









writing, and revising behavior-analytic treatment plans, training others to implement components of treatment plans, and overseeing implementation of treatment plans.

- [School Counselor](#): is certified by the CSDE to implement the CT School Counseling Framework: A comprehensive and systemic approach to provide preventative care and intervention to support all students. They assist students and families in the areas of academic planning and support, college/career, social-emotional behavioral development, and transition planning. If a local or regional board of education receives a grant under this section for the hiring of a school counselor, such school counselor shall provide one-on-one consultations with each student in grades eleven and twelve on the completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. If such board can provide evidence to the Commissioner of Education that the student completion rate of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid for the school district has increased by at least five per cent, such board shall receive an additional grant in the amount of ten per cent of the grant received under this section for the fiscal year in which such board provided such evidence.
- [Licensed Professional Counselor](#): is a person trained in counseling of established principles of psycho-social development and behavioral science to the evaluation, assessment, analysis, diagnosis, and treatment of emotional, behavioral, or interpersonal dysfunction or difficulties that interfere with mental and human development. Professional counseling includes, but is not limited to, individual, group, marriage and family counseling, functional assessments for persons adjusting to a disability, appraisal, crisis intervention, and consultation with individuals or groups.
- [Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist](#): provides services to students, families, and parents/guardians to support the academic and/or behavioral functioning of the student that is influenced by a family's pattern of behavior. Marriage and family therapists support the family system with interventions to address the relationships in which the student is a part.

According to [CT EdSight](#), as of October 1, 2021, there are 3,871 full time equivalent (FTE) counselors, social workers and school psychologists to provide services for the 513,615 students in Connecticut. The SMHS Grant Program seeks to support an increase in the number of SMHSs across the state and provides funding through June 30, 2025.

Districts wishing to submit an application must apply for the grant through the eGMS system, beginning March 13, 2023. The number of grants awarded will depend on the number of applicants, the quality of the proposals, and the amount of the funds available.

### **Legal Authority**

Section 10 of [Public Act No. 22-116](#) directs the CSDE to establish grant programs to provide funds to local and regional boards of education for the purpose of hiring and retaining additional SMHSs.

Note: The CSDE reserves the right to modify awards if there are state or federal statutory or regulatory changes or guidance that affect how funds may be utilized or expended.

## II. Eligible Applicants and Grant Requirements

Local or regional boards of education, Charter schools, and Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs) may apply for these grants.

**Applicants must submit a plan for the expenditure of grant funds which must include the following.**

1. Expenditure plan for grant funds for the duration of the grant.
2. Narrative describing the needs of the district, including the current number of SMHSs by category.
3. Number of additional SMHSs to be hired, by category.
4. State whether the SMHSs will be conducting assessments of students or providing services to students based on the results of assessments.
5. Describe the types of services that will be provided by the SMHS.
6. Estimated number of students receiving direct services from each of the SMHSs
7. Identify in-kind and/or matching contributions not derived by state or federal funds.
8. Provide a narrative for how the position(s) will be sustained in year three, when the funding will be decreased and how the district will sustain the positions beyond the grant funding.

All applications submitted become the property of the CSDE and become part of the public domain. The CSDE reserves the right to make necessary policy and programmatic changes after proposals are submitted and to negotiate awards with potential recipients.

In determining if a board of education shall be granted funds, the Commissioner of Education shall give priority to, but not be limited to, the following factors:

- Districts with large student-to-school mental health specialist ratios or
- Districts with high student utilization of mental health services.
- Consideration will also be given to districts where 40% or more of the students are entitled to free or reduced priced lunches and districts within towns with a population of less than 13,000 residents.

Please Note: The SMHS Grant Program is funded through the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and appropriated by the Connecticut General Assembly. The Period of Performance, in accordance with [Public Act 22-116](#) for these funds for each of the three years is June 30th of each year, meaning that recipients will have access to these funds for reimbursement for each year only for costs incurred prior to June 30th of each program year.

