State of Oregon



Cover Page

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

BIPARTISAN SAFER COMMUNITIES ACT, Building STRONGER CONNECTIONS

Request for Applications (“RFA”)

Date of Issue: January 30, 2024

Closing Date and Time: March 1, 2024 3:00 PM

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION
   1. PURPOSE

The State of Oregon, acting by and through its Department of Education (“Agency”), is issuing this Request for Applications (“RFA”) for the Stronger Connections Grant (“SCG”). This is a grant program authorized under the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (“BSCA”), which was enacted “to establish safer and healthier learning environments, and to prevent and respond to acts of bullying, violence, and hate that impact our school communities at individual and systemic levels, among other programs and activities.”

The Department of Education is excited to invite eligible districts to apply for this grant to supplement your district’s efforts and activities to support student wellbeing and positive school climates. The SCG is designed to provide additional funding and resources to grantees to support the strengthening of their programs to:

* Foster a sense of belonging through a positive, safe, welcoming, and inclusive school environment,
* Support the social, emotional, physical, and mental health needs of all students, through evidence-based strategies,
* Adequately support high quality teaching and learning by increasing educator capacity,
* Recruit and retain a diverse educator workforce, and
* Ensure the fair administration of student discipline policies in ways that treat students with dignity and respect.

Additional details are included in the Scope of Activities section.

* 1. GRANT AMOUNT AND DURATION

Agency anticipates the award of multiple Grant Agreements (each a “Grant”) from this RFA. The maximum amount of each Grant will be up to $750,000. Funds must be obligated by September 30, 2026.

There is no guarantee that submitting an application will result in funding or funding at the requested level. All award decisions are final.

* 1. ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants must have high relative percentages (as determined by a scoring rubric) of students who are:

* Navigating poverty,
* Have high rates of barriers to regular attendance (chronic absenteeism),
* Experiencing high exclusionary discipline rates,
* Navigating housing instability, including unaccompanied youth, and/or
* Served in the foster care system.
  1. CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS
* Local Education Agencies (“LEA”) who are identified as required to conduct Tribal consultation must do so, in accordance with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (“ESEA”) Section 8538 ([Tribal Consultation Toolkit).](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/NativeAmericanEducation/Documents/A%20Toolkit%20for%20Tribal%20Consultation.pdf)
* Districts must consult with private schools prior to applying for the grant (ESEA section 8501(c)(1)). Attachment D in RFA.
  1. SCHEDULE

The table below represents a tentative schedule of events. All times are listed in Pacific Standard Time. All dates listed are subject to change.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Event | Date | Time |
| ODE will host an Office Hour session to provide information about the application process and answer applicant questions. | February 1, 2024 | 10:00 AM |
| Deadline that applicants can submit questions and/or requests for clarification on the grant program | February 16, 2024 | 11:00 AM |
| ODE will issue answers to the questions and requests for clarification submitted by February 16, 2024. | February 23, 2024 | |
| Deadline to submit applications | March 1, 2024 | 3:00 PM |
| Issuance of notice of intent to award (approximate) | March 15, 2024 | |
| Grants Awarded | April 1, 2024 | |

* 1. SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT

The ODE Single Point of Contact (“SPC”) for this RFA is identified on the Cover Page, along with the SPC’s contact information. Applicants must direct all communications related to any provision of the RFA, including the technical requirements of the RFA, Grant requirements, the RFA process, or any other provision only to the ODE SPC.

1. AUTHORITY AND SCOPE
   1. AUTHORITY

Agency is issuing this RFA pursuant to its authority under the Public Law 117-159 Bipartisan Safer Communities Act.

