Division of Victim Services, Wyoming Highway Patrol, Wyoming Homeland Security and Wyoming Department of Transportation
  - <https://www.safe2tellwy.org/>
  - The goal of Safe 2 Tell Wyoming ensures that all Wyoming students, parents, teachers, and community members have access to a safe and confidential way to report any concerns about their safety or the safety of others, with a focus on early intervention and prevention through awareness and education.

## Trauma

- Violence and Trauma/Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
  - <https://www.samhsa.gov/trauma-violence>
  - These SAMHSA resources address the impact of trauma on individuals, families, and communities as a behavioral health concern that requires a healing and recovery process.
- Pathways to Resilience
  - <https://pathways-us.org/>
  - Resources for promoting trauma informed policies and programs.
- Wyoming Children's Trust Fund/Wyoming Children's Trust Fund and Prevent Wyoming
  - <https://pcawwy.org/home-inicio>
  - Coordinating prevention efforts in Wyoming to prevent incidents of child neglect, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse.
- Students Exposed to Trauma/American Psychological Association
  - <https://www.apa.org/ed/schools/primer/trauma>
  - This information is designed to help teachers respond to students who may need support. It is not intended to be used as a diagnostic tool or to replace the use of formal assessments employed by mental health professionals.

## Substance Use and Abuse

- "Talk. They Hear You." Campaign/SAMHSA
  - <https://www.samhsa.gov/talk-they-hear-you>
  - SAMHSA's national youth substance use prevention campaign helps parents and caregivers, educators, and community members get informed, be prepared, and take action to prevent underage drinking and other substance use.
- Wyoming Nicotine Free School Toolkit/Wyoming Department of Health and Wyoming Cancer Coalition
  - [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1993n8WQXA6A\\_dkBgcBeq98lBw2aDoWZ\\_/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1993n8WQXA6A_dkBgcBeq98lBw2aDoWZ_/view)
  - The intended purpose of this toolkit is to help school districts in Wyoming update, implement, and enforce a comprehensive nicotine-free policy.
- Wyoming Community Prevention Specialist /Wyoming Department of Health
  - <https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/prevention/community-prevention-grants/>
  - The Wyoming Department of Health funds a community prevention grant program through a combined effort of the Substance Use and Tobacco Prevention Program and the Injury and Violence Prevention Program. Each county that receives community prevention funding has a Community Prevention Specialist (CPS) who works with local coalitions to strengthen the prevention efforts in their community. Their focus areas include alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and suicide prevention.

- Substance Abuse/National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
  - <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/safety/substance-abuse>
  - Visitors to this site can find information and campaigns geared toward preventing underage substance use in grades K-12.

## Homelessness

- Homeless Education/Wyoming Department of Education
  - <https://edu.wyoming.gov/for-district-leadership/federal-programs/homeless-ed/>
  - Information and resources about the Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) that is authorized under Title IX Part A of the Every Students Succeeds Act (ESSA). This is also known as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This act is designed to address the problems that children and youth in transition face in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. Schools are encouraged to utilize additional resources provided through the school district's local homeless liaisons.
- Best Practices in Homeless Education/National Center for Homeless Education
  - <https://nche.ed.gov/resources/> - Scroll down to the fourth category on this website for resources.
  - NCHE operates the U.S. Department of Education's technical assistance and information center for the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program. This website houses articles and resources on a wide variety of topics concerning homeless youth.

## MTSS

- Wyoming Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (Wyoming MTSS)/The Wyoming Department of Education
  - <https://edu.wyoming.gov/educators/pd/wyoming-mtss/>
  - A **multi-tiered system of supports**, or MTSS, is a framework that focuses on system-level change and continuous improvement across the classroom, school, and district to provide each student with opportunities to maximize academic achievement and develop skills for success. Among numerous other resources, the site also provides resources for schools looking to improve the health and safety of Wyoming students through screening, monitoring, data-based decision making and prevention.

## Wyoming Prevention Needs Assessment

- Wyoming PNA Data/Wyoming Department of Health and the Wyoming Survey and Analysis Center at the University of Wyoming.
  - <https://www.pnasurvey.org/Home>
  - The PNA survey gathers information from Wyoming young people about their substance use, mental health, and wellness. "The PNA can help schools, administrators, and policy makers better understand the young people in their communities."