High Quality Special Education Incentives Grant

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

7/2/2026

General Information

Established under Public Act 25-93 Sec. 19, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) announced the launch of the High-Quality (HQ) Special Education Incentives Grant on May 22, 2026.

The CSDE is administering this competitive grant program for local and regional boards of education to support in-district or regional special education programming and services for students with disabilities. Grants awarded to local and regional boards of education under the program may be used (1) to enhance and improve existing special education programming and services in the school district or start-up costs related to the creation of in-district or regional special education programming and services for students who are currently enrolled in a program operated by a provider of special education services, as defined in section 10-91g of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.), and (2) for planning and operational expenses related to such in-district or regional special education programming and services.

Total funding for this initiative is $18.9 million ($8.9M designated for programming and $10M for capital improvement). Applicants may request up to $350,000 for individual programming and/or capital improvement proposals and up to $500,000 for collaborative programming and/or capital improvement proposals.

Eligibility

1. **Who can apply for the HQ Special Education Incentives Grant?**

   Eligible applicants are Connecticut local and regional boards of education, which include magnet schools and charter school districts.

2. **Are Alliance Districts given priority for funding?**

   Yes. Pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-262u, an Alliance District will be given priority consideration.

Application Requirements

1. **Is the HQ Special Education Incentives Grant an entitlement grant or a competitive grant?**

   The HQ Special Education Incentives Grant is a competitive grant.

2. **What are the application requirements?**

   The application is due on or before July 10, 2026, via an electronic submission (HQ Special Education Incentives Grant Application). See the Application Guidance and the Scoring Rubric for additional information. **Note:** There is no opportunity for an extension. Late applications will not be considered.

3. **Can eligible applicants submit more than one grant application?**

   Yes. Applicants can submit more than one grant application.

   Applicants may request up to $350,000 for individual programming and/or capital improvement proposals and up to $500,000 for collaborative programming and/or capital improvement proposals.

4. **Can eligible applicants have more than one need identified in the grant application?**

   Yes. The applicants can identify more than one need in their applications. The responses to the questions and corresponding budget should align with the needs identified in the application.

5. **For collaborative grant proposals, do all eligible applicants need to submit a grant application?**

   No. For collaborative grant proposals, one eligible applicant must take on the role of the "lead" applicant; the "lead" applicant will submit the grant application. There must be letters of support from all eligible applicants who are collaborating on the proposal submitted with the grant application.

6. **Will applications be reviewed on a rolling basis or only after the submission deadline? When will applicants be notified of their funding approval?**

   The CSDE will review applications after the submission deadline. Applications will be scored based on the Scoring Rubric. All applicants will be notified of their application determination by the end of July.

7. **Will the CSDE approve partial funding of a grant application, or will applications be either fully approved or not approved?**

   Applications will be either fully approved or not approved, based on available funding.

8. **Will there be any additional audit requirements for capital improvement projects?**

   No, there will not be any unique audit requirements for capital improvement projects funded by the HQ Special Education Incentives Grant.

Reporting Requirements

1. **What are the reporting requirements for the HQ Special Education Incentives Grant?**

   Applicants who are awarded funds (subgrantees) must upload their completed/approved grant application and complete a budget in the electronic grant management system (eGMS). Subgrantees must complete Fund Requests and Expenditure Reports in the eGMS as well.

2. **For collaborative grant proposals, are all eligible applicants responsible for reporting requirements?**

   No. For collaborative grant proposals, one eligible applicant must take on the role as the “lead” applicant. As stated above, the “lead” applicant will submit the grant application. If approved, the “lead” applicant (subgrantee) will be responsible for uploading their completed/approved grant application and completing a budget in the eGMS. The subgrantees must complete Fund Requests and Expenditure Reports in the eGMS as well.

Use of Funds

1. **How can HQ Special Education Incentives Grant funds be used?**

   Allowable activities of HQ Special Education Incentives grant funds include:

   - development or expansion of high-quality in-district or regional special education programming;
   - flexible learning models such as unified classes and co-teaching;
   - increased instructional time with non-disabled peers for identified students;
   - planning and start-up costs for new and/or existing programming;
   - operating costs for new and/or expanding existing programming;
   - staffing, assistive technology, instructional materials, and professional development; and
   - capital improvements as necessary to support in-district programming.

   Note: Grant funds may not be expended on special education programming or services provided pursuant to a contract with a third party or private provider of special education services.

2. **Can an eligible applicant apply for funds if they are creating and/or enhancing a program that includes both students with disabilities and nondisabled students?**

   Yes. The application must be clear that these funds will be used to create and/or enhance its special education programming.

3. **Can an eligible applicant apply for funds if they accept out-of-district student placements, therefore, charging tuition to another local or regional board of education, to their new and/or existing special education program?**

   Yes. However, the applicant must have its resident students with disabilities enrolled in the program.

4. **Can eligible applicants use funds for third-party vendors?**

   Applicants can collaborate with a third-party or private provider of special education services to assist with creating and/or enhancing their special education programming, or to provide professional development to increase the capacity of the applicants’ staff.

   However, applicants cannot contract with a third-party or private provider of special education services to provide special education and related services to students with disabilities.

5. **Can funds be used to pay for the cost of transportation?**

   If a third party is providing the transportation: No. This is not an allowable use of funds. Applicants cannot contract with a third-party or private provider of special education services to provide special education and related services to students with disabilities.

   If the local or regional board of education owns and provides the transportation: Yes. This is an allowable use of funds.

6. **What is the period of the grant? What are the parameters related to the expenditure window? What is the deadline for liquidating the funds?**

   Fiscal year (FY) 2027 HQ Special Education Incentives grant funds are to be expended between July 1, 2026, and June 30, 2027. There is no extended liquidation beyond June 30, 2027.

7. **Will the capital improvement funds (state bond funds) be available on 7/1/2026?**

   No. The state bond funds are subject to review and approval by the Connecticut State Bond Commission before the award.

Questions

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