

Connecticut State Department of Education
Division Of School Health, Child Nutrition, and Family Services

Overview and Guidance for
After-School Grant Program for Grades K-12
July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2027



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Grants must have status of “LEA Superintendent Approval” in the Electronic Grant Management System (eGMS) by 11:59 P.M. June 24, 2025.

Purpose: To implement or expand high-quality programs outside school hours that offer educational enrichment and recreational activities that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of students in grades K-12.

This grant is offered and administered pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-16x.

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I. Purpose

The After-School Grant Program was established by the Connecticut General Assembly for the purpose of creating high-quality afterschool programs outside of regular school hours. After-school programs are defined as programs that take place when school is not in session (e.g., before and after-school, summer recess and school breaks) and provide educational enrichment and recreational activities for students in Grades K-12 and which has a parent component. At the same time, after-school programs help support families by offering educational development opportunities and providing a safe environment for students when school is not in session. Programs can be situated across the grade levels in elementary, middle or high schools or other similar accessible academic facility and provide a range of high quality services to support student learning and development, including:

- providing opportunities for academic enrichment to help students meet state and local performance standards in core academic subjects;
- offering a broad array of additional services, programs and activities such as: youth development activities; counseling; project-based learning; art; music; technology; service learning; and recreation programs that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students; and
- offering parents and families of students served by after-school programs opportunities for literacy and related educational development such as: adult development activities, family activities, opportunities for governance and leadership involvement, and participation in school and program events.

There are two after-school program options. The application cover sheet must identify one of the following options:

- Option A: Elementary School; or
- Option B: Middle and/or High School.

II. Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to apply as a lead applicant:

- all local education agencies (LEAs), endowed academies, charter and magnet schools;
- municipalities;
- Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) applying on behalf of LEAs; and
- community-based organizations (CBOs), including faith-based organizations (FBOs) and other public or private nonprofit organizations in partnership with a local school or school district.

Applications submitted by LEAs must provide a detailed explanation of any partnership, with either entity acting as the lead partner. CSDE is open to receiving applications with varied configurations between CBOs, LEAs, and partners. Applications submitted by RESCs on behalf of LEAs or magnet schools, or by CBOs, must explicitly mention their intended or existing partnership with a local school or school district in their proposal.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to create collaborative programming that has the potential to last beyond the funding cycle. Any district that needs help finding a community-based partner should contact their local RESC.

Applicants may submit up to three proposals as long as they are for separate projects at different locations. The CSDE reserves the right to limit the number of successful grants awarded to a single entity, in a single municipality, or serving specific geographic areas.

LEAs or RESCs as Lead Applicant

For school districts applying as lead applicants, fiscal health and financial policies can be documented in a letter of commitment from the superintendent that states that the programs have the capacity to invest time and resources to support program start-up and implementation once the grant is awarded, notwithstanding a delay in reimbursement of funds.

CBOs or FBOs as Lead Applicant

For CBOs and FBOs applying as lead applicant, fiscal health and financial policies must be documented by providing all of the following information as attachments on the CBO or FBO Related Documents page: copy of IRS determination letter; organization chart; list of board of directors with names and affiliations; organization's most recent financial statements (audited, if available) and management letter (if available); and organization's annual operating budget and actual income and expenses for the current fiscal year.

Lead Applicant Requirements

Applicants must require the lead partner to comply with all conditions and restrictions that apply to grant recipients under the CSDE funding requirements, including:

- providing appropriate progress reports and financial reports to the CSDE;
- being accountable to the CSDE for how it uses state funds provided under the subcontract;
- following applicable state and federal rules regarding financial management, internal controls, cost principles, and audit requirements;
- collecting and providing performance data for the recipient to include in its reports to CSDE;
- providing a letter of commitment (see Partnership & Collaboration, question #5); and
- providing all other assurances required by the State of Connecticut in the eGMS application.

If awarded this grant, each funded site must have an After-School Site Safety Plan prior to opening. An After-School Site Safety Plan is a comprehensive document outlining procedures and protocols to ensure the safety of students during after-school hours, including details on emergency response, supervision practices, hazard identification, and preventative measures to address potential risks within the after-school program space. Such plans should include site assessment, staff training, supervision practices, emergency preparedness, student safety, health and hygiene, and transportation safety. The safety plans themselves are not included in the application, but the lead applicant must attest that each site will have one prior to opening.

In addition, all Lead Applicants must upload to the related documents section:

- letter from the lead applicant's CEO (if the lead applicant is not an LEA) or Superintendent that states that they have the capacity to invest time and resources to support program startup and implementation as specified in the grant proposal until those awarded can receive reimbursement;
- letter of commitment from the Superintendent stating they will share with CSDE the State Assigned Student Identifier (SASID) numbers of program participants for the CSDE data collection and evaluation; and
- letters of support or memorandums of understanding from each of the major partners that will deliver a component of the after-school program.

