CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Sheff Region-Open Choice District Resource Guide

2026-2027



A Resource for Open Choice Participating School Districts

Final

November 2026

Sheff Open Choice District Resource Guide

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Sheff Open Choice Resource Guide

1. About Open Choice

Program Overview

The Hartford Region Open Choice (OC) Program is a voluntary interdistrict public school program that provides students with opportunities to attend public schools outside their resident school districts. The program allows Hartford-resident students to attend participating public schools in suburban districts and provides non-Hartford students with opportunities to attend designated public schools in Hartford.

The program is intended to improve academic achievement, reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation, and provide students with access to diverse, high-quality educational opportunities.
Participating districts voluntarily declare available seats for OC students. Families apply through the Regional School Choice Office (RSCO), and students are placed through the RSCO placement process.

History and Goals of the Program

The *Sheff v. O'Neill* lawsuit was filed in 1989 by Hartford-area students and their families to address racial and economic isolation in Hartford's public schools. In 1996, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled that the racial and ethnic isolation of Hartford students violated the Connecticut Constitution.

In response to the decision and subsequent court-approved agreements, the State of Connecticut expanded voluntary school choice opportunities throughout the Greater Hartford Region. These opportunities include interdistrict magnet schools, the Hartford Region OC Program, technical high schools, and agricultural science and technology education programs.

The goals of the Hartford Region OC Program are to:

- Improve academic achievement;
- Reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation;
- Provide students with access to high-quality educational opportunities;
- Support diverse and inclusive school communities; and
- Promote collaboration among Hartford, participating suburban districts, families, RSCO, and CREC.

Program Administration and CREC's Role

The Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) serves as the managing regional educational service center for the Hartford Region OC Program on behalf of RSCO. CREC works in partnership with RSCO, Hartford Public Schools, participating suburban districts, students, and families to support the program.

CREC's responsibilities include coordinating program operations, supporting participating districts and families, assisting with student and family services, and managing transportation and other program-related functions.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The table below summarizes the primary responsibilities of each partner in the OC program.

The Regional School Choice Office

Primary Role:
The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) RSCO oversees the school choice application and placement process, OC grant management, program oversight and policies in the Greater Hartford Region.

Key Responsibilities:
Oversees the statewide OC Program
Develops program policies and guidance
Administers OC grants
Manages the application, lottery, and placement process
Provides technical assistance to districts
Monitors program implementation and compliance
Coordinates statewide communications

- **Districts Should Contact RSCO When:**
- You have questions about program policy or legislation.
- You need guidance on grants or reimbursement.
- You need technical assistance or policy interpretation.

RSCO Contacts

Position	Name	Contact Info	Key Responsibilities
RSCO Director	Robin Cecere	860-713-6518 robin.cecere@ct.gov	OC policies and guidance
Bureau Chief	Shola Freeman	860-713-6532 shola.freeman@ct.gov	OC policies and guidance
OC Program Consultant	Brenna Casey	860-713-6457 brenna.casey@ct.gov	OC Grants Manager/OC Liaison
RSCO Lottery Coordinator	Laura Lyon	860-713-6598 laura.lyon@ct.gov	Manages OC seat declarations and placement process
RSCO Marketing Coordinator	Sarah Jones	860-713-6883 sarah.jones@ct.gov	Recruitment & Fair
RSCO Communications/ Publications Coordinator & Transportation Liaison	Sandi Casberg	860-713-6960 sandi.casberg@ct.gov	RSCO Publications RSCO Transportation

Position	Name	Contact Info	Key Responsibilities
RSCO Outreach Coordinator & Family Liaison	Vincent Crawford	860-713-6992 vincent.crawford@ct.gov	Outreach Recruitment Events
RSCO PRC	Kerry Mattson	860-713-6487 kerry.mattson@ct.gov	Manages PRC staff

RSCO Parent Resource Center (PRC)

Primary Role:
Application and family support

The RSCO PRC serves as the primary resource for information about Greater Hartford school choice options and works directly with families to support them through the RSCO application and placement process. The PRC is open Monday – Friday and can assist families and school staff with any questions or issues pertaining to the RSCO school choice process. In addition to standard office hours, PRC staff are active in the Greater Hartford Region, attending events, partnering with local organizations, and collaborating with schools to expand access to high- quality application assistance.

Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Email: RSCO.SDE@ct.gov **Telephone:** 860-713-6990

In-App Messaging: Guardians can message the PRC directly using their EnrollWise account.

Please Note: The RSCO PRC is not responsible for school-based registration and enrollment. Please direct any questions pertaining to school registration to your organization's Welcome Center or Central Office.

Districts Should Contact the PRC When:

- Families need help completing an application.
- Questions arise about eligibility or deadlines.
- Families want to understand placement offers or waitlists.
- Families need general information about school choice options.

RSCO PRC

Position	Name	Contact Info
Parent Resource Center Specialist	Shelby Caballero	860-713-6990 shelby.caballero@ct.gov
Parent Resource Center Specialist	Marilyn Cancel	860-713-6990 marilyn.cancel@ct.gov
Parent Resource Center Specialist	Carmen Santana	860-713-6990 carmen.santana@ct.gov

Address:
Regional School Choice Office
Connecticut State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)

Primary Role:
OC Program implementation and coordination
Program administration: Oversees the regional operation of OC and coordinates with participating Hartford-area school districts.
Family and district support: Provides program information, answers questions, assists families, and serves as a point of contact for participating districts.

Key Responsibilities:

- Serves as the managing operator for the Hartford Region OC Program in the Greater Hartford Region
- Coordinates placements and seat declarations with districts
- Coordinates student registration after placement
- Provides family engagement and transition support
- Coordinates transportation with participating districts
- Supports student transitions throughout the school year
- Provides technical assistance to districts
- Connects families with community resources
- Provides ongoing support for students and families throughout the school year

Districts Should Contact CREC When:

- A family needs transition or enrollment assistance.
- You have transportation or routing questions.
- You need assistance with student transitions.
- You have questions about student placements or the lottery process.
- You need assistance with EnrollWise and updating seat declarations.