* 1. DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purposes of this RFA, capitalized words will refer to the following definitions:

* “Addendum” or “Addenda” means an addition to, deletion from, a material change in, or general interest explanation of this RFA.
* “Applicant” means an entity who submits an application in response to this RFA.
* “Application” means a written response to this RFA.
* “BCSA” means Bipartisan Safer Communities Act.
* “Consortium” means a group of districts who are each individually eligible to receive federal funds under SCG, but would not be able to implement a program that is of sufficient size, scope, and quality to be effective if they were to apply on their own. A consortium consists of one school district or Educational Service District (“ESD”) who agrees to serve as the Consortium Lead and a few other school districts who agree to serve as Member Districts. An ESD can only serve as Consortium Lead and not as a Member District.
* “Closing” means the date and time specified in this RFA as the deadline for submitting Applications.
* “Consortium Agreement” means a legally binding agreement between districts to apply for the SCG as a consortium. See Attachment C.
* “Evaluation Committee” means the group of people who will evaluate and score Applications submitted in response to this RFA.
* “Educational Service District” means a regional education unit in the State of Oregon. ESDs work to provide the various counties' school districts with a wide
* “Eligible Applicants” are districts are those who have been identified as having high percentages of students who:
  + Are navigating poverty,
  + Have high rates of barriers to regular attendance (chronic absenteeism),
  + Are experiencing high exclusionary discipline rates,
  + Are navigating housing instability, or
  + Are in served in the foster care system.
* “Focal Student Group” means students of color; students experiencing disabilities; emerging bilingual students; and students experiencing poverty, housing instability, and foster care; and other students who have historically experienced disparities in our schools.
* “SCG” means Stronger Connections Grant.
* “State” means the State of Oregon.
* “Tribal consultation” ensures LEAs are partnering with the Tribes in their area, in accordance with ESEA Section 8538.
  1. OVERVIEW
     1. Agency Overview and Background

The Office of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (“OTLA”) of the Oregon Department of Education ensures that all components of Oregon’s public and private educational enterprise, pre-kindergarten through postsecondary (Pre-Kindergarten-20), are effectively interconnected to provide data and reporting that supports appropriate and personalized instruction for each student. We provide leadership to Oregon's districts and schools, professional development for teachers and administrators and tools for student success.

OTLA is a collaborative, innovative team devoted to leadership and support of educators and students in the state of Oregon. Our vision is to transform public education through realizing the full potential of every district, school, educator, and student in the state of Oregon.

* + 1. Project Overview and Background

The Stronger Connections Grant is part of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (“BSCA”), which was enacted by the U.S. Congress “to establish safer and healthier learning environments, and to prevent and respond to acts of bullying, violence, and hate that impact our school communities at individual and systemic levels, among other programs and activities.” See the [Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, Stronger Connections FAQs](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2023/10/23-0083.BSCA-FAQs-approved-April-Final-Updated-October-2023.pdf).

The Oregon Department of Education is inviting districts to apply for the SCG, a Grant program designed to provide additional funding and resources to grantees to support the strengthening of their programs to ensure student well-being.

* + 1. GOALS

Successful SCG applicants will propose and sustain systems to implement and maintain strategies that:

* Foster a sense of belonging through a positive, safe, welcoming, and inclusive school environment,
* Support the social, emotional, physical, and mental health needs of all students, through evidence-based strategies,
* Adequately support high quality teaching and learning by increasing educator capacity,
* Recruit and retain a diverse educator workforce, and
* Ensure the equitable administration of student discipline policies in ways that treat students with dignity and respect.
  1. SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES
     1. Funding Priorities

Applicants must use funds for at least one, and no more than two, of the categories below. An additional five points will be awarded to applicants who choose to apply for one of the categories (1-4) below. Applicants can also choose to apply for up to two of the categories (1-4), for a total of 10 priority points. No more than 10 additional points will be awarded. Applicants applying for funding for category 5 will not receive additional points. All activities proposed in the application must be authorized under Section 4108 of the ESEA and prioritize the outreach and engagement of Focal Student Groups and provide inclusive, culturally affirming, responsive, and where appropriate, culturally specific programming, to support the strengths, assets, and needs of students.

