



OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Whole Child and Educator Wellness Grant (WCEW) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Release Date: Sept. 17, 2025

Eligible Applicants

1. Who is eligible to apply?

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) Division of Health and Wellness (HW) will accept applications from applicants, including not-for-profit, for-profit and faith-based organizations. Applicants must have experience in building capacity through the provision of technical assistance (TA) in one or more of these following areas: physical activity, environmental education, garden-based education, or educator wellness.

2. Our CBO is currently operating out of District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) schools. Is our organization eligible to apply?

Community-based organizations (CBOs) operating in DCPS schools are eligible. However, there is the potential for a conflict of interest if you are delivering the grant's capacity-building services during school hours, while working as a District government employee at DCPS. After reviewing the Request for Applications (RFA), if you still believe your organization is qualified to meet program requirements, please let KimberlyA.Thompson@dc.gov know how your organization will avoid a conflict of interest.

3. How are schools matched with CBOs? If we are interested in working with a CBO that will be providing wellness support and technical assistance, how would we proceed? Do we need to first partner with the CBOs, and could only one CBO be matched with us?

OSSE cannot dictate to CBOs to partner with specific school/Early Childhood Education (ECE) sites, but we can provide them with a list of sites that have expressed interest in participating in the grant. Grantee sites can receive support from multiple CBOs under different program areas, but it is up to them who they will finalize a partnership with.

4. Can a CBO submit multiple applications?

No, OSSE will only accept one application per CBO; a lead organization may contract with other organization(s) that can provide services in another program. (Contracted organizations can only appear on one application.)

5. For CBOs that were awarded the FY25 WCEW grant, are they allowed to continue partnerships with the same fiscal year 2025 school partners?

Yes, CBOs that were awarded the FY25 WCEW grant from OSSE/HW (FY25 WCEW grantees) are permitted to partner with the same ECE facilities and schools in FY26; however, a CBO that previously received an OSSE/HW grant cannot propose working with the same ECE facilities and schools for more than two school years (i.e., a CBO that received an OSSE/HW in FY24 and FY25 and who partnered with the same sites cannot partner with a site for a third school year). See section 1.2.3 for eligibility requirements.

6. Knowing that the grant applicants must be CBOs, is there a process in place for when a school reaches out and may be interested in partnering with an organization?

OSSE maintains a list of schools and ECE facilities that have expressed to OSSE their interest in the grant program. CBOs that are seeking school and ECE facility partners may reach out to KimberlyA.Thompson@dc.gov. The partnership agreement must be finalized in advance of the application deadline and submitted with the application.

7. My organization is a national organization that provides direct support to schools and districts in communities across the country. We have staff in DC that partner with DCPS. Would we be seriously considered for funding as a national organization that serves DC as part of a larger footprint? Are proposals to support ECE facilities versus schools given equal weight?

All CBOs will be considered if they can demonstrate that they provide capacity-building services to the ECE and/or DC public and public charter schools. Since you represent a national organization, in your program narrative and budget narrative, you would need to provide information on the staff and services operating only in the District. All proposals that serve only ECE or school sites or a mix of both are reviewed equally.

8. If the applicant organization is actively partnering with a school to provide different services than are proposed in the application, and thus would not be supplanting funds, can the organization partner with that school for this grant?

Yes, WCEW grants funds cannot be used to supplant existing and active school partnerships in any specific priority area. In your application, you should provide a supporting program narrative and budget justification for the scope of your proposed priority area and planned school partnerships. Other existing school partnerships outside of the scope of the application are allowable.

9. Is this grant available for high school and middle school charter schools?

CBOs are eligible to apply for this grant opportunity. For eligibility purposes under the WCEW grant, a local education agency (LEA) is not a CBO. CBOs can partner with ECEs and DCPS and public charter schools that serve K-12 students. Private schools are not eligible partners for the grant.

Source of Funds

10. What is the source of funds for this grant?

The funds for this grant are being made available solely through the District of Columbia local funds through Fiscal Year 2026 Local Budget Act of 2025, Bill 26-260.

11. What is the total available amount of funding for this grant?

The total funding available for the WCEW grant is \$700,000. Award amounts will be based on the priority areas below:

Priority Area 1 (Physical Activity) and Priority Area 2 (Environmental Education and Garden-based Education) totals \$400,000. Priority Area 3 (Educator Wellness) is \$300,000.

Each awarded organization is expected to receive anywhere from \$50,000 to \$150,000 for the grant period.

12. As an applicant, we have concerns about the sustainability of funding. Will funding be available during the second grant period, beginning Oct. 1, 2026?

OSSE maintains the right to adjust the grant award and amount based on funding availability. Funding will be available for the second grant period. OSSE anticipates level funding during the second grant period.

The RFA does not commit OSSE to make an award. See 1.2.4 Source of Funds.

13. Can WCEW funding count toward the match requirements for our federal programs such as Head Start?

OSSE's grants can often be used to count toward matching fund requirements. However, it is crucial to verify with your federal grantor on their specific match funds requirements as it relates to your specific federal award.