CREC Central Office Contacts

Position	Name	Contact Info
Deputy Superintendent, CREC Magnet Schools and School Choice	Sarah Vocca	860-509-3792 svocca@crec.org
Managing Director	Curtis Rodriguez-Porter	860-810-7686 cporter@crec.org
Operations Manager	Callie Bostic-Gardner	860-993-4695 cbosticgardner@crec.org
Logistics Coordinator	Alisa Forgetta	860-509-3734 aforgetta@crec.org
Director, CREC Transportation Solutions	Nakisha Strickland	860-509-3608 nstrickland@crec.org
CREC Transportation Manager	Phyllis Clements	860-240-6622 pclements@crec.org

Position	Name	Contact Info
General Transportation Telephone	Call Center Staff	860-524-4077
Transportation Hotline	860-509-3731	
General School Contact line	860-524-4055	
Tracy Gyngell-Guilmette	Transportation Supervisor	O: 860-240-6622 C: 860-539-1428 Tguillemette@crec.org
Call Center/Customer Service Supervisor	Quiana Jackson-Ashe	O:860-509-3710 C:860-837-1044 Qjacksonashe@crec.org
Call Center/Customer Service Supervisor	Shanta Warren	O:860-509-3704 C: 860-837-3391
Transportation Video Processor **Late Bus Scheduler**	Melanie Gordon	860-509-3648 Megordon@crec.org
Transportation Field Trip Scheduler	Melanie Gordon Qustin Rowland	860-509-3648 Megordon@crec.org 860-509-3604 qrowland@crec.org
Athletic Scheduling	Jeanine Wojcik	860-509-3756 Jwojcik@crec.org
Magnet School Family Liaisons	Shawnette Taylor Barbara Burke	O:860-509-3730 C:860-929-9517 Shtaylor@crec.org O:860-509-3730 C:860-951-1955 Bburke@crec.org
OC Family Liaison	Cassie Little	O:860-509-3796 C:860-951-1499 clittle@crec.org

CREC Welcome Center

Primary Role:
Application and family support

Key Responsibilities:

- Assists families with the school choice application
- Explains eligibility and placement priorities
- Provides lottery and placement information
- Answers general school choice questions
- Assists families with application completion

Districts Should Contact the CREC Welcome Center When:

- Families need help completing an application.
- A student needs to complete registration after placement.
- Questions arise about eligibility or deadlines.
- Families want to understand placement offers or waitlists.
- Families need general information about school choice options.
- Families need a residency affidavit notarized.

CREC Welcome Center

Position	Name	Contact
Resource Specialist	Nilda Hernandez	860-509-3071 nhernandez@crec.org
Resource Specialist	Ben Aguilera	860-692-8732 baguilera@crec.org
Resource Specialist	Shekina Vega	860-509-3701 svega@crec.org

Address:
CREC
111 Charter Oak Avenue
Hartford, CT 06016

Phone: 860-509-3700
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
CREC Website: CREC Welcome Center Website
CREC OC Website: CREC_Open_Choice_Website

Hartford Public Schools (HPS)

Primary Role:
Coordinates with OC districts regarding special education services.

Key Responsibilities:
Special education contact for OC districts

Districts Should Contact HPS When.
A district is scheduling a PPT meeting
A district has questions about special education billing

HPS Key Contacts

Positions	Name	Contact Info
Director- Office of Enrollment & School Choice	Carolyn Ross-Lee	860-695-8750 carolyn.ross-lee@hartfordschools.org
Associate Program Manager	Jimena Stevenson	860-695-1526 stevj001@hartfordschools.org

HPS Administrators Contacts

Positions	Name	Contact Info	Key Responsibilities
Executive Director of Special Education	Dr. Kendy Anderson	kendy.anderson@hartfordschools.org	Contact for PPT meetings
Homeless & Family Service Program Assistance	Leslie Carrillo	aarrl003@hartfordschools.org	Contact for McKinney-Vento

Address:
Hartford Public Schools
Office of Enrollment and School Choice
330 Wethersfield Ave, Hartford, CT 06114

Phone: 860-695-8876
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
HPS Website: hartfordschools.org

3. CSDE Important Dates

Time of Year	Task
October 1	PSIS Collection
November	October PSIS Freeze 0 File - October 1
December	Advance attendance payment
January 31	October PSIS Freeze 1 File- October 1 certification
March/April	Final attendance payment
June 12	Last day to submit a grant funds request
June 30	Last day to liquidate grant funds

4. RSCO Application and Placement Process

RSCO is the centralized resource for information to support families as they explore and apply to unique, high-quality, public school choice option, from prekindergarten through grade 12, in the Greater Hartford Region.

Through the RSCO online application, families apply to magnet schools, OC districts, and Hartford Region CTECS.

Contact Laura Lyon for the OC Operator Resource Guide.

RSCO Application and Placement Timeline

Application and Placement Schedule		
Call to Action	**Date**	**Event**
Discover/Explore	October 24, 2026	RSCO Kick-Off Fair: CT River Academy 9 Riverside Drive, East Hartford
	November 2026	School-based Open Houses (Parents encouraged to explore their options)
Apply	December 2, 2026	On-time Application Opens
	December 9, 2026	RSCO Application Launch Fair: SMSA Hartford
	February 5, 2027	Application Closes*
Act (Respond, Register, Manage Waitlists)	Late February	First Round of CTECS Placements**
	Early March	First Round of Magnet Placements First Choice Applicants Only
	Early March	Late Application Opens Schools/grades open on a limited, as-needed basis
	Mid-March	First Round of OC Placements – First Choice Only
Placements	Early March- Late September	Placement process
End of Placement Process	October 1	

**Potential to extend to 2/10 at 5:00 pm for a bump in applications.*

RSCO Application "EnrollWise" Database

Click Here to view RSCO Application Database

The user guide is designed to help OC districts navigate the RSCO application as an Admin user. Please contact Laura Lyon at laura.lyon@ct.gov for more information about the OC Admin user guide.

