FUNDED

THE AMERICAS

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Title Funding Reimagined

Also: More on Congressional Earmarks; Funding for Education, Telehealth, Rural Utilities, and Cybersecurity; and A Look at the Funding Landscapes in Canada, Mexico, and Brazil.

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In This Issue

Letter From the Editor

Living up to its name, this issue of *FUNDED The Americas* provides funding tips and insights across two continents, including grant opportunities in the USA, Canada, Mexico, and Brazil. Of course, the funding landscape varies country by country, but that's what Grants Office is here to help you sort out – whether you're working to find funding for a local project in Topeka or more interested in what's available for Alberta, Ensenada, or Rio de Janeiro.

Education and cybersecurity – two hot topics in today's environment – make up the bulk of our discussion this issue, beginning with Christina Fernandez describing an insightful new way of looking at the broader applications of education title funding. Looking forward, Liz Shay provides some tip on preparing for the upcoming year's education funding landscape (once a federal budget is passed), and Sam Rawdon takes us on a deeper dive into funding for preventing school violence. Last but certainly not least, Meghan Jacobsen runs through several programs that fund libraries, along with examples of how these funds can be applied.

On the cybersecurity front, Amanda Day offers an update on where we are with cybersecurity funding from the "Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal" (IIJA) as well as several other good cyber-funding programs, and Joseph Phelan highlights funding specific to cybersecurity for rural and municipal utilities.

History really does often repeat itself, and seeing that play out in the funding arena, Shannon Day brings us back into the mode of thinking about congressional earmarks ("pork" funding) as a newly relevant avenue for funding a wide variety of projects, especially those for which the catalog of existing grants doesn't quite fit.

Broadening our scope beyond the borders of the US, Stephanie Cesar has written a great description of the massive Canadian Green Municipal Fund. From her office in Mexico, Irais Arenas highlights several federal programs aimed at improving infrastructure and technology throughout the country. And Nátali Bahena Benck discusses new and expanded opportunities for healthcare funding available from Brazil's National Health Fund.

Be sure to check out the other timely and informative *Grantscasts* our team will be presenting on or review the replays of past events on topics you find interesting. As always, if you have comments, feedback, corrections, or topics for future issues, feel free to drop me a line at: mpaddock@grantsoffice.com.

I hope you enjoy this issue of FUNDED as much as we have enjoyed bringing it to you!

Sincerely,

Michael Paddock
Editor and Publisher,
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in Grants Office

Program Snapshot

Computer Science for All (CS For All)

SUMMARY

Computer Science for All is a bold initiative to empower all American students from kindergarten through high school to learn computer science and be equipped with the computational thinking skills they need to be creators in the digital economy. A key goal of this program is to provide all U.S. students the opportunity to participate in computer science (CS) and computational thinking (CT) education in their schools at the preK-12 levels. CT refers to the thought processes involved in formulating problems and their solutions in such a way that the solutions can be effectively carried out by an information-processing agent (usually a computer).

This program supports researcher-practitioner partnerships (RPPs) and research with the goal of building knowledge from research and development to support providing opportunities for all students to participate in CS and CT formal STEM learning at the elementary, middle, and high school grade levels. Proposals will be funded in four strands that foster design, implementation at scale, and research. RPP Strands include:

- For the high school strand, the focus is on preparing and supporting teachers to teach rigorous CS courses;
- For the preK-8 strand, the focus is on designing, developing, and piloting instructional materials that integrate CS and CT into preK-8 classrooms; and
- For preK-12 or preK-14 pathways strand, the focus is on designing pathways that support school districts in developing policies and supports for incorporating CS and CT across all grades and potentially into introductory levels at community or four-year colleges and universities.

In order to ensure that advances in computing education are inclusive of our diverse student populations, proposals on any strand must address, in a significant manner, longstanding underrepresentation in computing. Groups traditionally underrepresented or underserved in computing include women, persons with disabilities, African Americans/Blacks, Hispanic Americans, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Native Pacific Islanders, and persons from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants are (1) Universities and Colleges; (2) Non-profit, non-academic organizations; (3) For-profit organizations; (4) State and Local Governments; (5) Unaffiliated Individuals; (6) Foreign organizations; and (6) Other Federal agencies.

DEADLINE

Applications are to be submitted by February 14, 2024. A similar deadline is anticipated annually.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/computer-science-all-csforall-research-rpps

Funded Project Highlight

Computer Science for All (CS For All)

FUNDED ORGANIZATION

The University of Washington

PROJECT TITLE

Justice-Focused Secondary CS Teacher Education

AMOUNT FUNDED

$1,247,667

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The University of Washington will lead a researcher-practitioner partnership that leverages the team's joint expertise in computer science (CS) education research, justice-focused secondary teacher education, high school CS teaching, RPP leadership, academic program administration, and community organizing to design, launch, and sustain a new justice-focused secondary CS teacher education program to serve the Puget Sound region's high schools.