**Category 1: Mental Health:**

The applicant(s) will prioritize the mental health and well-being of both students and staff with explicit strategies, processes and practices to center relationships, form partnerships with school-based mental health or public/private mental health organizations, and create a climate and culture focused on connection, care, and belonging. All activities in this area must be in alignment with Oregon’s [Integrated Model of Mental Health.](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/mental-health/Pages/Integrated-Model-of-Mental-Health.aspx)This model addresses health and mental health promotion, prevention, and intervention efforts that are strengths-based, trauma-informed, incorporate principles of social-emotional learning, and are equity centered.

**Category 2: Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention.**

Oregon students are increasingly expressing more suicidal ideation and this trend must be reversed. Funding in this category can be used to develop and strengthen current efforts or develop and strengthen new efforts toward suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. Applicants must demonstrate how these activities are in alignment with ORS 339.343 known as Adi’s Act. Funding must be used to support Focal Student Groups who are expressing suicidal ideation more than their peers.

**Category 3:** **Safe and Inclusive School Climates**

Many Oregon students in Focal Student Groups experience disproportionate exclusionary discipline compared to their peers. Funding in this area can be used for systems to address exclusionary discipline practices so that students are in classrooms and schools. Additional consideration will be given to applicants who support these strategies for this Focal Student Group.

**Category 4: Systems to Address Chronic Absenteeism**

Students continue to experience barriers to regular school attendance. Funding in this area can be used to strengthen systems and capacity to support regular student attendance and engagement in school as well as training for staff and community members on how to support students’ attendance in school.

Category 5: Additional Resources and Support

The Stronger Connections Grant authorizes the use of any allowable activities under [Section 4108 of ESEA, Title IV-A and Healthy Students](https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=20+USC+7118&f=treesort&fq=true&num=7&hl=true&edition=prelim&granuleId=USC-prelim-title20-section7118). An applicant must demonstrate how an activity that is covered under this section, that is not covered in categories 1-4, will address the unique strengths and needs of their community and contribute to the overall mental, emotional, and physical health of students or contribute to a positive educational experience for the students in their community. Priority points will not be awarded for this category.

* + 1. Allowable Activities

Each eligible entity that receives an award may use the award funds to carry out a broad array of activities that advance student and educator mental health, well-being, and academic success. All activities proposed must be authorized under Section 4108 of the ESEA, including:

1. Improving School Climate
   * Strategies to improve school climate, including MTSS, schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports, for example.
2. Family Engagement
   * Family partnership development, to address mental health, wellbeing, and basic needs.
3. Community Partnerships
   * Community partnerships, including wraparound supports to address physical and mental health, wellbeing, and basic needs.
4. Bullying Prevention
   * Bullying, harassment, and cyberbullying prevention.
5. Mental Health and Social Emotional Learning
   * Mental health education and social-emotional learning (SEL) interventions.
6. Student Mentoring
   * Development and implementation of mentoring programming.
7. School Counseling
   * Activities to recruit and retain school counseling staff.
8. Healthy Lifestyle
   * Health, active lifestyle programs, including nutritional and physical education supplemental programs.
9. Dropout Prevention
   * School dropout prevention efforts, including early warning systems.
10. School Discipline Improvement
    * Activities to improve exclusionary discipline, including behavior coordinators, climate surveys, and training in restorative practices.
11. School Safety
    * School safety, including personnel and the implementation of threat assessment systems, teams, or protocols.
12. Drug Prevention
    * Drug use prevention efforts.
13. Child Sexual Abuse Prevention
    * Activities to supplement what is required in OAR 581-022-2050 and SB 856 (2015), known as Erin’s Law.
14. Specialized Staff Support
    * Professional development and training for specialized staff to support student mental health, well-being, and basic needs.
15. Healthy and Safe Programs
    * Activities to integrate health and safety practices.
      1. Fiscal Management and Budget

Applicants must complete the Stronger Connections Grant Budget Form, outlining allowable costs that are aligned with the scope of the application. ODE reserves the sole right to determine allowable costs on a case-by-case basis.