OC RSCO Application and EnrollWise Training

OC Training Link below

- **December 8, 2026 [1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.]**

Open Choice EnrollWise Admin Training: Pre-placement tools and Application and Placement Rules

- **December 10, 2026 [10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.]**
  Open Choice EnrollWise Admin Training: Pre-placements Tools and Applications and Placement Rules
- **February 9, 2027 [1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.]**
  Open Choice EnrollWise Admin Training: Placement Tools and Waitlist Process
- **February 11, 2027 [10:00 a.m.-11a.m.]**
  Open Choice EnrollWise Admin Training: Placement Tools and Waitlist Process

RSCO Seat Declaration Process

Seat declaration information is collected in two ways:

CSDE Seat Declaration Form: This form is used to calculate the Sheff Academic and Social Support Grant and help the district plan for enrollment goals to reach the fiscal tiers. For the Sheff Academic and Social Support Grant, districts receive $575 per student for grades PK-5 and $900 per student for grades 6-12 based on the initial enrollment projections to support enrollment of students in the upper grades. The form is only submitted once, and the initial submission is used to calculate the grant.

Seat Management in EnrollWise: For the placement process, seat declarations, including adjustments, are managed through EnrollWise, RSCO's application and placement platform. CREC serves as the primary support and point of contact for districts for seat entry and adjustments in EnrollWise.

EnrollWise provides districts with real-time access to data needed throughout the school choice process to manage the placement process.

Through EnrollWise, districts can:

- Manage annual seat allocations.
- Review priority applicant reports.
- Access student placement lists.
- Manage student registrations and enrollment status.
- View pre- and post-lottery reports by grade level to support enrollment planning and vacancy management.

Click Here to view the 2026-27 SY Seat Declaration and Placement Schedule

OC Contact for RSCO Seat Declaration Submissions

Position	Name	Phone	Email Address
OC Seat Declaration Coordinator	Shekina Vega	860-509-3701	svega@crec.org
SDE Lottery Coordinator	Laura Lyon	860-713-6598	laura.lyon@ct.gov
Managing Director, School Choice and OC	Curtis Rodriguez-Porter	890-810-7686	cporter@crec.org
Logistics Coordinator	Alisa Forgetta	860-509-3734	aforgetta@crec.org

OC Eligibility

OC for Hartford Residents- Hartford Resident Only

Hartford students entering PK4 through Grade10th*. Once a student is enrolled in an OC district, they are enrolled through high school graduation as long as they remain a Hartford resident. Families enrolled in the program do not need to reapply each year.

* OC districts do not typically offer seats for students entering Grades 11 or 12. However, at a district's request, RSCO may create an application for an eligible priority applicant entering Grade 11 or 12. Families seeking assistance with this process should contact the RSCO Parent Resource Center.

OC for Non-Hartford Residents

Applications are accepted up to grade 5, though students may remain enrolled through the end grade of the school (which is either 5th grade or 8th grade, depending on the school).

OC Placement Priorities

- Former Resident
- Enrolled Siblings
- Placed Siblings
- Open Choice Only
- Pathway School

Order	Priority	Definition/Notes
1	Former Resident	• Requires verification by the district and CREC. • Priority given to applicants who move in or out of Hartford and apply to continue attending their OC school district or school. • Late former residents are treated as on-time. This priority over-rides application timing.
2	Enrolled Sibling	• Requires verification by the district and CREC. • Enrolled sibling priority attempts to keep students in the same school first. If space is not available in the school, students will receive priority at another school in the district. • To be eligible, students must share at least one biological parent, legal guardian, or stepparent and the enrolled sibling must remain enrolled in the following year or be in the final grade of the district. • Late enrolled siblings are treated as on-time. For OC, sibling priority over-rides application timing. *See Placement Rules for information on the exception to the one offer rule for siblings.*
3	Placed Sibling	• RSCO tries to place siblings together who are in the same grade range. • Applicants must apply to the same districts in the same order for the priority to work. • As soon as one sibling receives a placement, the other siblings have priority at the same school or district. • Placed sibling priority is conditional on the sibling accepting the placement offer. • Late placed siblings are treated as on-time. For OC, sibling priority over-rides application timing. *See Placement Rules for information on the exception to the one offer rule for siblings.*
4	Open Choice Only	• Available for applicants who only apply to the OC program (do not submit magnet or CTECS applications).

Order	Priority	Definition/Notes
5	Pathway School	• Hartford resident students enrolled in PK4 at Wintonbury Early Childhood Magnet may receive a pathway priority to the Open Choice districts associated with their zone

Exceptions to Zone Restrictions

- **Enrolled siblings** and **former residents** may automatically apply to out-of-zone districts.
- At a parent's request, an out-of-zone district may be added to the application in the following situations:
  - The family is applying for a grade level in which the district had unfilled seats in the previous year.
  - The family lives near a zone boundary and is requesting a district that is closer to their home than any of their assigned districts.

RSCO Student Placement Process

RSCO uses a computerized placement system to match Hartford resident students with participating OC districts based on district-declared seat availability and established placement priorities. Districts determine the number of available seats they wish to offer each year, and RSCO manages the placement process in accordance with the statewide OC placement policy.

One-Offer Rule

To ensure an equitable placement process, applicants are generally eligible to receive **one placement offer** during the school year. Once an applicant receives an offer, the application is removed from all other RSCO waitlists, including **OC, interdistrict magnet schools, and CTECS**, and the student is no longer eligible to receive another placement offer for the 2026–27 school year, regardless of whether the offer is accepted or declined.