It is critical to note, however, that, these are federal funds and additional restrictions on the use of these funds also apply. Specifically, ARPA SMHS funds must be fully obligated by December 31, 2024, and cannot be re-allocated for another purpose after this date. Funds may continue to be expended for these obligations through June 30, 2025, in year 3 of the program. For the purposes of the SMHS grants, an obligation includes staff hired prior to December 31, 2024, or contracts for staffing executed prior to December 31, 2024, to implement the purposes of the SMHS grant. If the staff person funded with these funds leaves or retires after December 31, 2024, the district may not hire a replacement and would forfeit the balance of the awarded funding. If the district has a contract with a staffing provider for services, as long as the contract remains in place, the person(s) performing those services under the contract can change and continue utilizing the ARPA SMHS funds through the end of the program on June 30, 2025.

## **Technical Assistance and Management**

All questions regarding this request for proposal (RFP) may be directed to James Mandracchia at [James.Mandracchia@ct.gov](mailto:James.Mandracchia@ct.gov). The CSDE reserves the right to monitor program progress at least annually, including examination and approval of all reports and data collection.

### **III. Grant Award Options**

The estimated funding available statewide for the SMHS Grant for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 is \$5,555,555, FY 2024, is \$5,555,555 and FY 2025 is \$3,888,888. The minimum grant award for districts is \$50,000, and a maximum award of \$120,000 per district, per year. This amount will be awarded as 100% of the approved award in the first two years of the grant, FY 2023 and FY 2024. In the third year, recipients will be awarded 70% of the previous year awarded allocation.

The CSDE shall pay the grant to each grant recipient in each of FY ending June 30, 2023, 2024 and 2025 on a reimbursement basis. No encumbrances or expenditures may be incurred after June 30, 2025.

Funding for each year is subject to state budget appropriations. Grantees will be required to submit an End-of-Year Report (EYR) for year 1 and a budget for year 2 prior to receiving year two funding. The second year of funding is also contingent upon adequate progress toward program goals and use of funds in the first year.

### **IV. Eligible Activities and Spending**

#### **A. Eligible Spending Categories**

1. Personal services – salaries.
2. Personal services – employee benefits.
3. Purchased professional development and in-service training for newly hired SMHS position(s).
4. Professional Education Services – proposed mental health service workers can be contracted with outside agencies or individuals.
5. Supplies – specifically required for the newly hires SMHS position(s).

#### **B. Ineligible Spending Categories (not exhaustive)**

1. Grant funds cannot be used to purchase office or computer equipment that does not directly support SMHS positions.
2. Funds cannot be used to purchase motor vehicles, facilities, or to support new construction.

### **V. Program Quality Requirements**

#### **Management Control of the Program**

The grantee has complete management responsibility for this grant. While the CSDE staff may be consulted for their expertise, they will not be directly involved in the selection of personnel.

The CSDE reserves the right to make awards under this program without discussion with the applicants. Therefore, applications should represent the best effort from both a technical and cost standpoint.

**Standard Statement of Assurances for Grant Programs (See Appendix B)**

**Affirmative Action Certification Form (See Appendix C)**

**VI. Data Monitoring, and Program Implementation**

Grant recipients will be required to complete the ARPA funding application in eGMS.

Grant recipients will be asked to submit the following data annually.

District: Student Enrollment: SMHS Positions	Total # of Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	Number of schools assigned per position	Number of students served per position (Divide number of SMHS by total district student enrollment)	Average number of students on the SMHS caseload
School social worker				
School psychologist				
Trauma specialist				
Behavior technician				
Board certified behavior analyst				
School counselor				
Licensed professional counselor				
Licensed marriage and family therapist				

In addition to the data listed above, districts will need to submit annual expenditure reports with the CSDE.

Grant recipients will also provide data on the utilization rates of the grant, including the number of students served and the hours of service provided using the grant funds awarded under the program.

**VII. Program Assurances**

**Budget**

Enter state funds budget using eGMS Budget Details. Budget narratives must be provided and specify the time commitment for all grant funded staff and the scope of their assigned work.



### **Budget Detail Narratives**

Provide a detailed description of the proposed use of funds for each budget detail. Wherever applicable, cite local policy and/or contractual basis for amounts requested. Examples:

1. “The salary amount is projected at the first step of the school counselor salary range established in the local education agency's collective bargaining agreement.”
2. “Line 322 represents the contracted services of a workshop presenter who will be paid x dollars per day for y days.”
3. “Line 500, travel expenses, includes x amount for y miles of auto travel at z cents per mile in accordance with the local collective bargaining agreement.”