University of Washington proposes to design, launch, and sustain a new justice-focused secondary CS teacher education program to serve the region's high schools. The RPP has the shared goal of preparing secondary CS teachers who can empower all youth to bend computing toward justice. This goal is achieved through deeper engagement in two forms. First, teachers must have the content knowledge (CK) that while computing can amplify social change, it can also amplify injustice. Teachers must see that computing can rely on biased data; that algorithms can make unjust assumptions about identity; that people in power are increasingly delegating to algorithms decisions such as who is policed and how long someone goes to prison. Second, teachers must have pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) that how one teaches CS determines which students learn and what students choose to do with their CS knowledge. By reconceptualizing CS CK and PCK in terms of justice, CS education has the power to broaden participation in CS, but also broaden civic discourse on the role of computing in society. The project team will collaboratively write with teachers a new justice-focused CS teacher education book that is free, online, and accessible, reframing CS content knowledge in the CSTA standards in justice terms.

With this book, they will co-design with teachers four new CS teacher education courses on CS teaching methods, CS assessment, CS justice and equity, and a CS teaching field experience. Finally, they plan to pilot and launch the program, attracting both pre-service and in-service teachers, and sustaining their roles as CS teachers through a vibrant community of justice-focused CS educators.

FOR MORE AWARD INFORMATION

https://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/showAward?AWD_ID=2031265&HistoricalAwards=false

ORGANIZATION WEBSITE

https://www.washington.edu/

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Title Funding Reimagined

Christina Fernandez, Grants Development Consultant (K-12 Education)

The federal government plays a crucial role in supporting elementary and secondary education in the United States through various funding programs. The largest source of federal education programs is the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. ESSA provides two types of funding- formula and competitive. Formula funds are administered annually by State Education Agencies (SEA) to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) based on a unique Title formula. Title formula funding is meant to supplement state funding and help close the achievement gap for disadvantaged students.

Among all of the title programs that are housed within the ESSA, this article will focus on Title I Part A, Title II Part A, and Title IV Part A, as these programs are significant sources of financial assistance for elementary and secondary schools. Each of these titles serves a distinct purpose and targets specific areas of need within the education system. We will explore the differences between these titles, how schools are utilizing these funds, and ways to reimagine these funds to include technology that improves educational outcomes.

DIFFERENT TITLE FUNDING BUCKETS:

Title I part A (Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Education Agencies) is the most widely used federal formula program for K12 school districts. The purpose of this fund is to help students who are failing or who are at most risk of failing to meet state academic achievement standards. An LEA's Title I allocation is the sum of four statutory formulas: Basic, Concentrated, Targeted, and Education Finance Incentive Grants. These formulas are primarily based on census poverty LEA data and the cost of education in each state. Title I schools with a student population of at least 40% from low-income families may use these funds to operate a school-wide initiative to upgrade their instructional programs to serve all students, thus raising the achievement of the lowest-achieving students. Schools with less than the 40% threshold, or that choose not to

operate a schoolwide program, may offer a targeted assistance program in which the school identifies the most at-risk students and designs an instructional program to meet their specific needs. LEAs must also use a portion of their Title I funds to provide academic enrichment services to eligible children enrolled in private schools.

Title II part A (Supporting Effective Instruction) focuses on improving the quality of educators, principals, and other school leaders to increase student achievement consistent with state academic standards. This funding bucket aims to increase the number of qualified educators through personalized professional development, recruitment, and retention efforts for the purpose of reducing class sizes and increasing student achievement.

Title IV part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment) is aimed at promoting well-rounded education and safe and healthy schools. The main purpose of Title IV Part A is to improve student academic achievement in three areas: (1) provide all students with access to a well-rounded education, (2) improve school conditions for student learning, and (3) improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy for all students. States allocate these funds to LEAs in proportion to their prior-year Title I, Part A allocations. If approved, LEAs will receive a minimum of $10,000. LEAs receiving more than $30,000 must conduct a comprehensive needs assessment and use 20% of funding for well-rounded education activities and 20% on safe and healthy school activities. 15% of the remaining funds may be used to support technology.

THE MOST COMMON WAYS SCHOOLS ARE UTILIZING TITLE FUNDING

Not every school utilizes their title funding in the same way, however, these are the most common ways schools are using their allocations:

Title I part A funding:

- Additional Support Personnel: Many schools hire additional teachers, instructional aides, and support staff to provide targeted assistance to students who are struggling academically.
- Intervention Programs: Title I funds are frequently allocated to implement intervention programs such as one-on-one tutoring, after-school programs, and summer school to help at-risk students catch up to their peers.
- Professional Development: Teachers and staff often receive professional development opportunities to enhance their skills in working with disadvantaged students.
- Parent and Family Engagement: Schools use Title I funds to foster stronger partnerships with parents and families, organizing workshops and activities that support students' learning at home.

Title II Part A funding:

- Professional Development: Title II supports ongoing professional development for teachers and principals, helping them stay current with best practices and educational trends.

- Recruitment: Funds are used to attract highly qualified educators, especially in subjects or geographic areas with teacher shortages.
- Diversity Initiatives: Some schools use Title II funds to promote diversity within the teaching workforce, aiming to reflect the demographics of their student body.

Title IV, Part A Funding: Student Support and Academic Enrichment

- Curriculum Resources: Schools purchase instructional materials, technology, and resources to support a well-rounded education, including subjects such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and the arts.
- Mental Health Services: Funding is allocated to provide students with access to mental health services and support addressing their social and emotional needs.
- Safe and Healthy Schools: Not only is this a requirement under this program but also a common theme we see in other state and federal opportunities. Schools are utilizing this funding for programming and initiatives that create safe and supportive school environments, including bullying prevention and school safety measures.

Technology plays a fundamental role in teaching and learning.