There are two exceptions to the One-Offer Rule:

Exception 1: Hartford Resident OC Applicants

Hartford resident students who receive an **OC** placement offer may decline their **first** OC offer and remain eligible for a **second** OC placement offer from another district they ranked on their application, if a seat becomes available.

If the student receives a second OC offer, they are no longer eligible for any additional placement offers for the 2026–27 school year, whether they accept or decline that second offer.

Exception 2: Siblings Placed Separately

When siblings within the same grade span (e.g., **PK3–Grade 5** or **Grades 6–12**) receive placement offers at different schools or programs during the same offer round, the family may decline one sibling's placement and request that the student remain on the waitlist for the school or program where the other sibling received and accepted an offer. This exception is intended to support sibling placement whenever possible, subject to seat availability and placement policies.

5. OC Enrollment and Reporting in the Public School Information System

The OC enrollment grant is based on the October 1 Public School Information System (PSIS) count and the district's OC participation.

Please review the Sheff Enrollment Policies for OC Programs in the Sheff Region below.
Enrollment Policies for Interdistrict Magnet Schools and Open Choice Programs in the Sheff Region

Sheff OC Key Topics

- Direct Enrollment
- Single School and Dual Enrollment in Multiple School Choice Programs
- Dual Enrollment within an IMS or OC Program
    - Outplaced Special Education students
- Expelled students

October 1 PSIS Collection

Reporting OC students in PSIS
All OC districts must enter the appropriate Special Program Code for each OC student in the PSIS collection. This code is used to identify OC students and determine the official number of students participating in the program within each district.

Districts should review their records carefully to ensure that every OC student is coded accurately and included in the collection.

Districts should review CSDE's PSIS Reference Guide-Appendix E
PSIS Reference Guide Link-CSDE

Special Program Codes for OC Districts & How to apply them for PSIS reporting

Special Program Code	Description	How to apply for District Use
02	APPLIES TO FACILITY CODE 1: To be used if the student is a participant in the OC Program and is not attending a private facility or RESC-operated special education facility.	Districts should code all OC students with Special Program Status code "02" if the student is attending as an OC Student full time within the school.
12	APPLIES TO FACILITY CODE 1: To be used if the student attends an OC school part-time and private facility with an IEP, and; is a participant in the OC Program.	Districts should code all OC students with Special Program Status code "12" if the student is attending as an OC Student school part-time and a private facility.
22	To be used if the student is outplaced to another public school district or RESC in accordance with an IEP or other special circumstances.	Districts should code all OC students with Special Program Status code "22" if the OC student is outplaced to another public school district or RESC in accordance with an IEP or other special circumstances.
32	To be used if the student was placed by court in a detention center.	Districts should code all OC students with Special Program Status code "32" if the OC student is placed by court in a detention center.

What should I do when I have a PSIS reporting issue or question?

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has made an exhaustive effort to provide all district level users with the appropriate written guidance to master the PSIS reporting process. When a district user has a reporting question or concern, they should make full use of the available written guidance published on the PSIS public help site and contained in the most recent version of the PSIS Reference Guide. The help site can be accessed using the following web address: http://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Performance/Data-Collection-Help-Sites/PSIS-Help-Site

- **Resource Note:** We highly recommend that each authorized user download the most recent version of the PSIS Reference Guide and keep it as a helpful resource. This document and all pertinent PSIS emails sent to PSIS District Coordinators, shall serve as the district's primary resource for information and technical assistance.
- After carefully reviewing all available written guidance, previous presentation materials and available resources, the district user shall contact the District Support Person (DSP) for assistance. The DSP will attempt to assist you or triage your question to the appropriate consultant who will be able to provide you with a definitive answer.

CSDE PSIS Contact Information

Contact	Name	Email	Phone
CSDE Data Manager	Kendra Shakir	Kendra.shakir@ct.gov	860-713-6896
CSDE District Support Person	Renee Brousseau	Renee.brousseau@ct.gov	860-713-6865

6. OC Registration

Uniform registration deadlines are established for the system each round. The registration date is included in EnrollWise and visible to parents when an offer is made. RSCO works collaboratively with operators to establish registration deadlines that support enrollment goals and provide families with sufficient time to complete the process.

PLEASE NOTE: Comprehensive policy documents and district communications regarding registration are housed on the OSPP website: Office of Strategic Planning and Partnerships(ct.gov)
For complete guidance, refer to:

- **New-**Residency Verification Update coming soon.
- The February 3, 2023, communication regarding Residency Verification of Students Attending Interdistrict Choice Programs Update
- CSDE Guidance from 2017 for Designing a Lawful and Effective Enrollment Process

Proof of Age and Residency Verification

School districts have a duty under federal civil rights laws to limit the decision of whether a child may enroll in a school solely to checking information necessary for confirming the student's residency and age. There are various ways of showing residency and age, and no specific documentation is required to enroll. Documentation of citizenship or immigration status should not be collected. Examples of residency documents include:

- A current apartment or home lease agreement, a mortgage document, property tax record, rent receipt, home-owners insurance.
- A current utility bill (electric, gas, water), cable, home or cell phone bill, insurance correspondence.
- Current proof of government benefits (disability, Medicare, Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program (SNAP)) or other government correspondence showing an address.

- A current Connecticut driver's license, automobile registration, automobile insurance

If documents such as these cannot be provided because the parent and student live with someone else, an Affidavit of Residence from a parent, guardian or the person with whom the child resides, signed before a notary or commissioner of the superior court, may be used.
An original or certified copy of a birth certificate is not the only way to verify a student's age, and a birth certificate may not be available to a foreign-born child. Other documents that may be accepted as proof of a student's age include, but are not limited to:

- Photocopy of a birth certificate
- Earlier school records
- State-issued identification document
- Driver's license, passport, etc.
- Parent's affidavit or unsworn statement as to a student's age
- Physician's certificate verifying a student's age
- Immunization records

Immunizations and Health Assessments

Completion of immunization and health assessment requirements may be required prior to a child's attendance in school but should not be required as pre-requisites for enrolling a child who resides in the district and is of appropriate age to attend school.