Applicants should tailor their funding request based upon the services proposed. Consideration should be given to:

* The size of the school(s) served;
* The number of students overall; and
* The costs necessary to support high quality services, including program design, staffing, professional development, equitable services to private schools, etc.

For a use of funds to be permitted, the activity must be allowable under the Stronger Connections Grant, including activities that are:

* Reasonable and necessary for the performance of the grant;
* Allocable to the grant;
* Supplements, and does not supplant, other non-Federal funds that would otherwise be used to pay for authorized activities;
* Not one of the prohibited activities in ESEA section 4001(b) or section 8526; and
* Consistent with any other applicable Uniform Guidance provisions (see 2 CFR 200 et seq., in particular 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E).

Grantees will be subject to fiscal and programmatic monitoring and must maintain records to demonstrate compliance with federal fiscal requirements.

* + 1. Prohibited Use of Funds

SCG funds are only to be used for the activities aligned with activities allowable under ESEA section 4108, Supporting Safe and Healthy Students, which are listed above. Therefore, ESEA Title IV activities allowable under ESEA sections 4107 (Well Rounded Education) and 4109 (Effective Use of Technology) are not allowable under this specific grant. The ESEA also prohibits the use of these funds for food or school construction.

Additionally, BSCA section 13401 amended ESEA section 8526 to prohibit the use of ESEA funds, including those under Stronger Connections, to provide to any person a dangerous weapon or training in the use of a dangerous weapon. A “dangerous weapon” as defined in section 930(g)(2) of Title 18 of the United States Code is a weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury, except that such term does not include a pocketknife with a blade of less than 2 1/2 inches in length. Accordingly, funds may not be used, for example, to purchase a firearm or to train teachers to use a firearm. Note: Funding school resource officers, hunters’ education, archery programs and culinary arts are allowable.

* + 1. Evaluation and Reporting

Each LEA that receives an award through the Stronger Connections Grant is required to participate in all components of program monitoring, evaluation, and reporting to ODE and the United State Department of Education (“USDE”). This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Reporting uses of Stronger Connections Grant funds, including any revisions to activities or the approved budget, and
2. Submitting expenditure reports on a monthly or quarterly basis for each funding year.

**Note**: Additional fiscal and programmatic reporting requirements may be required as additional guidance is provided by USDE.

* + 1. Consortium Requirements

Applicants have the ability to apply as a consortium. If a district chooses to participate in a consortium, they may only belong to one and cannot also apply individually. ESDs can serve as the Consortium Lead, however they cannot serve as the lead for more than one application. If awarded, a Consortium must use their funds collectively and cannot allocate funds to each district to carry out their own individual, stand-alone programs. In a consortium, all participating districts work together to review the strengths and needs of all students and collaborate to design one plan which mutually benefits students from all participating districts. The Consortium Lead will complete the Consortium Agreement form within 2 weeks of applying, which is provided in Attachment C. The Superintendent of each member district must agree and sign the form.

1. PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS
   1. GRANT PROCESS
      1. Public Notice

The RFA, including all Addenda and Attachments, will be published on Agency’s [Stronger Connections webpage](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/ESEA/Pages/Stronger-Connections.aspx). The SPC will email the identified districts the link to the webpage containing RFA documents.

* + 1. Questions/ Requests for Clarification

All inquiries, whether relating to the RFA process, administration, deadline, or method of award, or to the intent or technical aspects of the RFA must:

* Be emailed to the SPC;
* Identify Applicant’s name and contact information;
* Refer to the specific area of the RFA being questioned (e.g., page, section, paragraph number, etc.); and
* Be received by the due date and time for questions/ requests for clarification identified in the Schedule.
  + 1. Office Hours

The Stronger Connections Grant Team will hold Office Hours at the date and time listed in the Schedule. Prospective Applicants’ participation in this conference is highly encouraged but not mandatory.

The purpose of the office hours are to:

* Provide an additional description of the project;
* Explain the RFA process; and
* Answer any questions Applicants may have related to the project or the process.