REIMAGINING TITLE FUNDING TO SUPPORT EVOLVING TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

There is no doubt that title funding is an integral part of every school's budget. Due to their consistent nature, these programs are routinely being used the same way each year. As we move into an increasingly digital world, it is imperative that schools start reassessing their title funds to address these immediate technology needs.

While at its core, Title I funds must be used to support at-risk student populations, they can also be used to fund some of your technology needs, for example, creating and managing online resources. Investing in high-quality educational software, digital textbooks, and online resources can significantly benefit students in Title I schools. These resources can be personalized to address individual learning needs and offer tailored support for at-risk students. As you begin integrating more technology into your classrooms, you can also allocate a portion of your Title I Part A funds to train teachers on that technology. Equipping educators with the skills to effectively use technology can greatly enhance the quality of instruction.

Though Title II primarily focuses on enhancing teacher quality through professional development, technology can be integrated to support these initiatives. Schools can allocate Title II Part A funding to provide teachers with training in educational technology. This includes workshops, courses, and certifications that empower educators to effectively utilize digital tools in their classrooms, providing an enhanced learning experience for their students. Schools can also utilize these funds to foster collaboration among educators, community members, and families. This enhanced collaboration enabled by technology may offer access to instructional materials as well as the resources and tools to create, manage, and assess their quality and usefulness, benefitting both their professional growth and student learning outcomes.

The most technological forward program is the Title IV part A, which provides schools with the flexibility to address a wide range of needs. This funding source can be creatively leveraged to enhance technology integration through initiatives like 1:1 Device programs for hybrid or distance learning. Also, subject to the special 15% rule, LEAs could purchase high-quality digital curriculum materials that align with their educational goals and standards.

CONCLUSION

Title I, Title II, and Title IV Part A are essential funding sources that help elementary and secondary schools address specific needs and challenges. By utilizing these federal funds strategically, schools can enhance the quality of education and create a more equitable and inclusive learning environment for all students. Even if a district is already using its title funds in these ways, it is important to periodically assess your funding needs to meet new demands.

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- 2 writing samples (preferably narratives from successfully funded projects

Cybersecurity Funding from the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA): Where are we now?

Amanda Day, Grants Development Consultant (State and Local Government)

On November 6, 2021, the U.S. Congress passed the **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)**. The IIJA is sometimes referred to as the "Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal" because it was supported by both Democrats and Republicans in Congress. A total of $1.2 trillion in funding was made available for nearly 400 new and existing programs. This legislation supports various infrastructure-related programs and projects like transportation, clean water, broadband, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure, among other initiatives. Included in the IIJA are grants aimed at improving the cybersecurity posture of state, local, and tribal governments.

Cybersecurity attacks continue to increase and can compromise sensitive data and cause disruptions in critical government functions, education, utilities, and transportation infrastructure. For entities looking to improve their cybersecurity, the IIJA has created several cybersecurity-focused programs to offset the cost of implementing necessary hardware and software. However, cybersecurity is not just about the technology involved; included in the IIJA is funding for workforce cybersecurity training. A skilled and knowledgeable workforce is essential to the success of implemented cybersecurity protections.

There are three main cybersecurity funding programs: The State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCG), the Tribal Cybersecurity Program (TCGP), and the Rural and Municipal Utility Advanced Cybersecurity Grant (RMUC).

The **State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP)** is a four-year program that will provide state and local governments with $1 billion in funding for cybersecurity and cybersecurity training. Administered by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), grant funds will be used to improve the nation's cybersecurity posture and protect critical infrastructure from malware, ransomware, and other threats.

The SLCGP Objectives are:
1. Develop and establish appropriate governance structures
2. Assess and evaluate cybersecurity needs
3. Implement security protections
4. Develop a workforce trained in cybersecurity

IIJA allocated funds are available to 56 states and territories from 2022-2025. In turn, states and territories must pass down 80% of these funds to local applicants, 25% of which must go to rural areas of the state. Eligible sub-applicants to the SLCGP include counties, municipalities, public school districts, and Tribal governments. States have the flexibility to decide whether to subgrant funds directly to eligible local entities or to spend the funds at the state level on behalf of local governments, essentially, making "bulk" purchases. By making bulk purchases, states can often negotiate better prices from vendors. This allows them to stretch the allocated funds further and potentially get more value from their yearly grant awards.

States and territories applied for the first year of funds in November of 2022. Along with the application for funding , states were also required to form a Cybersecurity Planning Committee to create and submit a cybersecurity plan to the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). The Planning Committee is also responsible for developing, implementing, and revising Cybersecurity Plans. The deadline for states to submit completed plans was September 30, 2023. After the application to DHS is approved and CISA approves the cybersecurity plan, funds will be released to the state. Deadlines for local applicants will vary by state as each creates its own SLCGP grant program. Several states have already announced the notice of funding for the FY22 funds, including Georgia, Oklahoma, Washington, New Jersey, and Colorado. In these states, interested applicants can find details about available funding opportunities and application procedures on their respective state government websites. The application deadline for states and territories to apply for FY23 funds was October 6th. To date, the state of Kentucky is the only state to open both application windows.

Announced with the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP) is the **Tribal Cybersecurity Grant Program (TCGP)**. The primary focus of the TCGP is to strengthen the cybersecurity practices and resilience of tribal governments. Over the next four years, a total of $30 million will be available to Native American Tribes and Alaska Natives. For this notice of funding, years one and two have been combined into a total of $18.2 million. Tribal governments have until January 10, 2024, to complete the required cybersecurity plan and DHS application.

