



**THIS DOCUMENT IS INTENDED FOR REVIEW ONLY. APPLICATIONS
MUST BE SUBMITTED USING THE EGMS SYSTEM AT (grants.osse.dc.gov)
WHERE IT WILL BE AVAILABLE ON JUNE 9, 2017**

**Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)
Division of Health and Wellness
Request for Applications (RFA)**

Improving School Climate in DC (ISC-DC) Grant

Announcement Date: June 9, 2017

RFA Release Date: April 14, 2017

Application Submission Deadline: July 21, 2017

**LATE OR INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS
WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.**



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Section I: General Information

Introduction

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), Division of Health and Wellness, is soliciting applications for the Improving School Climate in DC (ISC-DC) grant. The purpose of this grant is to support schools' efforts to complete the remaining components of the Safe School Certification program and implement evidence based programs that meet the requirements of "evidence of promise" as defined by the U.S. Department of Education to improve the teaching and learning environment for students and staff.

Background

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) has partnered with Child Trends, a nonprofit research organization, and Safe School Certification, the non-profit organization that developed and provides the certification for the Safe School Certification framework, to provide technical assistance to select D.C. public schools and D.C. public charter schools under a grant from the National Institute of Justice at the U.S. Department of Justice. This technical assistance aims to help schools complete eight key elements for establishing a safe and supportive school climate including collecting school climate data through school climate surveys developed by the U.S. Department of Education. Researchers and practitioners increasingly recognize that a positive school climate not only enhances students' day-to-day experiences, but also plays a role in improving student achievement. Yet many schools struggle to create a safe and supportive schoolwide climate. Additionally, there is a substantial body of evidence that students of color in particular are disproportionately impacted by issues of school climate.

The Improving School Climate in DC (ISC-DC) project aims to help schools develop and sustain the capacity to improve their climate. By following the Safe School Certification framework, schools are provided assistance in making data-based decisions based on survey data from students, staff and parents. Schools work towards completing flexible benchmarks under each of eight key components of the framework (data, leadership, buy-in, policy enforcement, student engagement, family engagement, programs, and training). The present grant provides schools who have reached the benchmarks for the first of these components (data, leadership, and buy-in) with funding to support the implementation of the remaining components of the framework.

Finally, some components of this project meet requirements of The Youth Suicide Prevention and School Climate Survey Amendment Act (YSPSCA) of 2015 (D.C. Law 21-0120; *see also* D.C. Official Code § 38-2602(b)(27)) which seeks to create safe schools where school staff have the tools to recognize the warning signs and risks factors for youth suicide and implement best practices for suicide prevention, suicide intervention, and suicide post-vention and students can focus on academic achievement in environments conducive for learning.

Intended Population

The intended population for the Improving School Climate in DC (ISC-DC) Grant is:

- The 26 schools that represent the pilot cohort for the program. These schools include a subset of DCPS schools and public charter schools both middle and high schools.
- Only the schools that are currently participating in the project are eligible to apply.
- All participating schools must first successfully pass Checkpoint 1 of the Safe School Certification process before applying.

Pre-Application Question Period

To ensure an equal opportunity for all applicants, OSSE requests that applicants submit questions regarding the Improving School Climate grant electronically to DeMarcus Jenkins, demarcus.jenkins@dc.gov from June 12, 2017 through June 23, 2017 at 4:30 p.m. Questions submitted after this deadline date will not receive responses. Responses to questions will be published on the OSSE webpage on June 28, 2017.

Application Checklist

Applications must meet the following requirements to be eligible for review:

- ☐ All required components of the application are completed.
- ☐ All components of the application have been thoroughly reviewed and signed by the appropriate stakeholders.
- ☐ The completed application must be submitted, including all narrative responses, artifacts and uploaded documents, by or before the deadline.
- ☐ Application include Checkpoint 1 approval document provided by the Certification Advisor Board

Due Date

Applications must be submitted electronically using the EGMS System no later than **July 21, 2017.**

OSSE Contact Information

DeMarcus Jenkins
Education Research Analyst
Division of Health and Wellness
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Government of the District of Columbia
810 First St. NE, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20002
Phone: (202) 322 - 1399
Email: DeMarcus.Jenkins@dc.gov

Section II: Award Information

Award Period

The grant period begins upon date of award notification and ends on **September 30, 2017**

Available Funding

The total amount of anticipated funding available for this award period is \$255,000. Eligible schools may apply for an award amount of up to \$15,000. OSSE anticipates awarding no more than 17 subgrants. All reimbursements will follow OSSE's grant policies and procedures.

Funding Restrictions

Funds must be used to support activities described in the program requirements of this RFA and/or included in the applicant's submission as part of their program plan.