Statements made at the office hour meetings are not binding upon Agency. Applicants may be asked to submit questions in writing.

* + 1. Application Due Date

Applications and all required submittal items must be received by the SPC on or before Closing. Applications received after Closing will not be accepted. All Application modifications or withdrawals must be completed prior to Closing.

Applications received after Closing are considered LATE and will NOT be accepted for evaluation.

Applicant is solely responsible for ensuring its application is received by the SPC in accordance with the RFA requirements before Closing. It is encouraged to allow time for resubmission before Closing. The following submission option is permitted for this RFA:

**Smartsheet Form.**

The application narrative located in Section 3.2.1 of this document details the application contents.

There is a corresponding Smartsheet portion for each section in the application template in this document. One section will require applicants to upload attachments. We recommend completing all section narratives and attachments before working in the Smartsheet.

Smartsheet SCG Application tips and items to note:

* Progress is unable to be saved in a single section. Applicants should be ready to complete a full form in one sitting;
* Once a form is submitted, applicants cannot go back and change responses;
* The SCG Budget Form should not be uploaded to Google Sheets, as it will lose the formulas;
* Plan ahead to ensure there is ample time to submit electronically before the grant deadline date.

Applications submitted outside of the process described in this section will be rejected.

[**Official Competitive Electronic Application**](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/7cc1ef61a9fd49848799d99dadf0ec07)

**2024-2026 Stronger Connections Grant Application**

* + 1. Modification or Withdrawal of Applications

Any Applicant who wishes to modify or withdraw an application already received by Agency must do so prior to Closing. Applicant must submit its modification or request to withdraw to the SPC as described in the Application Submission section. Modifications must denote the specific change(s) to the Application submission. All requests must reference the RFA number.

* + 1. Application Initial Eligibility Screening

All applications will receive an initial eligibility screening by ODE to ensure the application: 1) meets the eligibility requirements for the grant, 2) was received on time and in the proper format, and 3) contains all required sections, attachment uploads, and signatures. If an application does not meet these basic requirements, it will not be scored or funded. The total possible score for the application is 43 points. An application that receives a score of zero on any required section will not be funded. The value assigned for each section is indicated in the Evaluation Rubric located in the appendices of this document and in the Application Template Overview section.

Note: Applicants who are required to conduct Tribal Consultation and/or Private School Consultation will not be funded if the consultation requirements are not met.

* + 1. Application Rejection

Agency may reject an Application for any of the following reasons:

* Applicant fails to substantially comply with all prescribed RFA procedures and requirements;
* Applicant fails to conduct Tribal Consultation and/or Private School Consultation, if required;
* Applicant makes any contact regarding this RFA with representatives of the State such as State employees or officials other than the SPC or those the SPC authorizes, or initiates inappropriate contact with the SPC;
* Applicant attempts to inappropriately influence a member of the Evaluation Committee; or
* Application is conditioned on Agency’s acceptance of any other terms and conditions or rights to negotiate any alternative terms and conditions that are not reasonably related to those expressly authorized for negotiation in the RFA or Addenda.
  1. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Application must address each of the items listed in this section and all other requirements set forth in this RFA. Applicant must describe how activities will be completed. An Application that merely offers to fulfill the project will be considered non-responsive to this RFA and will not be considered further.

* + 1. Applicant Information

Provide information, including contact information, about the district applying for funds. Please specify whether the applicant is a single district or consortium. If the applicant is a consortium, specify the Consortium Lead and follow the requirements in Section 2.4.6 of this RFA. Please also provide the total amount requested.

* + 1. Demonstration of Strengths and Needs in Community (9 points, no more than 250 words)

Describe the greatest strengths, challenges and needs related to the mental, social-emotional, and/or physical health and safety of students that will be addressed through the Stronger Connections Grant. Include a description of the data that was used to identify these opportunities and barriers and who was involved in the review process. Please include a description of how the district consulted with entities, such as private schools (in accordance with ESEA section 8501) and/or Tribes (in accordance with ESEA Section 8538) in the strengths and needs assessment.  You may refer to your integrated guidance application.