The final cybersecurity-focused grant opportunity is the **Rural and Municipal Utility Advanced Cybersecurity Grant and Technical Assistance Program (RMUC)**. The RMUC is administered by the U.S. Department of Energy (DoE) and provides financial and technical support to municipal and rural electric utilities, recognizing the role they play in providing essential services to communities. Cybersecurity is crucial in these sectors as disruptions could impact the public safety and well-being of citizens. Over five years, a total of $250 million in funding will aid electric utilities in improving incident response, enhancing workforce cybersecurity skills, and strengthening infrastructure. The RMUC program will be implemented in three phases: the Commitment Phase, Planning Phase, and Implementation Phase. The deadline for the first phase of this program is November 29, 2023. Future deadlines will be announced in future months.

With this unprecedented funding in cybersecurity, the federal government is acknowledging that there is an increasing need for enhanced cybersecurity measures. The goal of this funding is to bolster defenses against two key adversaries: hackers and cyber-criminals:

- Hackers can include state-sponsored actors, and others who aim to breach systems for various purposes.
- Cyber-criminals engage in illegal activities, such as data theft and ransomware attacks for financial gain.

Cybersecurity is an ongoing process that requires continuous monitoring and adaptation to new threats. These historic investments are critical for safeguarding national security, public safety, the protection of our digital infrastructure, and represent a significant step in enhancing protections, securing data, and preventing cyber-attacks from foreign and domestic sources.

Program Snapshot

Rural and Municipal Utility Advanced Cybersecurity Grant

SUMMARY

The Department of Energy will establish the Rural and Municipal Utility Advanced Cybersecurity Grant and Technical Assistance Program to provide grants and technical assistance to, and enter into cooperative agreements with, eligible entities to protect against, detect, respond to, and recover from cybersecurity threats. The objectives of the program are:

- to deploy advanced cybersecurity technologies for electric utility systems
- to increase the participation of eligible entities in cybersecurity threat information sharing programs

This three-phase competition will challenge eligible utilities to identify risks and implement solutions to harden their systems against threats and improve their overall cybersecurity posture.

ACT 1 Prize 2023 (Phase 1): The ACT 1 Prize, announced August 30, 2023, is the first in a series of Prizes that will be offered under the RMUC Program. Competitors will have an opportunity to prepare submission packages that describe their resources, the need for improving their utility's cybersecurity posture, and their commitment to participating in the ACT 1 Prize. Winning utilities in the Commitment Phase will receive cash prizes and technical assistance based on their commitment to improving their utility's cybersecurity posture through investments in cybersecurity technologies, staff training, and improvements to governance processes.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants are rural electric cooperatives; utilities owned by political subdivisions; utilities owned by any agency, authority, corporation, or instrumentality of one or more political subdivisions; not-for-profit entities that are in a partnership with at least six entities described; or investor-owned electric utilities that sell fewer than 4,000,000 megawatt hours of electricity per year

DEADLINE

Applications are to be submitted by November 29, 2023. A similar deadline is anticipated annually.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://www.energy.gov/ceser/rural-and-municipal-utility-advances-cybersecurity-grant-and-technical-assistance-program

Grants Office launches the first edition of "The Global Grant Funding Landscape, 2023-2025", written by our global team of grants intelligence experts.

This analysis aims to provide business, government, and institutional leaders with a broader recognition and appreciation for the global outlook of grant funding in the years ahead.

INSIGHTS TO BE GAINED:

- How much grant funding is available around the world?
- What countries have the most money available?
- What organizations are receiving and spending these grant dollars?
- What is the source of these grant dollars in each country?
- How much funding is available through short-term stimulus packages and how much will continue beyond 2025?

Full analysis and additional resources available HERE.

Telehealth: The Future of Funding after COVID-19

Lynnette Cale, Grants Development Consultant (Healthcare)

Telehealth has been around for years, but COVID-19 necessitated the use of telehealth services. Before the pandemic, telehealth was not readily accepted by patients, doctors, administrators, insurance companies, and healthcare regulators. With the advancement of technology, a shortage of healthcare providers, practical experience, demonstrated benefits, and increasing acceptance of telehealth by patients and providers, telehealth and its benefits are here to stay.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently took several steps to extend temporary Medicare changes enabling telehealth coverage through December 31, 2024, and made additional Medicare provisions permanent for telehealth. Adding avenues to bill for telehealth, integration into Electronic Medical Record systems, advancement of technology, and expansion of telehealth into new and growing fields will also continue to pave the way for widespread telehealth acceptance. Telehealth enables providers to better serve patients in shortage areas, rural areas, and patients in need of specialty care. Not only does telehealth help improve and save patients' lives, it also helps reduce healthcare costs by decreasing costly travel for patients and providers, reducing the costs associated with delaying care, and increasing access to specialty providers.