Please respond to this task with as much detail as possible in order to avoid requests for more information, which may delay the granting process.

### **Budget Object Codes**

This list is a description of the object codes in the budget. The list is provided to help you in designing your budget for the program. Not all budget codes are eligible for this grant program as described in this RFP.

- 100 **Personal Services - Salaries.** Amounts paid to both permanent and temporary grantee employees, including personnel substituting for those in permanent positions. This includes gross salary for personal services rendered while on the payroll of the grantees.
- 200 **Personal Services - Employee Benefits.** Amounts paid by the grantee on behalf of the employees whose salaries are reported in line 100. These amounts are not included in the gross salary but are in addition to that amount. Such payments are fringe benefit payments and, while not paid directly to employees, nevertheless are part of the cost of personal services. Included are the employer's cost of group insurance, social security contribution, retirement contribution, tuition reimbursement, unemployment compensation and workmen's compensation insurance.
- 320 **Professional Educational Services.** Services supporting the instructional program and its administration. Included are curriculum improvement services, assessment, counseling and guidance services, library and media support, and contracted instructional services.
- 322 **In-service.** (Instructional Program Improvement Services). Payments for services performed by persons qualified to assist program personnel and/or teachers to enhance program quality or effectiveness. This category includes curriculum consultants, in-service training specialists, etc., who are not on the grantee payroll.

- 500 **Other Purchased Services.** Amounts paid for services rendered by organizations or personnel not on the payroll of the grantee (separate from Professional and Technical Services or Property Services). While a product may or may not result from the transaction, the primary reason for the purchase is the service provided.
- 600 **Supplies.** Amounts paid for items that are consumed, worn out, or deteriorated through use, or items that lose their identity through fabrication or incorporation into different or more complex units or substances.

## **VIII. Selection and Notification**

### **Review Process and Criteria**

The CSDE will convene a panel to review and score all completed applications received by the due date and time (April 13, 2023, 4:00 pm).

Grant awards will be negotiated and accepted with modifications, if necessary, in time for final award notification via the eGMS system. Each application will be rated according to the criteria in the scoring rubric which can be found in the Resources section of the eGMS System.

The CSDE will notify applicants in writing of the acceptance or rejection of their proposals. If a proposal is selected for funding, the Division of Health, Nutrition, and Family Services will initiate a grant award notification. The level of funding and effective dates of the projects will be set forth in the notification of the grant award. All grant awards are subject to availability of state funds. Grants are not final until award notifications are executed.

## **IX. How to Apply**

### **Minimum Requirements**

Applicants must complete a narrative to address each of the components listed below:

**Introduction and Rationale:** Provide a rationale to describe the need for this funding. Please include any other federal or state funding the district is currently using to fund school mental health positions and examples of how the district has prioritized the use of federal COVID relief funds, federal Title funds, and specific state grant funding such as Alliance District funding to support students' social, emotional, mental and behavioral health.

#### **A. Need for Project**

1. Provide a description of the applicant's school community and the needs of the target population. Please include data relevant to the goal of the application. Data can include: office referrals; suspension and expulsions; monthly number of calls to 211 or 911; number of pregnant or parenting teens; chronic absenteeism; percentage of free and reduced lunch; school based health services; etc.