14. In section 1.2.3. the last sentence in the second paragraph states: "Partner sites may be new or previous partners; however, the WCEW grant cannot be used to supplant funds for active school partnerships." Does this mean that a grantee can work with ECE programs that they partnered with before (FY23 and FY24)?

Yes, applicants can continue existing partnerships. In reference to supplanting funds, a grantee cannot swap one funding source for WCEW grant dollars. If a program is already funded and implemented, the WCEW is not intended to simply replace those funds to free up the original funding source for another use. Instead, the WCEW may be used for new programs with either an existing or new partner. It cannot fund already established and funded work underway. Please reference question 6 for additional details on supplanting funds.

Program Requirements

15. Can the needs assessment be conducted prior to the beginning of the program, or is it mandatory that a needs assessment be conducted during the program cycle?

The needs assessment will need to be completed during the grant award period.

See Section 2.1.3.1 for school recruitment and needs assessment requirements.

16. Within the technical assistance plan, can the grant funds be used to support the first three months of programming?

Grant funds can be used to support to support activities starting from the award date until Sept. 30, 2026, for the grant period.

17. Is there a maximum number of sites a CBO can partner with?

There is no maximum number of sites to partner with in your proposal. Applicants that choose to work with more than five sites should submit: (1) a plan that reflects how they will manage the number of proposed schools, (2) their organizational capacity for managing the sites, and (3) a budget commensurate with the project scope.

18. Regarding this requirement: CBOs will partner with a minimum of five DC ECE facilities and/or public and public charter schools. As a CBO and an ECE, can our location count as a partner, or do we need a minimum of five additional partners?

There is the potential for a conflict of interest if you are delivering the grant's capacity-building services during normal ECE working hours. Please let OSSE know in your application how your organization will avoid a conflict of interest.

19. A CBO is entering cooperative agreements to open ECE centers at DCPS elementary schools, expected to open in early 2026. Can those two sites count as partner ECEs, even though the ECE centers will be managed by the CBO applying?

There is the potential for a conflict of interest if you are delivering the grant's capacity-building services during normal ECE working hours. All applicants must submit their letter of commitments from their sites with the application that is due Oct. 8. All sites must be currently licensed, operating and approved for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) program. Alternatively, you could partner with other CACFP program sites under other sponsors. Please reach out to Kimberly.Thompson@dc.gov if you have questions about eligible CACFP sites.

20. Are there additional requirements for providing services in a DCPS school?

Yes, if you are partnering with a DCPS school to provide services to students, you must complete all DCPS partner requirements before beginning programming. This includes having a fully executed Memorandum of Agreement, completing the DCPS Clearance Process for all staff and volunteers, and having a fully executed Building Use Agreement with the Department of General Services if operating outside of regular school hours. More details about all these processes can be found [here](#). If you have questions, please email the DCPS Partnerships Team at DCPS.Partnerships@k12.dc.gov.

21. If we partner with two sites of the same school/LEA will that count as two of the five required partners?

Yes, CBOs can partner with multiple schools/ECE sites under one LEA or sponsor, and they count separately. The minimum number of partner sites is five. The number of partners is determined at the site level not the LEA level. Commitment letters should be completed at the site-level.

Budget

22. Can the funding be used to cover expenses for a venue or event space to gather school personnel for a wellness event related to the grant?

This is a permissible use of funds if an application's program-specific strategies include holding wellness events.

23. Can funds be used for teacher stipends?

Yes, stipends to cover replacement staff time during trainings and professional learning and to supplement time covered outside of normal working hours, are allowable.

24. May applicants include administrative or indirect costs in the grant budget?

Yes, indirect costs and administrative costs are allowable expenses under this RFA.

25. Is carryover of FY26 grant funds into FY27 allowable?

No, carryover of grant funds is not allowable for this grant. Funded applicants must commit to obligate all grant funds awarded under this competition by Sept. 30, 2026.

26. For the grant continuation year, is it a continuation of time or would there be a re-up for funding for the second year?

Applicants that are awarded the FY26 Whole Child and Educator Wellness Grant and meet all grant requirements and deliverables will be eligible to apply for the FY27 continuation grant. FY26 applicants that were not awarded will be ineligible for the continuation year. Funding after the initial award period is contingent upon funding availability and the grantee's satisfactory implementation of the proposed program. We anticipate that second year funding will be at the same level as FY26 funding.

See 1.2.5 Award Period for requirements.

General Grants Administration Questions

27. When is the deadline for the completed application?

Applications are due no later than Wednesday, Oct. 8, 2025, at 3 p.m. All applications must be submitted through the Enterprise Grants Management System (EGMS). Late applications will not be accepted.

28. Who should applicants contact if they have questions related to this grant?

The authorized contact person for matters related to this grant is:

Kimberly Thompson

Grants Management Analyst

Division of Health and Wellness

(202) 417-1948

KimberlyA.Thompson@dc.gov