New areas of telehealth continue to be explored including primary care, home health, tele-psychiatry, tele-stroke, tele-radiology, and tele-cardiology. The field is expected to continue to grow as acceptance, technology, and billing improve. COVID-19 provided the necessary funds and regulation changes for this momentum. As funding and emergency declarations have been phased out, future funding will be needed to continue to keep up with evolving technology, aging equipment, and obsolete software. Telehealth as a billable service will provide some revenue; however, grant funding such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development **Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT)** grant, USDA **Rural Development Community Facilities** grant, and the HRSA **Evidence-Based Telehealth Network Grant Program (EB THNP)** are expected to open in late fall/early winter 2023 and continue to provide additional funding opportunities beyond COVID-19 and American Rescue 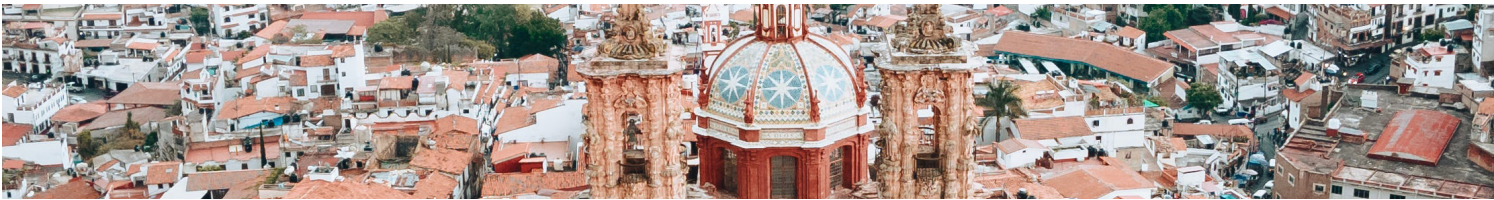Plan funding. Nonprofit entities, especially rural providers or urban/rural partnerships, and specialty areas such as school health, maternal health, and mental/behavioral health are seeing grant funding opportunities at the federal and some state levels. Incorporating telehealth into other grant projects as a way to serve underserved, minority, rural, or expand reach to a larger population such as regional care, networking, or partnerships. Telehealth and funding opportunities can help facilitate care coordination across providers from healthcare to mental and behavioral health to schools and caregivers. Current and future funding opportunities also include innovative and out-of-the-box applications, research, and partnerships with higher education and research facilities. As telehealth grows, so will the opportunities for use and funding.

Healthcare providers and partners need to plan for this technology now and in the future. New advancements and opportunities will arise as use and acceptance grow. Equipment and software bought during the pandemic will quickly become outdated and need to be replaced, updated, and upgraded. Planning for these costs and continuously looking for funding opportunities and growth potential will allow providers and partners to continue to offer telehealth services and grow in the coming years. Telehealth is here to stay, are you ready?

Transforming Mexico: Federal Programs Pioneering Infrastructure and Technology Advancements

Irais Arenas, Grants Development Consultant (Mexico)

Mexico is currently undergoing a significant transformation, with federal programs leading the way for modernized infrastructure and the implementation of new technologies across multiple sectors. With significant investments in roads, railways, ports, telecommunications, and urban development, Mexican society stands to benefit greatly while unlocking significant economic potential.

One standout initiative that is driving this transformation is the Mayan Train, set to span over 1,500 kilometers across the Yucatán peninsula. The aim is to encourage socioeconomic development and sustainably connect tourist destinations, providing an alternative to higher-carbon modes of transport such as air travel and private vehicles. Advanced construction techniques are being employed to minimize the disruption of sensitive environmental areas and archaeological sites.

Another program revolutionizing Mexico's logistics capabilities is the federal **Ports Modernization Program**. With massive upgrades being made to strategic ports like Veracruz and Manzanillo, productivity, storage capacity, and intelligent technology integration are all being boosted. This will enhance Mexico's status as a global trade hub, allowing for an increased volume of imports and exports to pass through modernized facilities.

The federal government is also addressing infrastructure gaps with bold new projects. The Interoceanic Corridor in Veracruz will facilitate multimodal transportation across 210 kilometers, including a six-lane highway and railway. The new Felipe Ángeles International Airport near Mexico City is an architectural and engineering marvel implementing cutting-edge air traffic control, passenger processing, and sustainability systems.

Advanced technology is also being deployed to modernize the energy and telecommunications sectors. The **National Electric System Development Program** utilizes intelligent grid technology to balance clean energy supply and demand. Federal Electricity Commission substations are being automated to enable remote monitoring and operation. Mexico's shared networks project drives mobile broadband connectivity by allowing multiple providers to use the same infrastructure through shared access.

On the urban development front, federal programs like **Mexico's Urban Improvement Program (PMU)** provide matching funds to municipalities for local infrastructure projects to revitalize public spaces. The PMU has backed over 27,000 initiatives in 2,200 municipalities nationwide, benefiting millions of residents. In 2023 alone, the program has a budget of 6 billion pesos (approx. $300 million USD). The PMU's objectives are to improve public services, mobility, and overall quality of life in cities across Mexico. The program funds urban infrastructure projects like paving streets, rehabilitating public spaces, restoring historic city centers, and building or renovating markets, among others.

Challenges include the containment of costs and responding to local opposition to infrastructure and technology projects, however, the pioneering vision behind Mexico's ambitious programs should not be underestimated. They signal national development priorities and a commitment to inclusive growth that unlocks economic potential.

The Mayan Train itself has faced some local resistance and environmental concerns. Yet, it moves forward to realize Mexico's sustainable tourism ambitions. The upgraded seaports strengthen an economy deeply integrated into global value chains. Rural broadband connectivity can bring information to marginalized communities.