The funds MAY be used for:

- Implementation of programs or practices that meet the criteria for "evidence of promise"¹ as defined by the U.S. Department of Education
- Training related to programs or practices that meet the criteria for "evidence of promise" as defined by the U.S. Department of Education
- Materials and supplies directly related to the implementation of programs or practices that meet the criteria for "evidence of promise" as defined by the U.S. Department of Education.

The funds MAY NOT be used for:

- Travel expenses (ex: hotels, airline tickets, and per diem)
- Food or entertainment
- Instruction or other direct services to students
- Supplanting other funds

Audits

At any time or times before final payment and for three years thereafter, the District and/or the federal government may audit the applicant's expenditure statements and source documentation. The applicant cannot, during the award period, be in violation of any previous grant obligations to the District of Columbia government or a Federal agency.

¹ Evidence of promise (EoP) means there is empirical evidence to support the theoretical linkage(s) between at least one critical component and at least one relevant outcome presented in the logic model for the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice. EoP may be satisfied by identifying at least one correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias. Specifically, the study must find a statistically significant or substantively important (defined as a difference of 0.25 standard deviations or larger), favorable association between at least one critical component and one relevant outcome presented in the logic model for the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice. . See 34 CFR § 77.1

Section III: Eligibility Information

Eligibility

OSSE will accept applications only from the 26 Local Education Agencies and Public Charter Schools with eligible campuses included in the Improving School Climate in DC (ISC-DC) project. Additionally, applications will only be considered for schools that have passed Checkpoint 1 of the Safe School Certification framework, as detailed in the Safe School Certification material and determined by the Certification Advisory Board (CAB). The CAB consists of members from the Mayor's Youth Bullying Prevention Task Force, an appointed body made up of representatives from all youth-serving governmental agencies in DC as well as representatives from local youth-serving non-profits and subject matter experts.

Grant Award Notice and Payment

In order to be awarded an Improving School Climate grant, sub-grantees must establish eligibility by submitting an application to OSSE in accordance with this RFA. Once OSSE has fully approved the application and issued a grant award notification, sub-grantees may then receive payment for allowable expenditures for which obligation was made during the grant period. OSSE has implemented a reimbursement process for all sub-grantees. Grant award payments are reimbursable on a monthly basis. Program costs must be paid by the sub-grantee to the payee prior to requesting reimbursement; it is not sufficient for costs merely to be incurred. Compliance with programmatic and fiscal implementation and reporting will be considered in paying reimbursement requests. To receive reimbursement for grant program expenditures, OSSE sub-grantees must complete and submit the applicable reimbursement workbook/s electronically by the 1st day of each month.

Fiscal Sponsor

If a fiscal sponsor is noted on the application, the fiscal sponsor must be an organization that has 501(c)(3) status and must include its 501(c)(3) determination letter as an attachment to the application.

Section IV: Submission and Application Information

Application Deadline

The RFA was released on April 14, 2017. The deadline for application submission is July 21, 2017 at 3pm.

Submission Requirements

The application must be submitted electronically using the EGMS System which can be accessed here: grants.osse.dc.gov. The required contents are as follows:

Section I: Introduction

- School Background
- Narrative about school community
- Narrative about parent/community organizations (partnerships)
- Current status with the Safe School Certification framework

Section II: Survey Findings

- Key findings from climate survey
- Identified needs and focus area for grant funding

Section III: Proposed Program or Practice

- Description of proposed program or practice
- Program Alignment to Identified Needs in Data and Expected Outcomes
- Clearly defined logic model or theory of change
- Demonstrated evidence linking proposed program or practice to expected outcomes
- Alignment to the Safe School Certification Framework
- Budget
- Timeline

Section V: Program Requirements

General Program Requirements

The purpose of the Improving School Climate grant is to support schools' efforts to complete the remaining components of the Safe School Certification program and implement evidence based programs that meet the requirements of "evidence of promise" as defined by the U.S. Department of Education to improve the teaching and learning environment for students and staff.

Grantees will be required to complete the following required activities:

- Participating in the Safe School Certification program, regardless of assignment to basic or enhanced supports.
- Participating in the Safe School Certification program, regardless of the amount of grant funds.
- Participating in all data collection activities related to this program, including:
 - Annual collections of school climate surveys from students, parents, and staff conducted by OSSE
 - Semi-annual observations of classrooms using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) conducted by Child Trends
 - Implementation evaluation activities including observations, interviews, and surveys conducted by Child Trends
- Notifying DeMarcus Jenkins at demarcus.jenkins@dc.gov of any changes in project point of contact.

