Connecticut State Department of Education

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Special Education Trauma-Informed Schools Initiative Grant

1. What is the purpose of the Trauma-Informed Schools Initiative Grant?

The grant supports districts in strengthening their capacity to identify and respond to student trauma and behavioral health needs through coordinated, trauma-informed practices.

The focus is on improving supports for students who require special education and helping districts recognize and respond to students who may not yet have been identified as requiring special education.

The goal is to strengthen staff capacity, coordination of services, family engagement, and community partnerships that can continue beyond the grant period.

2. Who can apply?

Connecticut local and regional boards of education (LEAs) and eligible endowed academies may apply.

3. Can two districts apply together?

Yes. CSDE will accept joint applications from up to two eligible applicants. One applicant must serve as the lead, submit the application, and act as the fiscal agent. The lead applicant must include a letter of support from the collaborating district and, if awarded funding, subcontract with that district.

The combined request may not exceed the total funding limits combined student population total. The application and budget must demonstrate how proposed activities and expenditures will support both districts equitably.

4. What is the maximum funding amount per LEA?

Maximum funding amounts are based on student enrollment as reported in EdSight on October 1, 2025. Individual applicants use their district's enrollment, while joint applicants may combine the enrollment of up to two applicants to determine their funding limit.

District Enrollment	Maximum Request
Fewer than 2,000 students	$100,000
2,001–7,499 students	$150,000
7,500 or more students	$200,000

5. How much funding is available, and how many grants are expected to be awarded?

A total of $1.5 million in state funding is available for the 2026–27 Trauma-Informed Schools Initiative Grant competition. Based on the available funding and maximum award amounts of $100,000 to $200,000, approximately 7 to 15 grants could be awarded. This is an estimate, not a predetermined number of awards.

With all Connecticut LEAs eligible to apply and limited funding available, this is expected to be a highly competitive grant opportunity. Applications will be evaluated by peer reviewers using the published scoring rubric. Awards will be determined based on the review results, the amounts requested, and the funding available.

6. When are applications due?

Applications must be submitted electronically by November 19, 2026.

7. What is the deadline for completing grant activities and expenditures?

All grant-funded activities must be completed and funds expended by June 30, 2027. The application timeline must reflect this deadline. No extensions will be granted.

8. Is the grant limited to early childhood or early intervention programs?

No. While the grant emphasizes early identification and intervention, its purpose is to strengthen district capacity to recognize and respond to trauma and behavioral health needs across student populations.

Districts may focus on different age groups or grade levels based on identified needs, provided the proposed activities align with the grant's purpose and expected outcomes.

9. What types of activities can the grant support?

Grant funds may support:

- Trauma-informed professional learning, coaching, and consultation.
- Coordination among special education, general education, behavioral health staff, and community providers.
- Home visitation and family outreach.
- Development or expansion of community partnerships.
- Additional staff time to coordinate and implement trauma-informed practices.
- Improved identification of student needs and connections to appropriate supports.
- Data collection and progress monitoring.
- Training materials, curricula, and supplies for home visitation and parent outreach.

All proposed activities and expenses must align with the grant's purpose and application guidance.

10. Can districts contract with outside providers?

Yes. Districts may propose contracts with outside organizations for professional learning, coaching, consultation, family outreach, auditing, evaluation, and other activities that support the grant's purpose.

The application and budget narrative should identify the proposed services, associated costs, and how they support the planned activities.

11. Can funds be used to expand an existing program or partnership?

Yes. Districts may strengthen or expand existing trauma-informed programs, practices, and partnerships. Examples include:

- Additional trauma-informed professional development.
- Expanded home visitation and family outreach.
- Contracted consultation or technical assistance.
- Additional staff time to coordinate services.
- Expanded partnerships with behavioral health and community providers.

The application should describe existing services, proposed improvements, and how the additional activities support the grant's expected outcomes.

12. Would expanding an existing program be considered supplanting?

Not necessarily. Grant funds may support new or expanded activities but should not replace funding already committed to existing services.

For example, a district may expand an existing home visitation program to serve additional families or address identified trauma-related needs.