Registration and Out-of-State Students

In some circumstances a parent/guardian may relocate to Connecticut before their children. Submitting an application only requires the parent to reside in Connecticut; however, the parent should not register their child until the child is living in Connecticut. Students should be residing in Connecticut to be enrolled in a Connecticut public school. Operators may use their discretion and hold a seat for a student until they arrive, knowing that a delay in arrival could result in an unfilled seat.

For guidance on returning students not in attendance at the start of the year or new students whose whereabouts is unknow, refer to the Disengaged and Extended Leave of Absence policies below.

7. OC Grants

To view the OSPP OC Grants for the 2026-27 SY, click on the link below.
Open Choice_ List of Grants_RSCO_FY27
If you need access to the link above, please email shola.freeman@ct.gov.

Available Grants- Please note that grants with an asterisk are paid directly to the Town Treasury
Grant Types: Entitlement Grants, Discretionary Grants and Competitive Grants

1. **Attendance Grant*: (Entitlement Grant)** The attendance grant is based on the annual October 1st (PSIS) count, and the district's OC participation. The participation percentage is determined by dividing the number of OC students enrolled in the district by total district enrollment. In accordance with Section 10-266aa(g)(2) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) and the CCP, the attendance grant tiered funding structure is as follows:

    - $5,000 per pupil for districts that enroll less than 2%;

- $6,000 per pupil for districts that enroll greater than or equal to 2%;
- $8,000 per pupil for districts that enroll greater than or equal to 3%;
- $8,000 per pupil for districts with enrollment greater than 4,000 students that increase the number of OC students enrolled in the district by at least 50% from the district's OC enrollment in the prior SY; and
- $10,000 per pupil for districts that enroll greater than or equal to 4%.

Grant Program Manager: Brenna Casey

2. **Early Beginnings Grant*: (Entitlement Grant)** For each Hartford-resident pre-kindergarten and kindergarten student enrolled in a full-day program, the district receives an additional $6,500 per-pupil in addition to the OC attendance grant for fiscal year (FY) 27, pursuant to C.G.S. §10-266aa(n).

Grant Program Manager: Brenna Casey

3. **Academic and Social Support Grant: (Discretionary Grant)** This grant supports academic and social success for students participating in the Hartford Region OC program. For FY 27, approximately $3 million is available for distribution among participating districts based on approved grant applications. The grant application is designed to streamline the process and strengthen supports related to retention, social-emotional learning, professional development and other important considerations, including increasing opportunities for students in the middle and upper grade levels.

   The grant application will include:
   - $5,000 for professional development focused on school climate and culturally responsive educational programming;
   - a per pupil award based on student participation and grade level;
   - a retention award; and
   - $9,000 for student engagement.

   (See C.G.S. §10-266aa(o).)

Grant Program Manager: Brenna Casey

4. **OC Entry Grades Incentives*: (Entitlement Grant)** This grant is available to districts that increase OC enrollment by at least five students in the same school and qualifying entry grade PK4, kindergarten, grade 6, or grade 9 compared with the prior year's enrollment in that school and entry grade. For FY 27, a total of $750,000 is available for distribution among participating districts, with awards of up to $5,000 per student based on October 1, 2026 enrollment.

Grant Program Manager: Brenna Casey

5. **OC Enrollment Increase Bonus*: (Entitlement Grant)** Districts that increase OC enrollment by at least 20% over actual enrollment from the prior year are eligible for this grant. For FY 27, $750,000 is available for distribution among participating districts, up to a maximum of $5,000 per student.

Grant Program Manager: Brenna Casey

6. **OC- Acceptance Rate and Educational Enhancements Grant: (Discretionary Grant)** In FY 27, the state will provide $300,000 in funding, to be distributed among participating OC districts, to support the

implementation of action plans aimed at enhancing academic and social supports, improving the educational experiences of OC students, and increasing student acceptance rates through targeted summer family engagement activities. This funding will continue in FY 28.

Grant Program Manager: Brenna Casey

7. **Wrap Around/Grant-In-Aid Grant: (Competitive Grant)** For FY 27, the state will provide up to $2 million, in OC funding, to be shared among participating districts, to support academic achievement and social development through services such as academic tutoring, family support, experiential learning opportunities, college and career readiness, and other aligned wrap-around supports as authorized under C.G.S. §10-266aa(k)(3). This grant will be distributed through a competitive application process.

Grant Program Manager: Brenna Casey

8. **Summer Enrichment Grant: (Competitive Grant)** For FY 27, the state will provide a competitive grant to expand enrichment and extracurricular programming opportunities to expand access integrated enrichment opportunities that support students' social, emotional, and academic growth.

Grant Program Manager: Kerry Mattson

9. **Districts' OC Transportation**: **(Discretionary Grant)** In accordance with C.G.S §10-266aa(f), CSDE reimburses regional educational services centers (RESCs) and **local or regional boards of education** for reasonable transportation costs for OC students. Districts that elect to transport Hartford students in the OC program, can receive $3,250 per pupil, along with supplemental transportation funding.

   Summer and After-School Transportation: (Discretionary Grant) For FY 27, the state will reimburse districts for summer and after-school transportation through the OC transportation grants. Some districts have opted for this opportunity to support student participation in OC.

Grant Program Manager: Brenna Casey

Bonus Set Aside Grants (to the extent such funds are available)

1. **Schools Enrolling 10 or more OC students*: (Discretionary Grant)** To the extent funding is available, participating districts share in a bonus set aside of up to $500,000 statewide, with awards of up to $1,000 per student for schools enrolling 10 or more OC students in the same school. See C.G.S. §10-266aa(k)(1).