Subcontractor/Vendor Guidelines

If the Lead Applicant provides after-school grant funds to a partner applicant, the CSDE will consider the agreement between the recipient and the outside entity a "subcontract." All subcontracts are subject to the terms of the CSDE grant funding source, and the grantee is held solely responsible for the performance of the subcontractor including all safeguards related to child safety such as staff background checks, and ensuring that all subcontractors comply with all state and federal laws. Additionally, a copy of the CSDE-approved funding application must be provided to the subcontractor as an attachment to the subcontract. The CSDE reserves the right to communicate directly with the subcontractor about the terms and conditions of the funding and details of the subcontract.

III. Priority Points

CSDE will give competitive priority to applications that propose to serve students in low-performing schools and to applications submitted jointly by LEA(s) and community organizations. In addition, the CSDE will give competitive priority to applications from communities with populations of 7,500 or less, and 10% of the funds will be set aside for these communities.

IV. After-School Program Requirements

Minimum Program Requirements

To be eligible for this funding, programs must operate for a minimum of 25 weeks at each site per school year for each of the two years of the grant cycle. Additional points will be awarded for programs that operate for longer periods.

Hours per week:

- Elementary School: 9 hours per week, 4 days a week.
- Middle School: 8 hours per week, 4 days a week, can be two two-day sessions (e.g. M/W & T/Th)
- High School: 5 hours per week, at least 2 days per week

Weeks per school year and maximum per student grant request:

- **Less than 25 weeks**, grant is ineligible for funding
- **26-29 weeks**, +5 points
Max. funding: \$2,200 per student

- **30-34 weeks** +10 points
Max. funding \$2,800 per student
- **35-38 weeks** +15 points
Max. funding: \$3,500 per student

Minimum Student Attendance Requirements

For students to count towards the program targets, they must attend the after-school program a minimum number of days each school year:

- Elementary School students: 60 days per school year
- Middle School students: 45 days per school year
- High School students: 30 days per school year

Example: Elementary site serving 200 students is open 4 days per week for 30 weeks = 120 days. Minimum number of students that attended at least 60 days of programming in order to get year two funding? Answer: 200 must attend 60 days of programming to receive year two funding.

V. Time Period, Size and Number of Grants

Time Period

The grant is funded for two years: Fiscal Years 2025-26 and 2026-27. Funding for each year is subject to the state budget appropriations. Programs will be required to submit an End-of-Year Report (EYR) for year one and a budget for year two 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.

Size of Grants

The minimum grant award is \$25,000 per fiscal year. The maximum grant award is \$200,000 per fiscal year. Historical average annual cost per program has ranged from \$150,000 to \$200,000, for two program sites serving a total of 150 students. Please note that the total funding must be the same for each fiscal year. Actual costs per program may be higher or lower depending on the number of students served, the variety of activities provided and the availability of additional resources. The actual amount awarded will likely vary from the budget submitted with the application, and grantees will be able to revise the budget and target number of students subject to approval by the CSDE, prior to accepting any grant award.

Number of Grants

The number of grants funded will depend on the number of applicants and funds available. No applicant may submit more than three applications per competition, and the number of grants awarded may be limited to no more than three grants awarded per municipality.

VI. Eligible Activities

Each eligible organization that receives an award may use the funds to carry out a broad array of activities during before and after-school, summer recess and school breaks that advance student achievement including:

- remedial education activities and academic enrichment programs;
- science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics (STEM) activities;
- arts programming including visual arts, theater and music education activities;
- entrepreneurial education programs;
- homework help and tutoring services (including those provided by volunteers and mentoring programs);
- after-school activities for Multilingual Learners (MLs) that emphasize language skills and academic performance;
- health and wellness activities, including physical and mental health;
- walking, running, and dancing;
- outdoor active play and recreational activities;
- drug, teen pregnancy and violence prevention programs, counseling programs;
- programs that promote social/emotional learning and character development;
- service learning activities;
- global education and world languages;
- college and career readiness activities;
- virtual high school and other credit recovery opportunities; and
- parent/family engagement activities and family literacy.

It is also essential that grantees provide significant opportunities for the students to have input as to which activities will be offered, as well as the ability to choose the activities in which they participate with appropriate guidance.

VII. Funding History and Experience

This section is for applicants who have a funding history with the Grant. Programs can gain up to 30 points in this section based on performance over the past four years. The CSDE program manager will assess the most recent year's performance data for any applicant who has received or is currently receiving CSDE After-school Grant funding. Assessment will be based on the following criteria:

- Program operations followed the grant proposal, including number of weeks, days and hours that services were provided;
- Program served the number of students as outlined in the awarded proposal or approved change request; and
- Program met goals for participant attendance expectations.