* + 1. Safe and Healthy Student Activities (12 Points, no more than 500 words)

Describe which category, or categories, the applicant is applying for under section 2.4.1. and include how the proposed grant activities will meet the strengths and needs of Focal Student Groups identified in section 3.1.1A. Include whether this is intended to develop, expand, and/or sustain existing activities underway in the district and community. If applicable, indicate in which activities private schools will participate.

* + 1. Funding Priorities (0, 5, or 10 points)

Applicant must indicate which funding priorities they are requesting to fund.

* + 1. Budget and Timeline (12 points, complete budget workbook)

Applicant must complete and submit the Budget Workbook found in Attachment B. Include sufficient detail to demonstrate that the costs are reasonable, necessary, and will support the objectives, design, scope, and sustainability of the proposed activities.

1. EVALUATION
   1. RESPONSIVENESS DETERMINATION

Applications received prior to Closing will be reviewed for responsiveness to all RFA requirements. If the Application is unclear, the SPC may request clarification from Applicant. However, clarifications may not be used to rehabilitate a non-responsive Application. If the SPC finds the Application non-responsive, the Application may be rejected; however, Agency may waive minor mistakes in its sole discretion.

* 1. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Responsive Applications meeting the requirements outlined in the Application Requirements section will be evaluated by an Evaluation Committee. Evaluators will assign a score for each evaluation criterion listed below in this section.

**Scoring Definitions**

* Met Very Few Criteria - information missing or incomplete
* Met Some Criteria - requires additional clarification
* Met All Criteria - concise and thoroughly developed, high quality response

SPC may request further clarification to assist the Evaluation Committee in gaining additional understanding of Applications. A response to a clarification request must be to clarify or explain portions of the already submitted Application and may not contain new information not included in the original Application.

* 1. POINT AND SCORE CALCULATIONS

[Smartsheet Application](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/7cc1ef61a9fd49848799d99dadf0ec07)

[Stronger Connections Grant Frequently Asked Questions](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2023/10/23-0083.BSCA-FAQs-approved-April-Final-Updated-October-2023.pdf)

The total possible score for the application is 43 points. The value assigned for each section is indicated in the tables below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Demonstration of Strengths and Needs in Community** | | **Met Very Few Criteria**  (information missing or incomplete) | | **Met Some Criteria**  (requires additional clarification) | | **Met All Criteria**  (concise and thoroughly developed, high-quality response) |
| The applicant provided a clear and concise description of the process used to determine the strengths and needs of the community and the findings. | | 1 | | 2 | | 3 |
| The applicant clearly identified which data sources were used in the strengths and needs assessment. | | 1 | | 2 | | 3 |
| The applicant provided a clear and concise description of the findings from the strengths and needs assessment.  If private schools participated in the needs assessment, include their strengths and needs in the description. If your district is required to conduct Tribal Consultation, include their strengths and needs in this description as well. | | 1 | | 2 | | 3 |
| **Comments:** | | | | | | |
| **Total Points: /9** | | | | | | |
| **Safe and Healthy Student Activities** | **Met Very Few Criteria**  (information missing or incomplete) | | **Met Some Criteria**  (requires additional clarification) | | **Met All Criteria**  (concise and thoroughly developed, high-quality response) | |
| Applicant clearly described the strategies they are proposing, including which strategies will serve private school and/or Tribal communities, if applicable. | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | |
| Activities proposed are aligned with the findings of their strengths and needs assessment. | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | |
| Applicant clearly articulated how the activities proposed supports Focal Student Groups in their community. | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | |
| Applicant clearly articulated if the strategies proposed are intended to develop, expand, and/or sustain existing activities. | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | |
| **Comments:** | | | | | | |
| **Total Points: /12** | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Funding Priorities**  **\*note, applicant can apply for up to two** | **Applicant Did not Apply for this Category** | **Applicant Applied for this Category** |
| Category 1: Mental Health | 0 | 5 |
| Category 2: Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention | 0 | 5 |
| Category 3: Safe and Inclusive School Climates | 0 | 5 |
| Category 4: Systems to Address Chronic Absenteeism | 0 | 5 |
| Category 5: Additional Resources and Support | 0 | 0 |

