Stronger Connections Grant
BIPARTISAN SAFER COMMUNITIES ACT (BSCA)

SEC. 4108. [20 U.S.C. 7118] ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT SAFE AND HEALTH STUDENTS

Review for a list of allowable programs and activities.

What can be purchased with this grant?

Activities, programs, and materials necessary to implement the project as requested in the LEA's approved plan to address the school community's physical and psychological safety and health needs.

Can we hire staff?

Yes. Staff paid with BSCA funds must directly address the safety and health needs of students and the school community and must be appropriately licensed or certified.

What would be considered "high need".

Based on the Request for Application (RFA), the applicant would need to determine which or both high need category they meet.

Per the RFA:

Priority of the Stronger Connections Grant (SGC) funds will be given to “high need” LEAs. Kansas has defined “high need” LEAs, based on ED Guidance, as an LEA having:

- A high rate of poverty, as demonstrated when 40 percent or more of the student population is at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level or qualifies for the free/reduced lunch program.
- A high rate of exclusionary discipline, as demonstrated by local data. “Exclusionary discipline” is any type of school disciplinary action that removes or excludes students from their usual educational setting. Examples could include but are not limited to: expulsions, in or out-of-school suspensions, transfer to alternative school, temporary removal from classroom, and/or occurrences of seclusion and restraint.

Does the Poverty percent have to be for the district, or can it be for an individual school within our district?

The percentage of students in poverty, as measured at the LEA is used to determine eligibility due to poverty.

Can a school district purchase a weapon for the SRO or Security Guard?

No. BSCA funds may not be used to purchase a dangerous weapon or for training in the use of a dangerous weapon, which is prohibited under section 13401 of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, which amends 8526 of ESEA.

What about building a safe room?

Construction or building modifications of any type is not an allowable activity under BSCA.
FAQ: STRONGER CONNECTIONS GRANT

Are mental health first aid and prevention/intervention training for members of the school community allowable?
Yes, program costs that educate and provide mental health awareness and increase practice skills among students, staff, families, and community members in behavioral and mental health are allowable.

Can a school send staff to national conferences?
Yes. The conference content must align with safe and healthy activities and align with addressing stated needs. The LEA should outline how participants will relate the training back to staff post-conference.

Can there be a combination of programming – i.e., counseling, SEL programming, and mentoring, blended together in the grant process?
The grant allows for multiple approaches to meeting the needs of the students. A combination of programming is acceptable.

Can you clarify whether a Cooperative is an “LEA” for purpose of this grant, if it can establish that the communities served by grant activities meet the eligibility criteria?
All Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are eligible, including properly registered and incorporated Special Education Cooperatives, Interlocal Agencies, and State Schools. Please contact KSDE if you are unsure if your entity qualifies.

For additional information on frequently asked questions for both SEA and LEA, review the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, Stronger Connections Grant FAQ.

For more information, contact:

Stronger Connections
Special Education and Title Services
strongerconnections@ksde.org

Kansas State Department of Education
900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212
www.ksde.org

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