Grant Program Manager: Brenna Casey

2. **School Construction Bonus Funds: (Entitlement Grant)** Each district has an opportunity to receive a funding bonus through the state's school construction grant pursuant to C.G.S. §10-285a(g) to incentivize OC participation by increasing the reimbursement rate for construction costs associated with a school building project, up to an additional 10% over the district's regular reimbursement rate. This increase in the reimbursement rate or bonus over the district construction grant, is based on the percentage of seats made available to Hartford-resident students at the specific school with the school building project. The reimbursement bonus is calculated by dividing the number of OC seats in the school with the building project by the total highest projected enrollment at the school, up to a maximum of 10%. This example helps illustrate the calculation. If a school with a school building project had (a) a

highest 8-year projected enrollment of 600 students, and (b) an enrollment of 60 OC students, the district would receive the full 10% bonus on their school construction grant for the project based on the calculation 60 OC students divided by 600 students as the highest projected enrollment for the school, times 100. Note that the bonus is school specific and based on the OC seats for the school and the highest projected enrollment at the same school. The Department of Administrative Services can provide further information on this bonus grant.

Grant Program Manager: Brenna Casey

8. RSCO Transportation

The CSDE's RSCO contracts with the CREC Transportation Solutions, a division of CREC, to operate a regional transportation system serving the Greater Hartford Region's school choice programs.

RSCO Transportation coordinates transportation services for more than 13,000 students servings 180 schools across the Greater Hartford Region. Students are transported from 43 participating towns to schools throughout the RSCO Transportation Zone.

Review the RSCO **Transportation procedures Manual- Operators and District Reference Guide**. Coming soon!!

OC Transportation Services

OC for Hartford Residents (PK4)
Bus transportation is provided for Hartford residents attending an OC school outside of Hartford.

OC for Hartford Residents (KG-12)
Bus transportation is provided for Hartford residents attending an OC school outside of Hartford.

OC for Hartford Residents attending Plainville and Wethersfield schools:
The town provides transportation services. Contact your district's transportation office for more information.

OC Non-Hartford Residents living INSIDE the RSCO Transportation Zone (K-12)
Bus stops vary and may include stops in your neighborhood and centralized locations in or near your town. Parents/guardian are responsible for transportation to the bus stop.

Bus Route Ride Times

RSCO Transportation makes every effort to plan bus routes with average ride times of 60 minutes or less to limit the time students are on the bus. The maximum ride time is 90 minutes per ride to or from school.

Bus Route Notifications

RSCO Transportation will email families their student's bus route in early to mid-August. This applies to students registered at magnet schools, OC districts, and Hartford Region technical high schools who live within the RSCO Transportation Zone and are eligible to receive transportation services.

• Bus route information will also be posted on the RSCO Transportation website (RSCO School Choice Bus Routes).

• Families who do not receive their bus route email by early August should contact the RSCO Transportation Call Center at **860-524-4077** or rscotransportation@crec.org.

• Families who register after mid-August will be contacted by the RSCO Transportation Call Center and will receive bus information as soon as it becomes available.

Address Changes

Families who move must contact the school to update their address. The school submits an online change request form directly to RSCO Transportation.

CREC Transportation Services

Phone: 860-524-4077
Website: www.crec.org/transportation/rsco
Email: rscotransportation@crec.org

RSCO Transportation Customer Service Center
165 Wyllys Street, Hartford, CT 06106

Regular Hours:
Monday-Friday, 5:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Special Hours: (August-November only)
Monday-Friday, 5:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Stay informed!

Below are quick links to access bus route information, the Change Request Form and the RSCO Inclement Weather Policy

2026-27 Bus Route Information
www.crec.org/transportation/routes

Change Request Forms
www.crec.org/transportation/forms

RSCO Inclement Weather Policy
www.crec.org/transportation/weather

RSCO Transportation Zone

Transportation is generally available for most kindergarten (KG) through grade 12 students participating in school choice at no cost. The RSCO Transportation Zone establishes the list of towns where students receive transportation to RSCO School Choice schools and programs within the Greater Hartford Region.

RSCO Transportation Zone			
Andover	East Hampton	Hebron	Somers
Avon	East Hartford	Manchester	South Windsor
Berlin	East Windsor	Marlborough	Southington
Bloomfield	Ellington	Middletown	Suffield
Bolton	Enfield	New Britain	Tolland
Bristol	Farmington	New Hartford	Vernon
Burlington	Glastonbury	Newington	West Hartford
Canton	Granby	Plainville	Wethersfield
Coventry	Hartford	Portland	Windsor
Cromwell	Hartland	Rocky Hill	Windsor Locks
East Granby	Harwinton	Simsbury	

Transportation Grants

Districts' OC Transportation: In accordance with C.G.S §10-266aa(f), CSDE reimburses regional educational services centers (RESCs) and **local or regional boards of education** for reasonable transportation costs for OC students. Districts that elect to transport Hartford students in the OC program, can receive $3,250 per pupil, along with supplemental transportation funding. Summer transportation and after-school are also supported through the OC transportation grants. Some districts have opted for this opportunity to support student participation in OC.

Summer and After-School Transportation: For FY 27, the state will reimburse districts for summer and after-school transportation through the OC transportation grants. Some districts have opted for this opportunity to support student participation in OC.

Grant Program Manager: Brenna Casey

9. Special Education

Responsibility for Convening the PPT and Development of the IEP
Pursuant to Public Act (PA) 25-143, § 10, amending C.G.S. § 10-266aa(i), the statute clarifies that the receiving district is responsible for convening the Planning and Placement Team
(PPT) meetings and for inviting representatives from the sending district to participate.
The receiving district must ensure that students receive services mandated in the Individualized Education Program (IEP), regardless of whether the receiving or sending district provides them.