Section VI: Review Process and Application Scoring

Review Process

Applications will be screened initially by Certification Advisory Board (CAB) to determine whether all application and eligibility requirements have been met. Applications will be reviewed following review of submitted workbooks for Checkpoint 1 of the Safe School Certification framework. The CAB consists of members from the Mayor's Youth Bullying Prevention Task Force, an appointed body made up of representatives from all youth-serving governmental agencies in DC as well as representatives from local youth-serving non-profits and subject matter experts. Only applications that meet all eligibility and application requirements will be evaluated, scored, and rated by the CAB. Scoring and recommendations of the review panel are advisory only. The final decision to award an Improving School Climate grant rests solely with OSSE. After reviewing the recommendations of the review panel and any other information considered relevant, OSSE shall decide which applicants to fund, as well as the funding amount.

Application Criteria and Scoring

All applications that meet the application criteria will be reviewed and scored by an external review panel using the following criteria:

| Criteria | Points |
|--|---------------|
| <i>Project Vision and Implementation</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applicant provides a short narrative of current state of school climate, including obstacles that exists. 2. Applicant provides a clear implementation plan, including a timeline, for the project. 3. Applicant anticipates challenges and has a plan in place to overcome these challenges. 4. Applicant has clearly described the purpose and intended uses of the funds including the connection to the school climate data and intended outcomes. | 20 |
| <i>Survey Findings</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applicant clearly identified key findings including strengths and opportunities for improvements from the data provided. | 20 |
| <i>Linkages between Data, Program, and Outcomes</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant clearly describes the proposed program or practice. 2. The applicant provides a clear logic model or theory of change linking the identified program or practice to needs highlighted in survey data and to expected outcomes. 3. The applicant provides sufficient evidence to demonstrate the program meets criteria for “evidence of promise.” 4. The applicant clearly describes how the proposed program or practice aligns with the Safe School Certification framework. 5. The applicant provides specific examples of how the school community, especially classroom teachers and school staff, will be involved in sustaining the school improvement efforts. | 30 |
| <i>Cost-Effectiveness of Budget</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applicant is clear about how proposed costs were determined and steps were taken to ensure the project is cost-effective. 2. All proposed costs are essential to the success of the project and are clearly related to the vision and implementation plan of the project. 3. All proposed costs are allowable as defined in the RFA. | 30 |

Description of Scoring

The criteria above will be scored using the following indicators:

- Missing: The category is not addressed.
- Does Not Meet Expectations: The applicant is missing a very large portion of the category, fails to provide information, provides inaccurate information, or provides information that is not discernible.

- Working Towards Expectations: The applicant provides unclear and non-specific information, partially addresses the category, but provides limited information about approach and strategies. The answers lack focus and detail.
- Meets Expectations: The applicant provides general but sufficient detail, adequately addresses the category, however some areas are not fully explained and/or questions remain. The application has some minor inconsistencies and weaknesses.
- Exceeds: The applicant provides specific and comprehensive information, and provides complete, detailed, and clearly articulated responses to address the category. The description is well-conceived and the ideas are fully developed and original.

Section VII: Award Administration

Decision and Notifications of Awards

The CAB reviews all applications for grant funds in accordance with DC competitive funding regulations. OSSE will notify all applicants of the final award decision in the Fall following the closing of the application. Each awarded applicant will receive a grant award notice (GAN) that will include the award amount, award agreement, terms and conditions of the award, and any supplemental information required.

Monitoring

The grant recipient's effectiveness is determined based upon the following information:

- Site Visit documentation including Site Visit Form.
- Responsiveness to requests and inquiries from OSSE.

Corrective Action and Termination of Funding

In the event that programmatic, financial, or documentation conditions of the grant are not being met in an appropriate and timely fashion, progressive actions will be taken, at the discretion of OSSE, up to and including the termination of funding. A project which is terminated will be subject to the same requirements regarding audit, recordkeeping, and submission of reports as a project which runs for the duration of the project period.

Confidentiality

Except as otherwise provided by local or federal law, no recipient of an Improving School Climate grant shall use or reveal any research, statistical, or personally identifiable information for any purpose other than that for which such information was obtained in accordance with the ISC program. Such information, and any copy of such information shall be immune from legal process and shall not, without the consent of the person furnishing such information, be admitted as evidence or used for any purpose in any action, suit, or judicial, legislative, or administrative proceeding.