2. Describe the target population and how the proposed staff position(s) will successfully address the needs of the target population. Please include demographic data for total number of students, number of certified staff, number of special education students, number of students eligible for free and reduced lunches, and number of students who are homeless.
  3. Provide the overall town population.
  4. Provide the current number of SMHSs currently serving the school district.
    - a. school social workers
    - b. school psychologists
    - c. trauma specialists
    - d. behavior technicians
    - e. board certified behavior analysts
    - f. school counselors
    - g. licensed professional counselors
    - h. licensed marriage and family therapists
  5. Describe the scope of the current work performed by the current SMHSs.
  6. Provide a description, scope and the number of the students currently utilizing mental health services.
  7. Provide the title(s) and number of SMHS(s) requested.
  8. Describe the anticipated work of the SMHS(s). Including will they be conducting assessments, or will they be providing services based on the results of assessments.
  9. Provide the number of the mental health positions outlined in this RFP (school social workers, school psychologists, trauma specialists, behavior technicians, board certified behavior analyst, school counselors, licensed professional counselors, and licensed marriage and family therapists) that you have hired, or you have under contract using other federal or state funding available to the district (e.g., ESSER 2, ARP ESSER, Title 4A, Alliance District, etc.).
  10. Did your district receive the ARPA-School Mental Health Workers grant?
- B. Expenditures & Sustainability
1. Provide a budget and detailed budget narrative that describes use of grant funds for the duration of the grant period, as well as funds from other sources, including:
    - a. Costs are reasonable in relation to the number of students to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits.
    - b. Proposed personnel are appropriate for the needs stated.
    - c. In-kind or matching contributions (cannot be derived from other state or federal funds).
    - d. Total costs are reasonable in the relation to the number of students to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits.
  2. Provide a narrative describing how the position/s will be sustained in year three, when the funding will be decreased to 70 percent. Indicate how the district will sustain the positions beyond the grant funding.

**X. Other Application Requirements**

**A. Obligations of Grantees**

All bidders are hereby notified that the grant to be awarded is subject to contract compliance requirements as set forth in Section 4a-60 and Section 4a-60a of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S) and Sections 46a-68j-23 et seq. of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA).

Furthermore, the grantee must submit periodic reports of its employment and sub-contracting practices in such form, in such manner, and in such time as may be prescribed by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO).

**B. Freedom of Information Act**

All of the information contained in a proposal submitted in response to this RFP is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Sections 1-200 et seq. (et seq. underlined) of the C.G.S. The FOIA declares that except as provided by federal law or state statute, records maintained or kept on file by any public agency (as defined in the statute) are public records and every person has the right to inspect such records and receive a copy of such records.

**XI. Resources to Support Student Mental Health**

- [Aperture Education Connecticut](#)
- [Board Certified Behavior Analyst Handbook](#)
- [Connecticut Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Framework Guide](#)
- [Connecticut Practice Guidelines for Delivery of School Social Work Services](#)
- [Guidelines for the Practice of School Psychology](#)
- [Social Emotional Learning Hub, CSDE](#)

## Appendix A

### Scoring Rubric for School Mental Health Specialist Grant

<b>A. Need for the Project (max. 53 points)</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Marginal</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
	(Well-conceived and thoroughly developed)	(Clear and Complete)	(Requires additional clarification)	(Information not provided)
1. Provided a description of the applicant's school community and the needs of the target population. Did the applicant include data relevant to the goal of the application. Data can include: office referrals; suspension and expulsions; monthly number of calls to 211 or 911; number of pregnant or parenting teens; chronic absenteeism, percentage of free and reduced lunch, etc.	4	2	1	0
2. Described the target population and how the proposed staff position(s) will successfully address the needs of the target population. Did the applicant include demographic data for total number of students, number of certified staff, number of special education students, number of students eligible for free and reduced lunches, and number of students who are homeless.	4	2	1	0
3. Provided the overall town population.	3 Less than 13,000	2 Between 13,000 and 24,999	1 Between 25,000 and 50,000	0 Greater than 50,000
4. Provided the <b>current</b> number of SMHSs serving the school district.	3 0-10	2 11-15	1 16-20	0 20 or more
a. Number of school social workers in the district.	3 Greater than 1:350	2 Between 1:250 and 1:350	1 Less than 1:250	0 No information provided
b. Number of school psychologists in the district.	3 Greater than 1:600	2 Between	1 Less than 1:500	0 No information provided

		1:500 and 1:600		
c. Number of trauma specialists in the district.	3 0 Positions	2 1 Position	1 2 Positions	0 2 or more Positions
d. Number of behavior technicians in the district.	3 0 Positions	2 1 Position	1 2 Positions	0 2 or more Positions
e. Number of board-certified behavior analysts in the district.	3 0 Positions	2 1 Position	1 2 Positions	0 2 or more Positions
f. Number of school counselors in the district.	3 Greater than 1:350	2 Between 1:250 and 1:350	1 Less than 1:250	0 No information provided
g. Number of licensed professional counselors in the district.	3 0 Positions	2 1 Position	1 2 Positions	0 2 or more Positions
h. Number of licensed marriage and family therapists in the district.	3 0 Positions	2 1 Position	1 2 Positions	0 2 or more Positions