|  |
| --- |
| **Total Points: /10** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Budget and Timeline** | **Met Very Few Criteria**  (information missing or incomplete) | **Met Some Criteria**  (requires additional clarification) | **Met All Criteria**  (concise and thoroughly developed, high-quality response) |
| Applicant submitted a complete budget workbook. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Activities budgeted for are reasonable, necessary, and allowable. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Activities budgeted for support the objectives, design, and scope of the application. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Activities budgeted can be obligated within the timeline of the grant. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| **Comments:** | | | |
| **Total Points: /12** | | | |

**SCG RFA Evaluation Rubric Scoresheet**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Section** | **Base Grant Application Sections** | **Points** |
| **A** | **Demonstration of Strengths and Needs in Community** | 9 |
| **B** | **Safe and Healthy Student Activities** | 12 |
| **C** | **Funding Priorities** | 10 |
| **D** | **Budget and Timeline** | 12 |
|  | **SUBTOTAL** | 43 |

* 1. RANKING OF APPLICANTS

The SPC will total the points for each Application. SPC will determine rank order for each respective Application, with the highest point total receiving the highest rank, and successive rank order determined by the next highest point total.

1. AWARD AND NEGOTIATION
   1. AWARD NOTIFICATION PROCESS
      1. Award Consideration

Agency, if it awards a Grant, will award a Grant to the highest-ranking Applicant(s) based upon the scoring methodology and process described in the Evaluation section. Agency may award less than the full scope described in this RFA.

Applications will be scored by qualified reviewers knowledgeable in and experienced with federal programs.

Reviewers are required to remove themselves from the scoring of any application that may present any conflict of interest.

Each application will have at least two reviewers using the evaluation rubrics in this application.

Reviewers will provide each application with a technical merit score.

Each proposal will be evaluated and scored section by section by the assigned team of reviewers.

Reviewers will note the strengths and weaknesses for each section.

Reviewer scores from each application will then be totaled to create an overall team score for the application.

The team will also provide an assessment of whether the proposal is recommended for funding, recommended for funding with changes, or not recommended for funding.

After the scores are compiled, all eligible applications will be placed in rank order. To the extent practicable, ODE will distribute funds equitably among Oregon geographic areas, including urban, suburban, and rural communities.

If ODE and the applicant are unable to negotiate an agreed upon scope of work and budget the proposal will not be funded.

**AGENCY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO NOT SELECT ANY OR ALL APPLICANTS UNDER THIS RFA IF AGENCY DETERMINES IN ITS SOLE DISCRETION THAT A SELECTION SHOULD NOT BE MADE.**

* + 1. Notice of Intent to Award

Agency will notify all Applicants in writing that Agency intends to award a Grant to the selected Applicant(s) subject to successful negotiation of any negotiable provisions.

* 1. SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Application is submitted in its entirety. Evidence of Tribal Consultation is submitted to the Office of Indian Education and evidence of Private School consultation is submitted through the Evidence of Consultation Form, when required. Private schools who have accepted Equitable Services under SCG will complete the SCG Affirmation of Private School Consultation, Attachment D in RFA.

* + 1. Business Registry

If selected for award, Applicant must be duly authorized by the State of Oregon to transact business in the State of Oregon before executing the Grant. The selected Applicant must submit a current Oregon Secretary of State Business Registry number or an explanation if not applicable.

All corporations and other business entities (domestic and foreign) must have a Registered Agent in Oregon. For more information, see Oregon Business Guide, How to Start a Business in Oregon and Laws and Rules: <http://www.filinginoregon.com/index.htm>.