Special Education Billing
According to the C.G.S. Section 10-266aa(i), when a student from one district attends school in another district through the OC Program and requires special education services, the sending district must reimburse the

receiving district. The amount owed is calculated as the difference between the “reasonable cost” of providing those services and the funding the receiving district receives from the state, as articulated in statute.

Determining Billable Costs Referred to in Statute as “Reasonable”
Current law allows the receiving district or school to be paid for the “reasonable cost” of special education and related services. PA 25-67, §5 specifically provides that the law does not presume that "reasonable costs" means the actual cost incurred for the provision of special education and related services to a student with an individual education plan (IEP). This standard means that the receiving district’s reported costs of providing the services at issue are not automatically deemed appropriate or justified. Rather, the reasonableness of the costs must be assessed based on the nature and scope of the services provided, not simply on the fact that they were incurred. However, between July 1, 2025, and December 31, 2027, the CSDE may set standardized rates for these services.

OC students outplaced in a special education facility or program
This policy applies to students enrolled in the OC program who have been outplaced to a special education facility or program.

Pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-266aa(i), the receiving district is responsible for convening the PPT, determining the IEP, and ensuring that special education and related services are provided to students attending the OC program on a full-time basis, as required by the student’s IEP. These services may be provided directly by the receiving district or in collaboration with the sending district.

If, through the IEP process, a student enrolled in the receiving district is outplaced to a special education facility or program, the receiving district must continue to enroll and report the student in the PSIS. The receiving district may not disenroll the student from the OC program as a result of the outplacement. The student shall remain enrolled in the receiving district as an OC student and be reported as such through graduation unless the student voluntarily disenrolls from the program prior to graduation.

HPS Special Education Contact

Positions	Name	Contact Info	Key Responsibilities
Executive Director of Special Education Services	Dr. Kendy Anderson	kendy.anderson@hartfordschools.org	Attending PPT meetings within OC districts

10. 504 Services

For students with a Section 504 plan, the receiving district is responsible for developing and implementing the plan, providing the required services, and covering the associated costs. This clarification in responsibilities for 504 services was added through PA 25-143, § 10

11. District Support Services

CREC Services
As the OC managing operator, CREC provides ongoing support to families beyond the placement process. Family support services include assisting with student transitions, coordinating transportation concerns, connecting families with community resources, facilitating communication between families and districts, conducting home visits when appropriate, offering parent workshops and networking opportunities, providing

referrals to support services, and helping families become active participants in their children's education. These services are designed to promote successful student transitions, strengthen family engagement, and support long-term student success.

OC Resource Specialists

- serving as a liaison between home and school,
- attending student-centered meetings,
- coordinating support services,
- empowering families through PTO/PTA participation,
- connecting families with community resources,
- providing family support services, home visits, parent workshops, networking opportunities, and transportation assistance.

OC Early Beginnings (OCEB)- For Prekindergarten Through Grade 1

Coaches are assigned to specific districts for the entire academic year. They support teachers with inclusive curriculum and classroom practices.

- Models the use of picture books as a vehicle to engage students in age-appropriate discussions and activities to help promote safe, inclusive and respectful classroom and school environments
- Locates and/or creates instructional materials to share with school-based staff.
- Assists in the development and maintenance of culturally responsive environments and curriculum
- Collaborates with school-based staff to support best instructional practices
- Provides academic and pro-social skill support in small group settings

Professional Development Services
State Educational Resource Center (SERC): SERC provides professional development to certified employees and training for school personnel in receiving OC districts.

Website: SERC Website

CREC Resource Specialist

Positions	Name	Contact Info
Elementary School Resource Specialist (Pre-K to Grade 4)	Jennifer Hoffman	kguzzo@crec.org
Elementary School Resource Specialist (Pre-K to Grade 4) and Family Engagement Specialist (Pre-K Grade 12)	Karla Cruz	kcruz@crec.org
Middle School Resource Specialist	Jenny Maldonado	jumaldonado@crec.org
High School Resource Specialist & Summer Credit Recovery	Celia Noe	cnoe@crec.org
College & Career Advisor	Lauren Allen-Jones	lallenjones@crec.org

OC Instructional Coaches Team

Positions	Name	Contact Info	Key Responsibilities
OC Instructional Coaches	Diana Lamenzo	dlamenzo@crec.org	Coaches are assigned to specific districts for the entire academic year. They support teachers with inclusive curriculum and classroom practices.
OC Instructional Coaches	Clare Serrantino	cserrantino@crec.org	
OC Instructional Coaches	Rachel Elkey	relkey@crec.org	
OC Instructional Coaches	Amy McClutchy	amcclutchy@crec.org	
OC Instructional Coaches	Jill Zaino	jzaino@crec.org	
OC Instructional Coaches	Melissa Roy	mroy@crec.org	

Students Experiencing Homelessness- McKinney-Vento Act

The following information is for reference only. ***Specific questions about homelessness and applicants to choice programs should be directed to the RSCO office.***

In addition, the SDE's Homeless Education website provides comprehensive information about McKinney-Vento and should serve as the primary resource.

- **SDE Website:** Homeless Education (ct.gov)
- **SDE Contact:** Louis Tallarita
  - **Louis.Tallarita@ct.gov**
  - 860-807-2058

Listing of McKinney-Vento/Homeless Education Liaisons: Contact Card

Overview

The federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act provides special legal protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness, including homeless "unaccompanied youth" who are not in the custody of a parent or guardian. Under the law, homeless children and youths are individuals who:

- lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children and youths who share the housing of others, due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons;
- have a nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- live in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings;
- live in emergency or transitional shelters, or are abandoned in hospitals; or
- live in facilities which provide emergency shelter for a specified limited period of time.