VIII. Data Collection, Evaluation, Quality Improvement and Professional Learning

Data Collection

Funded applicants must submit program and student data for Monthly Attendance Reports by the seventh day of each month of programming. The data to be collected will include:

1. Program data:
 - a. site information;
 - b. details of activities offered (e.g. start and end dates, type of activity); and
 - c. staff information.

2. Student data:
 - a. SASID information;
 - b. student demographics;
 - c. program attendance; and
 - d. school attendance.

Programs must designate a staff member for data entry. Identified staff must attend CSDE database trainings and address data issues by required deadlines. Programs that do not meet attendance requirements are subject to a decrease or termination in funding.

Evaluation

Programs must complete an End-of-Year Survey by June 30th of each year of funding describing project activities, accomplishments and outcomes. The End-of-Year Survey is used to demonstrate progress in meeting program objectives and to collect data that addresses the performance indicators of a quality after-school program. Grantees must set aside five percent of the grant funds each year to support the costs of the statewide evaluation, quality improvement, and data collection work.

Quality Improvement

Programs must participate in a designated quality improvement process with the CSDE and subcontracted providers. This process may include trainings, meetings, conference calls, scheduled site visits for program observation and feedback and interviews with administrators, staff, families and students.

Programs must submit appropriate forms and receive prior approval from the CSDE before any changes are made that differ substantially from what was presented in the grant application.

Professional Learning

Programs must provide professional learning for all staff of the after-school program, which may include:

- New Grantee Orientation for an overview of CSDE grant policies and procedures (mandatory for year 1 of funding cycle, minimum of one staff and fiscal officer);
- CSDE After-school Grant Networking meetings for relevant professional development and networking opportunities, e.g., the CT Network for Children and Youth's Annual Fall After-school Conference;
- Additional trainings that improve program safety and quality, such as CPR/First Aid, Mandated Reporter, and Medication Administration trainings;
- NIOST Assessment of Program Practices Tool (APT) for expectations of program quality and assessment; and
- TransACT AS21 User Training for entering program and attendance information for State reporting.

IX. Components of High Quality After-school Programs

According to research conducted at the University of Connecticut, Harvard Family Research Project and the Institute of Education Sciences, the following is a synthesized list of nine characteristics exemplified by high quality programs:

- prepared and experienced staff;

- intentional programming;
- alignment with the school day;
- youth engagement, such as promotion of youth choice;
- strong community partners;
- safety, health and wellness;
- sustained student participation and access;
- parent/family engagement; and
- ongoing assessment and improvement.

X. Requirements

Licensing

Please note that programs that plan to serve school age students through this funding opportunity may be obligated to meet child day care licensing requirements, as defined in Connecticut General Statutes Section 19a-77. Programs that are administered by public or private schools, or municipal agencies or departments, may be exempt from this requirement. All applicants must provide the requested assurance on the Grant Cover Page or a copy of their current license. For access to licensing information, please see the following Website: <https://www.ctoec.org/licensing> or call the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood at (860) 500-4450 for more information.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Please note that applicants are reminded of their obligation under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to ensure that the proposed program is accessible to persons with disabilities. Entities that operate a state-funded program must provide reasonable accommodations as required by law and regulations to enable a child with a disability to participate in programming.

XI. 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 responsible for the selection of sub-grantees or vendors, nor will they be directly involved in the expenditure and payment of funds.

XII. Review Process and Criteria

The CSDE will convene a panel to review all completed applications received in the eGMS system with LEA Superintendent approval by the due date. Each application will be rated according to the criteria with the scoring rubric.

XIII. Grant Award Decisions and Disposition of Proposals

The CSDE reserves the right to award in part, to reject all proposals, in its entirety or in part, and to waive technical defects, irregularities or omissions if, in its judgment, the best interest of the state would be served. After receiving the grant application, the CSDE reserves the right to not award all grants, to negotiate specific grant amounts, and to

select certain grantees, regardless of points awarded, as part of the evaluation process to meet the State Board of Education's priorities.

The CSDE will notify applicants via email of the acceptance or rejection of their proposals. If a proposal is selected for funding, the Division of School Health and Family Services will initiate a grant award letter. The level of funding and effective dates of the projects will be set forth in the notification of the grant award. The CSDE will retain all proposals submitted and such proposals will become part of the public domain.

XIV. Obligations of Grantees

All bidders are hereby notified that the grant to be awarded is subject to contract compliance requirements, as set forth in Connecticut General Statutes Section 4a-60 and Sections 4a-68j-1 et seq., of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

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 Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.

XV. Fiscal Responsibility and Reporting Requirements

The grantee will be responsible for adherence to all state and federal regulations governing expenditures, accounting and reporting requirements and shall prepare and submit all reports, as required by the CSDE.

XVI. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

All of the information contained in a proposal submitted in response to this Request for Proposal (RFP) is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, Connecticut General Statutes Sections 1-200 et seq. (FOIA). 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.