13. Do districts need to establish new community partnerships?

No. Districts may strengthen existing partnerships, establish new ones, or both. The application should identify each partner's role and how the partnership supports the proposed activities and identified needs.

14. Are partnerships with early childhood providers required?

Not for every project. The scoring rubric considers early learning, home visitation, and family engagement based on their relevance to the proposed activities.

Partnerships should reflect the needs of the students and families identified in the application.

15. Can funds support staff training and professional development?

Yes. Funding may support trauma-informed training, coaching, consultation, and related professional learning.

The application should describe how the training will strengthen staff capacity and support the proposed activities and expected outcomes.

16. Can funds support direct services for students and families?

Yes. Direct services, such as home visitation and family outreach, may be proposed when they support the grant's purpose and broader approach to strengthening trauma-informed systems.

The application should identify the services, associated costs, and how they support the proposed activities.

17. What outcomes should districts expect to achieve during the grant period?

Expected outcomes include:

- Increased staff knowledge and capacity to implement trauma-informed practices.
- Stronger coordination among school staff, families, and community providers.
- Improved identification of student needs and connections to appropriate supports.
- Stronger partnerships with early learning, behavioral health, and community providers.
- Increased family engagement and outreach.
- Strengthened trauma-informed practices, systems, and processes.
- Increased capacity to sustain effective practices and partnerships.

The application should identify measurable outcomes aligned with the proposed activities and achievable by June 30, 2027.

18. Are districts expected to demonstrate improvements in attendance, behavior, or academic engagement during the grant period?

The grant focuses on strengthening district capacity, systems, and practices during the funding period. These improvements are intended to contribute over time to stronger student engagement, attendance, behavioral well-being, and access to appropriate supports.

The application should distinguish between outcomes expected during the grant period and longer-term intended outcomes.

19. How should districts address sustainability?

The application should explain how proposed activities will strengthen staff capacity, practices, systems, and partnerships that can continue beyond the grant period.

Examples include ongoing staff practices, established community partnerships, improved coordination of services, and commitments from district leadership and community partners to sustain these efforts.

For example, a district could use grant funds to train a team of staff in trauma-informed practices, with a plan for those staff members to provide ongoing training and support to colleagues after the grant ends.

20. Where can applicants find the application materials and scoring rubric?

The application guidance, scoring rubric, and additional resources are available on the CSDE Special Education Fiscal RFPs and Grants webpage.

The scoring rubric outlines how applications will be evaluated and can help applicants align their responses with the grant's priorities.

21. What must be included in the application?

Applications must include:

- Completed responses to application questions 1–5.
- A completed budget and budget narrative.
- A signed letter of support from the superintendent or designee.
- Commitment letters from community partners, when applicable.

22. What should community partner commitment letters include?

Commitment letters should identify the partner's role, proposed services or activities, and commitment to participate if funding is awarded.

23. How much does early learning, home visitation, and family engagement count toward the application score?

Early Learning, Home Visiting, and Family Engagement is one component of the scoring rubric, worth up to 7 of the 120 available points.

Applications will be evaluated using the full rubric and the relevance of proposed activities to identified needs.

24. What information should districts provide to demonstrate the need for their project?

The application should include relevant data and information identifying student needs, existing supports, service gaps, and how the proposed activities address those needs.

25. What should be included in the project timeline?

The implementation timeline should identify major activities, key milestones, responsible district staff and partners, expected deliverables, and completion dates.

All grant-funded activities must be completed by June 30, 2027.

26. What should be included in the budget narrative?

A strong budget narrative identifies proposed expenditures, explains how costs were determined, and demonstrates that the requested funds support the activities described in the application.

All costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allowable under the grant.

27. Can funds be used for staff stipends, substitutes, or other personnel costs?

These costs may be allowable when they directly support planned grant activities.

A strong budget narrative identifies the positions and associated costs that support the application narrative.

28. Can funds be used for supplies, materials, or other resources?

Yes. Funds may support supplies, materials, and resources necessary to carry out proposed activities.

The budget narrative should identify the items and associated costs that support the application narrative.

Questions:

Additional questions can be submitted to Bryan.Klimkiewicz@ct.gov and Shelby.Pons@ct.gov

Need EOE abbreviated Statement Here