	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Marginal</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
	(Well-conceived and thoroughly developed)	(Clear and Complete)	(Requires additional clarification)	(Information not provided)
5. Described the scope of the current work performed by the current SMHSs	4	2	1	0
6. Provide a description, scope and the number of the students currently utilizing mental health services	4	2	1	0
7. Provided the number of SMHS requested.				
8. Describe the anticipated work of the SMHS. Did the applicant include if they would be conducting assessments, or will they be providing services based on the results of assessments?	3	2	1	0
9. Provided the number of the mental health positions outlined in this RFP (school social workers, school psychologists, trauma specialists, behavior technicians, board certified behavior analyst, school counselors,	4 0-1 positions	2 2-3 positions	1 3 or more positions	0 No information provided

licensed professional counselors, and licensed marriage and family therapists) that you have hired, or you have under contract using other federal or state funding available to the district (e.g. ESSER 2, ARP ESSER, Title 4A, Alliance District, etc.)				
10. Received the ARPA-School Mental Health Workers Grant	No 0		Yes -4	

<b>B. Expenditures &amp; Sustainability (max. 13 points)</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Marginal</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
	(Well-conceived and thoroughly developed)	(Clear and Complete)	(Requires additional clarification)	(Information not provided)
1. Provided a budget and detailed budget narrative that describes use of grant funds for the duration of the grant period, as well as funds from other sources, including:				
a. costs are reasonable in relation to the number of students to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits	3	2	1	0
b. purposed personnel are appropriate for the needs stated	3	2	1	0
c. in-kind or matching contributions (cannot be derived from other state or federal funds)	3	2	1	0
2. Provided a narrative describing how the position/s will be sustained in year three, when the funding will be decreased to 70 percent and how the district will sustain the position beyond the grant funding.	4	2	1	0

**Appendix B**

**Standard Statement of Assurances for Grant Programs**

**Connecticut State Department of Education**

<b>Project Title:</b>	School Mental Health Specialist Grant Program (SMHS)
<b>Applicant:</b>	

**The Applicant hereby assures the Connecticut State Department of Education that:**

- A. The applicant has the necessary legal authority to apply for and receive the proposed grant;
- B. The filing of this application has been authorized by the applicant's governing body, and the undersigned official has been duly authorized to file this application for and on behalf of said applicant, and otherwise to act as the authorized representative of the applicant in connection with this application;
- C. The activities and services for which assistance is sought under this grant will be administered by or under the supervision and control of the applicant;
- D. The project will be operated in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and in compliance with regulations and other policies and administrative directives of the State Board of Education and the Connecticut State Department of Education;
- E. Grant funds shall not be used to supplant funds normally budgeted by the agency;
- F. Fiscal control and accounting procedures will be used to ensure proper disbursement of all funds awarded;
- G. The applicant will submit a final project report (within 60 days of the project completion) and such other reports, as specified, to the Connecticut State Department of Education, including information relating to the project records and access thereto as the Connecticut State Department of Education may find necessary;













## Appendix C

### Affirmative Action Certification Form

The certification below should be completed by those applicant organizations that have an Affirmative Action Plan on file with the CSDE.

Applicant organizations that do not have an Affirmative Action Plan on file with the CSDE must complete and submit the Affirmative Action Compliance Report with their application. That form is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/CHRO/NotificationtoBidderspdf.pdf>.

### Affirmative Action Certification Form

According to the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO), municipalities that operate school districts and also file a federal and/or state Affirmative Action Plan(s) are exempt from the requirement of filing an Affirmative Action Plan with the Connecticut State Department of Education. Agencies with an Affirmative Action Plan on file need to certify such by signing the statement below.

*I, the undersigned authorized official, hereby certify that the applying organization/agency: \_\_\_\_\_, has a current Affirmative Action packet on file with the Connecticut State Department of Education. The Affirmative Action packet is, by reference, part of this application.*

Signature of Authorized Official: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_