A school district in which a student is attending school must assure that if the student becomes homeless during a school year, or between school years, such student continues to receive educational services for the duration of homelessness. To the extent feasible, a school district must keep a homeless student in the school of origin, unless this is contrary to the wishes of the student's parent or guardian. A homeless student who becomes permanently housed during an academic year is permitted to remain in the school of origin for the remainder of the academic year.

A school district must immediately enroll a homeless student and allow the student to attend school even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation. The district must then immediately contact the last school attended to obtain any relevant records and make appropriate referrals for required immunizations, health exams, and the like. The process of obtaining records concerning a homeless child or youth should not delay attendance at school; it is not permissible to wait for records before allowing homeless children and youth to attend school.
A child or unaccompanied youth can be homeless for an unspecified amount of time if housing is not fixed, regular, or adequate. Given the limited availability of affordable housing across the state, it is not unusual for a temporarily housed student to be designated as homeless in multiple academic years. Students who become homeless over the summer may also remain in their school of origin (the school they last attended) for the upcoming school year.
Preschoolers are eligible for protections under the McKinney-Vento Act, to the extent that a school district offers a public education to preschool children and requires schools to ensure they have access to and receive services, if eligible. This includes keeping a homeless child in their public preschool and the right to receive transportation to/from school.

The McKinney-Vento Act provides for many rights and protections for students experiencing homelessness, including:

- The opportunity for "**school selection**" including:
    - staying in the last school they attended, even if they have now moved, and are receiving transportation to that school
    - immediate enrollment in school without proof of residency, immunizations, school records, or other documents normally needed for enrollment, regardless of application or enrollment deadlines, during any period of homelessness
- Enroll and attend class in the school of their choice, even if a dispute arises regarding the student's eligibility or choice of school placement. A student will remain enrolled in the school until a disagreement is resolved.
- A student-centered decision-making process on where a student should go to school.
- Free school meals and the other special programs and services, if needed, provided to all other students.

Open Choice

- Families facing displacement should contact Hartford's McKinney-Vento Liaison to ensure continuation of services. If displacement continues through multiple school years, families should confirm displacement status with Hartford each year.
- Students experiencing homelessness and temporarily residing outside of Hartford are eligible to participate in OC.
    - New students are eligible to apply for and enroll in OC.
        - Students should use their last permanent address to submit the application.
        - Residency documents are not required to complete registration.
        - **Special Note for PK:** *PK students are covered by McKinney-Vento if a district offers public education to preschool children. In most OC districts, preschool education is not part of the school district. Preschool applicants may be required to prove Hartford residency.*
    - Current students have the right to maintain their enrollment in OC.
        - Students are eligible to remain enrolled in their OC school for the duration of the displacement, even if it spans multiple years.

- If permanent housing is found outside of Hartford during the school year, the student has the right to finish the academic year in their OC school before enrolling in their new district.

Hartford Homeless Coordinator

Positions	Name	Contact Info
Hartford Homeless Coordinator	Leslie Carrillo	Carrl003@hartfordSchools.org
McKinney-Vento Liaison	Stephanie Lockhart	Stephanie.Lockhart@hartfordschools.org

OC Housing Voucher Program

A joint program of the Connecticut State Department of Education and Department of Housing.

The OC Housing Voucher Program provides housing assistance to eligible families with students enrolled in participating OC districts. The program offers families an opportunity to relocate to the town where their child attends school.

The program is currently available in Avon, Farmington, Glastonbury, Simsbury, and West Hartford.

For additional information, please refer to the English and Spanish program flyers linked below.
For more information, please click on the link below.

English Flyer
Spanish Flyer

Appendix

Sheff Region OC Participating Districts

ZONE 1
Avon*
Canton
East Granby
Granby
Simsbury
Suffield
West Hartford*
ZONE 2
Bolton**
Coventry**
East Windsor
Ellington
Enfield
Somers
South Windsor
Tolland
Windsor Locks
ZONE 3
Avon*
Berlin
Farmington
Newington
Plainville
Southington
West Hartford*
ZONE 4
Cromwell
Glastonbury
Portland
Rocky Hill
Wethersfield

* Avon and West Hartford are in Zones 1 and 3.

** Bolton and Coventry are in Zones 2 and 4.

OC Zone Map



Sheff Region OC Zone map with zip codes



Residential Zone	OC Districts for Hartford Residents
Zone 1	Avon*, Canton, East Granby, Granby, Simsbury, Suffield, West Hartford*
Zone 2	Bolton**, Coventry**, East Windsor, Ellington, Enfield, Somers, South Windsor, Tolland, Windsor Locks
Zone 3	Avon*, Berlin, Farmington, Newington, Plainville, Southington, West Hartford*
Zone 4	Bolton**, Coventry**, Glastonbury, Portland, Rocky Hill, Wethersfield

* Avon and West Hartford are available for application for families in Zones 1 and 3.
** Bolton and Coventry are available for application for families in Zones 2 and 4.

OC RESC Operators Statewide

Hartford Area

Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), 111 Charter Oak Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106

CREC Contacts:

CREC Welcome Center
Phone: **860-509-3635**
Website: **CREC Open Choice Program**

Curtis Rodriguez-Porter, Managing Director

Phone: **860-810-7686**
Email: **cporter@crec.org**
To apply visit **ChooseYourSchool.org**

New Haven Area

Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES), 350 State Street, North Haven, CT 06473

ACES Contact

Todd A. Solli, Open Choice Coordinator
Phone: 203-287-6843
Email: **tsolli@aces.org**
Website: **ACES Open Choice Program**

Bridgeport Area: including Bridgeport, Danbury, and Norwalk

Cooperative Educational Services (CES), 23 Oakview Drive, Trumbull, CT 06611

CES Contact:

Eric Nyquist, Open Choice Coordinator
Phone: 203-365-8857
Email: **nyquiste@cestrumbull.org**
Website: **CES Open Choice Program**