Urban revitalization programs give local leaders resources to address pressing quality-of-life issues for their residents. The strategic investments made through these bold federal initiatives are helping to lay the foundation for Mexico's future as a globally competitive economy and society.

The message is clear: Mexico is stepping up with 21st-century infrastructure and technology capabilities. These pioneering programs leverage public resources to drive development that accelerates growth. By bridging infrastructure gaps and adopting cutting-edge innovations, Mexico's federal agenda promises concrete returns in productivity and prosperity over the long term. The transformation is ongoing and ambitious - but Mexico appears firmly on the path toward a more modern and technologically advanced future.

Program Snapshot

Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) Program

SUMMARY

The purpose of the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program is to provide rural local educational agencies (LEAs) with financial assistance to fund initiatives aimed at improving student academic achievement.

Funds received under the SRSA program may be used to carry out activities authorized under one or more of the following Federal programs:

- Title I-A (Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Education Agencies) Example: A school district develops an entrepreneurial education program to supplement its civics curriculum.
- Title II-A (Supporting Effective Instruction) Example: A school district pays the stipend for a prospective teacher to work alongside an effective teacher, who is the teacher of record, for a full academic year.
- Title III (Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students) Example: A school district offers an afterschool enrichment program for English learners.
- Title IV-A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment) Example: A school district purchases a bully prevention program for all schools.
- Title IV-B (21st Century Community Learning Centers) Example: A school district purchases instruments to supplement schools' band and orchestra programs.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants are Local Education Agencies (LEAs) where:

- The total number of students in average daily attendance at all of the schools served by the LEA is fewer than 600, or each county in which a school served by the LEA is located has a total population density of fewer than 10 persons per square mile; and,
- All of the schools served by the LEA are designated with a school locale code of 41, 42, or 43, by the Department's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES); or the Secretary of Education has determined, based on a demonstration by the LEA and with the state educational agency, that the LEA is located in an area defined as rural by a state governmental agency.

DEADLINE

The previous deadline to apply was April 14, 2023. A similar deadline is anticipated annually. A new solicitation is expected to be released in February.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/rural-insular-native-achievement-programs/rural-education-achievement-program/small-rural-school-achievement-program/

Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) Program

FUNDED ORGANIZATION

Bloomfield Elementary School District

PROJECT TITLE

Bloomfield Elementary, MT

AMOUNT FUNDED

$43,875

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Bloomfield Elementary District, for the past three years, has used a portion of its awarded SRSA funds to supplement teacher salaries and benefits, in order to incentivize quality instruction for students.

A small portion of their SRSA funds have also been used to purchase supplemental instructional supplies and minor equipment. As an example, for the 2020-2021 school year, Bloomfield employed a single teacher and a paraprofessional. The LEA used $6,666 in SRSA funds to cover a portion of the teacher's $40,000 salary. For the 2021-2022 school year, Bloomfield paid two teachers a total of $75,000, of which $13,833 was paid for with SRSA funds.

Bloomfield's rural context and need for an educator that can teach a full K-8 curriculum limits the teacher applicant pool. By using SRSA funds to supplement the teacher's salary package, Bloomfield was able to retain an educator capable of teaching all the grades and subjects for the ten students enrolled in the single school.

FOR MORE AWARD INFORMATION

https://oese.ed.gov/files/2023/07/FY23-Bloomfield-SRSA-Monitoring-Report.pdf

ORGANIZATION WEBSITE

https://www.bloomfield.k12.nj.us/

Planning for the Upcoming Year in Education Funding

Liz Shay, Senior Grants Development Consultant (Education)

Education entities have many opportunities in 2024 to apply for grant funding to support their initiatives. Think about your current needs and review possible alignment with priorities/trends we have identified in the education grant funding landscape.

Although the Fiscal Year 2024 budget has not yet passed (as of the time of writing), it is still important to start preparing now for the upcoming year. Federal agencies have already submitted their proposed budgets to the relevant Congressional committees. In most years, we see relatively stable levels of discretionary funding in the final budget, with small increases to align with inflation. It is likely that we will see a similar approach this year for most or all of the agencies relevant to education funding.

Based on the proposed budgets, other funding legislation from the last few years, and long-term trends, there are several areas that we expect to see prioritized in the FY24 budget and eventual grant programs for education entities.

OVERALL EDUCATION TRENDS

There are a few funding trends that apply to all types and levels of education entities.

1. Diverse Participants in Education:

Funders focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in many grant programs, either explicitly or through competitive preference priority points. Sometimes this goal is focused on involving a more diverse group of students in educational practice. Other times there is more of a focus on equitable design of systems and curriculum to better meet the needs of students. As part of these goals, funders often encourage approaches that include social-emotional learning and other 21st Century skills development or wrap-around services to address the broader needs of students.

2. Career and Technical Education (CTE):

Grantmakers are putting significant funding towards CTE for students of all ages. Funding has increased over the last few years for career-connected middle schools and high schools. We are also seeing more funding for CTE programming for college students and adults, including opportunities for working adults to upskill or reskill to enter high-wage careers. Many of these grant programs are focused on ways to provide students with short-term credentialing so that they can enter the workforce quickly. Collaboration between K-12 and higher education entities (particularly community and technical colleges) is critical for these types of projects to build clear pathways for students to get the training they want and need.