Terms and Conditions

- OSSE reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if the agency determines it is in the best interest of the agency to do so. OSSE shall notify the applicant if it rejects that applicant's proposal. OSSE may suspend or terminate an outstanding RFA pursuant to its own grant making rule(s) or any applicable regulation or requirement.
- OSSE reserves the right to issue addenda and/or amendments subsequent to the issuance of the RFA, or to rescind the RFA.
- OSSE shall not be liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of applications in response to the RFA. Applicant agrees that all costs incurred in developing the application are the applicant's sole responsibility.
- OSSE may conduct pre-award on-site visits to verify information submitted in the application and to determine if the applicant's facilities are appropriate for the services intended.
- OSSE may enter into negotiations with an applicant and adopt a firm funding amount or other revision of the applicant's proposal that may result from negotiations.
- OSSE shall provide the citations to the statute and implementing regulations that authorize the grant or sub grant; all applicable federal and District regulations, payment provisions identifying how the grantee will be paid for performing under the award; reporting requirements, including programmatic, financial and any special reports required by OSSE; and compliance conditions that must be met by the grantee.
- If there are any conflicts between the terms and conditions of the RFA and any applicable federal or local law or regulation, or any ambiguity related thereto, then the provisions of the applicable law or regulation shall control and it shall be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

Assurances

Program Specific Assurances

Applicants will be required to attest to the following program specific assurances:

1. Our fiscal records are kept in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and account for all funds, tangible assets, revenue, and expenditures whatsoever; that all fiscal records are accurate, complete and current at all times; and we give the sponsoring agency through any authorized representative, the right to audit and inspect all records, books, papers, or documents related to the grant;
2. We are current on payment on all federal and District taxes, including Unemployment Insurance taxes and Workers' Compensating premiums. (Except for public or charter schools, this statement of certification shall be accompanied by a Certificate of Good standing from the District of Columbia Office of Tax & Revenue (OTR) stating that the entity has complied with the filing requirements

- of District of Columbia tax laws and has paid taxes due to the District of Columbia, or is in compliance with any payment agreement with OTR);
3. We have demonstrated administrative and financial capability to provide and manage the proposed services and ensure an adequate administrative performance and audit trail;
 4. We are not proposed for debarment or presently debarred, suspended, or declared ineligible, as required by Executive Order 12549, "Debarment and Suspension," and implemented by 2 CFR 180, for prospective participants in primary covered transactions and are not proposed for debarment or presently debarred as a result of any actions by the District of Columbia Contract Appeals Board, the Office of Contracting and Procurement, or any other District contract regulating Agency;
 5. We have the financial resources and technical expertise necessary to perform the grant or sub grant, or the ability to obtain them;
 6. We will insure that the facilities under our school or organization's ownership, lease or supervision, which shall be utilized in the accomplishment of the project are compliant with all District statutes, codes, and regulations;
 7. We will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that is or gives the appearance of being motivated by a desire for private gain for themselves or others, particularly with whom they have family, business, or other ties.

Acknowledgement Assurances

Applicants will be required to acknowledge compliance with the following applicable District and Federal statutes and regulations:

1. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L. 101-336, July 26, 1990, 104 Stat. 327 (42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.)
2. Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Pub. L. 93-112, Sept. 26, 1973, 87 Stat. 355 (29 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.)
3. The Hatch Act, Chap. 314, 24 Stat. 440 (7 U.S.C. § 361a et seq.)
4. The Fair Labor Standards Act, Chap 676, 52 Stat, 1060 (29 U.S.C. § 201 et seq.)
5. The Clean Air Act (Sub grants over 41000,000) pub. L. 108-201, February 24, 2004, (42 U.S.C. Chap 85 et seq.)
6. The Hobbs Act (Anti-Corruption), Chap 537, 60 St. 420 (see 18 U.S.C. § 1951)
7. Equal Pay Act of 1963, Pub. L. 88-38, June 10, 1963, 77 Stat. 56 (29 U.S.C. § 201)
8. Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Pub. L. 94-135, Nov. 28, 1975, 89 Stat. 728 (42 U.S.C. § 6101 et seq.)
9. Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Pub. L. 90-202, Dec. 15, 1967, 81 Stat. 602 (29 U.S.C. § 621 et seq.)
10. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Pub. L. 92-318, June 23, 1972, 86 Stat. 235, (20 U.S.C. § 1001)
11. Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, Pub. L. 99-603, Nov 6, 1986, 100 Stat. 3359, (8 U.S.C. § 1101)
12. Executive Order 12459 (Debarment, Suspension and Exclusion)

13. Medical Leave Act of 1993, Pub. L. 103-3, Feb. 5, 1993, 107 Stat. 6 (5 U.S.C. § 6381 et seq.)
14. Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988, Pub. L. 100-690, 102 Stat. 4304 (41 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.)
15. Assurance of Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity as found in 29 CFR § 34.20
16. District of Columbia Human Rights Act of 1977, D.C. Official Code § 2-1401.01
17. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
18. District of Columbia Language Access Act of 2004, DC Law 15 -414, (D.C. Official Code § 2-1931 et seq.)
19. Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, Pub. L. 104-65, Dec 19, 1995, 109 Stat. 693, (31 U.S.C. § 1352)