* + 1. Insurance

Prior to execution of a Grant, the apparent successful Applicant must secure and demonstrate to Agency proof of insurance coverage meeting the requirements identified in the RFA or as otherwise negotiated.

Failure to demonstrate coverage may result in Agency terminating negotiations and commencing negotiations with the next highest ranking Applicant. Applicant is encouraged to consult its insurance agent about the insurance requirements contained in Insurance Requirements (Exhibit B of Attachment A) prior to Application submission.

* + 1. Taxpayer Identification Number

The apparent successful Applicant must provide its Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) and backup withholding status on a completed [W-9 form](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf). Agency will not disburse any Grant funds until Agency has a properly completed W-9.

* 1. GRANT NEGOTIATION

By submitting an Application, Applicant agrees to comply with the requirements of the RFA, including the terms and conditions of the Sample Grant (Attachment A), with the exception of those terms reserved for negotiation. Applicant must review the attached Sample Grant and note exceptions. Unless Applicant notes exceptions in its Application, Agency intends to enter into a Grant with the successful Applicant substantially in the form set forth in the Sample Grant. It may be possible to negotiate some provisions of the final Grant; however, many provisions cannot be changed. Applicant is cautioned that Agency believes modifications to the standard provisions constitute increased risk and increased cost to the State. Therefore, Agency may consider the scope of requested exceptions in the evaluation of Applications.

Any Application that is conditioned upon Agency’s acceptance of any other terms and conditions may be rejected. Any subsequent negotiated changes are subject to prior approval of the Oregon Department of Justice.

In the event the parties have not reached mutually agreeable terms within 30 calendar days, Agency may terminate negotiations and commence negotiations with the next highest-ranking Applicant.

1. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
   1. GOVERNING LAWS AND REGULATIONS

This RFA is governed by the laws of the State of Oregon. Venue for any administrative or judicial action relating to this RFA, evaluation, or award is the Circuit Court of Marion County for the State of Oregon; provided, however, if a proceeding must be brought in a federal forum, then it must be brought and conducted solely and exclusively within the United States District Court for the District of Oregon. In no event shall this section be construed as a waiver by the State of Oregon of any form of defense or immunity, whether sovereign immunity, governmental immunity, immunity based on the eleventh amendment to the Constitution of the United States, or otherwise, to or from any claim or from the jurisdiction of any court.

* 1. OWNERSHIP/ PERMISSION TO USE MATERIALS

All Applications submitted in response to this RFA become the property of Agency. By submitting an Application in response to this RFA, Applicant grants the State a non-exclusive, perpetual, irrevocable, royalty-free license for the rights to copy, distribute, display, prepare derivative works of and transmit the Application solely for the purpose of evaluating the Application, negotiating a Grant, if awarded to Applicant, or as otherwise needed to administer the RFA process, and to fulfill obligations under Oregon Public Records Law (ORS 192.311 through 192.478).

* 1. CANCELLATION OF RFA; REJECTION OF APPLICATIONS; NO DAMAGES

Agency may reject any or all Applications in whole or in part, or may cancel this RFA at any time when the rejection or cancellation is in the best interest of the State or Agency, as determined by Agency. Neither the State nor Agency is liable to any Applicant for any loss or expense caused by or resulting from the delay, suspension, or cancellation of the RFA, award, or rejection of any Application.

* 1. General Education Provisions Act

Section 427 of the United States Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) requires each applicant for funds to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its federally assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This provision allows applicants discretion in developing and describing the activities that are occurring to meet this requirement. GEPA highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, applicants should determine whether these or other barriers might prevent students, teachers, families etc., from such access or participation in the federally funded project or activity within the Stronger Connections Grant application.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

**ATTACHMENT A: SAMPLE GRANT**

**ATTACHMENT B: BUDGET**

**ATTACHMENT C: CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT**

**ATTACHMENT D: AFFIRMATION OF PRIVATE SCHOOL CONSULTATION**