3. Varied Group of Grant Seekers and Recipients:

In the past, the majority of grant funding has gone to only a relatively small group of eligible recipients. Funders want to see more schools and other education and training providers participating in grant-seeking and receiving awards to implement projects. Part of this shift has included more racially diverse organizations, such as more funding going to Minority-Serving Institutions. However, other funding has also gone to include more rural school districts and colleges, as well as more K-12 entities in National Science Foundation and Department of Defense efforts.

K-12 EDUCATION TRENDS

In addition to the overall trends in education funding, there are also some priorities that are specific to K-12 schools.

1. Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Improvements:

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, also know as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) included unprecedented levels of funding to support improvements to schools to make them more eco-friendly. This funding includes options for schools to update infrastructure like heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC), and lighting, as well as funding for clean energy buses. Other funders have also started to follow suit and provide more support for these types of projects.

2. Addressing Achievement Gaps:

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted many challenges students face with learning the knowledge and skills they need when they graduate high school. Federal agencies, especially the Department of Education (USED), are being allocated more funding for programs that will address learning loss and other opportunity and achievement gaps. Some of this funding will go towards efforts to be more equitable and responsive to student needs, including English language acquisition. Other funding will go towards extending learning opportunities into the evenings and during summers to provide additional curriculum support and mitigate summertime learning loss.

3. Game-Based Learning (GBL):

Grantmakers understand that student engagement is one of the most key factors for determining their ability to successfully learn complex materials. GBL utilizes video games, including augmented or virtual reality set ups and more traditional options on computers or tablets, to teach concepts to students. The FY23 budget explanatory statement for USED explicitly notes GBL as a way to motivate students to problem solve and encourages the Department to include evidenced-based GBL as a priority in their funding. That has been implemented over the last year, and we expect this trend to continue in USED grant programs and education-related grant funding from other agencies.

HIGHER EDUCATION TRENDS

Beyond the overall trends in education funding, there are also some other priorities that are more specific to institutes of higher education.

1. Public-Private Partnerships:

Partnerships allow organizations with diverse skills and knowledge to work together towards a common goal. These projects often allow for larger impacts for the same amount of funding. Grantmakers are increasingly encouraging public-private partnerships, or even making them mandatory. Some of these programs are interested in translating academic research findings into products and services in the commercial market. Other support focuses on employers sharing their skill needs to help with appropriately aligned curriculum development.

2. Increased Research Capacity:

Grantmakers who support academic research want to be able to ensure that there is appropriate infrastructure and skills for these types of projects to be implemented. Several federal funders have designed programs that support research infrastructure or instrumentation at institutes of higher education. Other funding programs have also been released to increase the amount of research-related education available at institutions to train the next generation of academic researchers. The amount of funding going to these types of programs has been increasing over the last few years, and we expect to see that trend continue. More federal agencies have created these types of programs (including USED) and funders are expanding the scope of institutions they would like to see participating in these funding opportunities.

3. Hands-On Learning:

Funders are increasingly supporting curriculum design and innovation that includes hands-on learning opportunities. Most grantmakers want to see projects that will engage students, and hands-on learning is an effective way to ensure that students are focused and involved in their learning experiences. Programs are designed to support everything from makerspaces or other classroom tools to apprenticeships. Some programs will even support augmented or virtual reality versions for topics that do not allow for sufficient real experience (such as medical education or law enforcement training).

Now is the time of year for education entities to evaluate their goals and plans for the upcoming year. Think about your plans to support your students, researchers, and the broader community, and look for alignment with any of the priorities described above. Although this is by no means an exhaustive list of the kinds of grant funding that will be available in the coming months, these trends will give you a sense of the types of programs that are likely to be most popular and where you may see absolute or competitive preference priorities for existing annual programs. Start to strategize for where you would like to focus your efforts in 2024 and get started!

Unlocking Grants for Libraries: A Guide to Funding Your Project

Meghan Jacobsen, Grants Development Associate (State and Local Government)

Libraries are a vital part of every community. They provide access to information, education, and cultural enrichment. However, many libraries don't always have the budget to expand their programming to best serve their patrons. Fortunately, there are many funding opportunities available for libraries through grants.

TYPES OF GRANTS FOR LIBRARIES

1. Federal Grants:

Federal agencies like the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) offer various grants for libraries. The **Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)**, which is a pass-through grant (funded by IMLS and passed through to be administered by states), is one such program that supports library initiatives, including technology upgrades, workforce development, and community engagement.

Another IMLS grant is the National Leadership Grant (NLG). This program seeks projects that will have a widespread impact that reaches beyond a single library. Some of the projects this grant supports include improving access to libraries and archives, digital inclusion, enhancing civic engagement, and elevating the capacity of libraries to deliver essential services during emergencies or natural disasters.

The **Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program (LB21)** supports the professional development of librarians. This program focuses on far-reaching initiatives that enhance the recruitment, training, and retention of a diverse library workforce that will meet the needs of their communities. This grant also supports increasing the capacity of libraries and library and information science graduate programs to develop more leaders within library and archive institutions.

2. State Grants:

Many states have grant programs designed to support local libraries. These grants may focus on specific needs like digitization projects, collection development, or literacy programs. Check with your state library association or government website for available opportunities.

3. Foundation Grants:

Private foundations, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, often provide grants to libraries. It is also helpful to look at local foundations that seek to support initiatives within your community.

4. Nonprofit Grants:

Nonprofit organizations, like the American Library Association (ALA), provide grants and scholarships to libraries for various purposes, including professional development and community engagement.

EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS THAT QUALIFY FOR GRANTS

1. Technology Upgrades:

Many grants are available to help libraries improve their technology infrastructure. Projects might include upgrading computer systems, enhancing Wi-Fi access, or developing digital literacy programs for patrons.

2. Collection Development:

Grants can support the acquisition of new books, eBooks, audiobooks, and other materials. Special collections, such as local history archives or diversity-focused resources, can also be funded through grants.

3. Educational Programs:

Libraries can secure funding for educational programs that cater to specific community needs. Examples include adult literacy classes, early childhood education initiatives, STEM workshops, or esports programs for children and teens.

4. Renovation and Expansion:

Grants can help libraries renovate or expand their facilities to better serve the community. This may include creating dedicated spaces for makers, community meetings, or children's areas.

5. Outreach and Community Engagement:

Grants can support outreach efforts, allowing libraries to extend their services to underserved populations or collaborate with community partners on special projects.

6. Workforce Development:

Staff training, recruitment efforts, and enhancing library education programs that will ultimately meet the needs of the community and encourage a diverse new generation of librarians.

When brainstorming ideas or upcoming projects for your library, it is also a good idea to foster collaboration with colleagues throughout your institution. This ensures all departments are aligned towards the larger goals and prevents the oversight of critical aspects such as technological requirements to carry out projects. Deadlines across grant programs vary so it is never too early or too late to initiate the planning process.

Empowering Public Health Initiatives: Unlocking BRL 2.2 billion from Brazil's National Health Fund

Nátali Bahena Benck, Grants Development Consultant (Brazil)

In the realm of public healthcare in Brazil, the Unified Health System (SUS) is of great significance. Established in 1988, SUS serves as a cornerstone in ensuring that all Brazilians have unfettered access to quality medical care, free of charge. However, SUS does not operate in isolation; it relies on a vital partner, the National Health Fund (FNS).
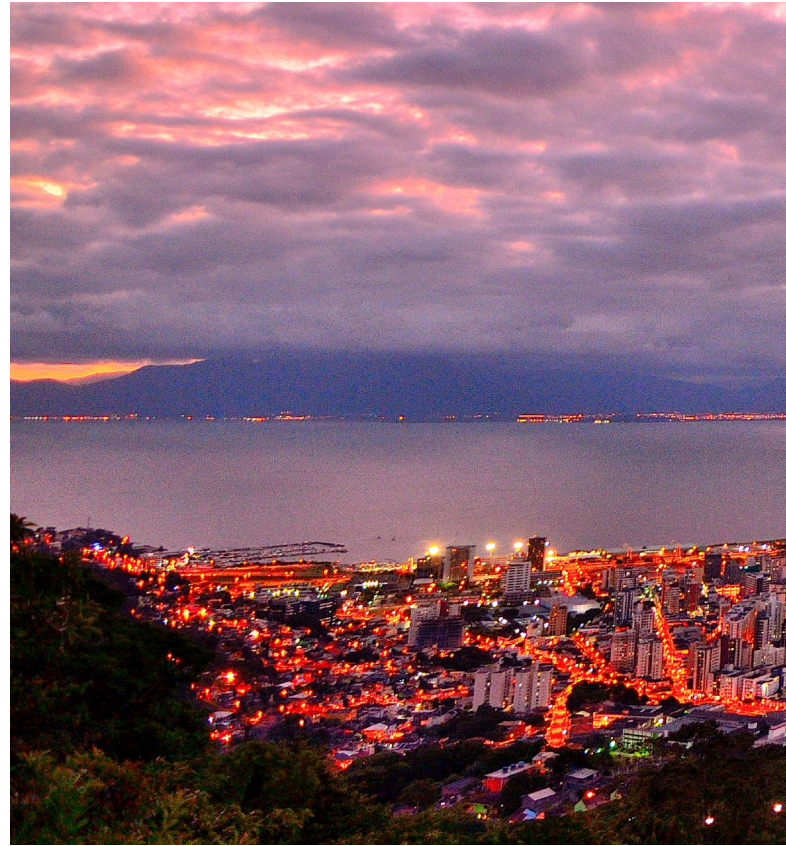
FNS plays a pivotal role in managing public resources earmarked for healthcare, with a mission to enhance citizenship by continually improving the allocation of resources in alignment with the National Health Plan, the Ministry of Health's Annual Plan, and established guidelines.

To empower local healthcare initiatives, resources within FNS get transferred to States, Municipalities, and the Federal District. This decentralized approach allows governments at various levels to tailor healthcare actions and services to local needs, thus fostering a more personalized approach to healthcare delivery. These transfers take place through various modalities such as Fund-to-Fund, Agreements, Repayment Contracts, and Cooperation Terms, thereby ensuring flexibility in resource allocation.

In 2022, FNS committed a sum of BRL 101.1 billion to bolster healthcare services nationwide. This substantial allocation not only sustains accessible healthcare but also creates opportunities to fortify the healthcare sector in Brazil in new ways.

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTHCARE INVESTMENT

In 2018, the National Health Fund (FNS) initiated a transformative shift in resource allocation to municipal and state health funds. This overhaul streamlined allocation into two primary categories: investment and operational expenses. Recognizing the importance of this change, Complementary Law No. 172/2020 was enacted. This pivotal law allowed the utilization of funds from accounts predating 2018 and expanded their utility.
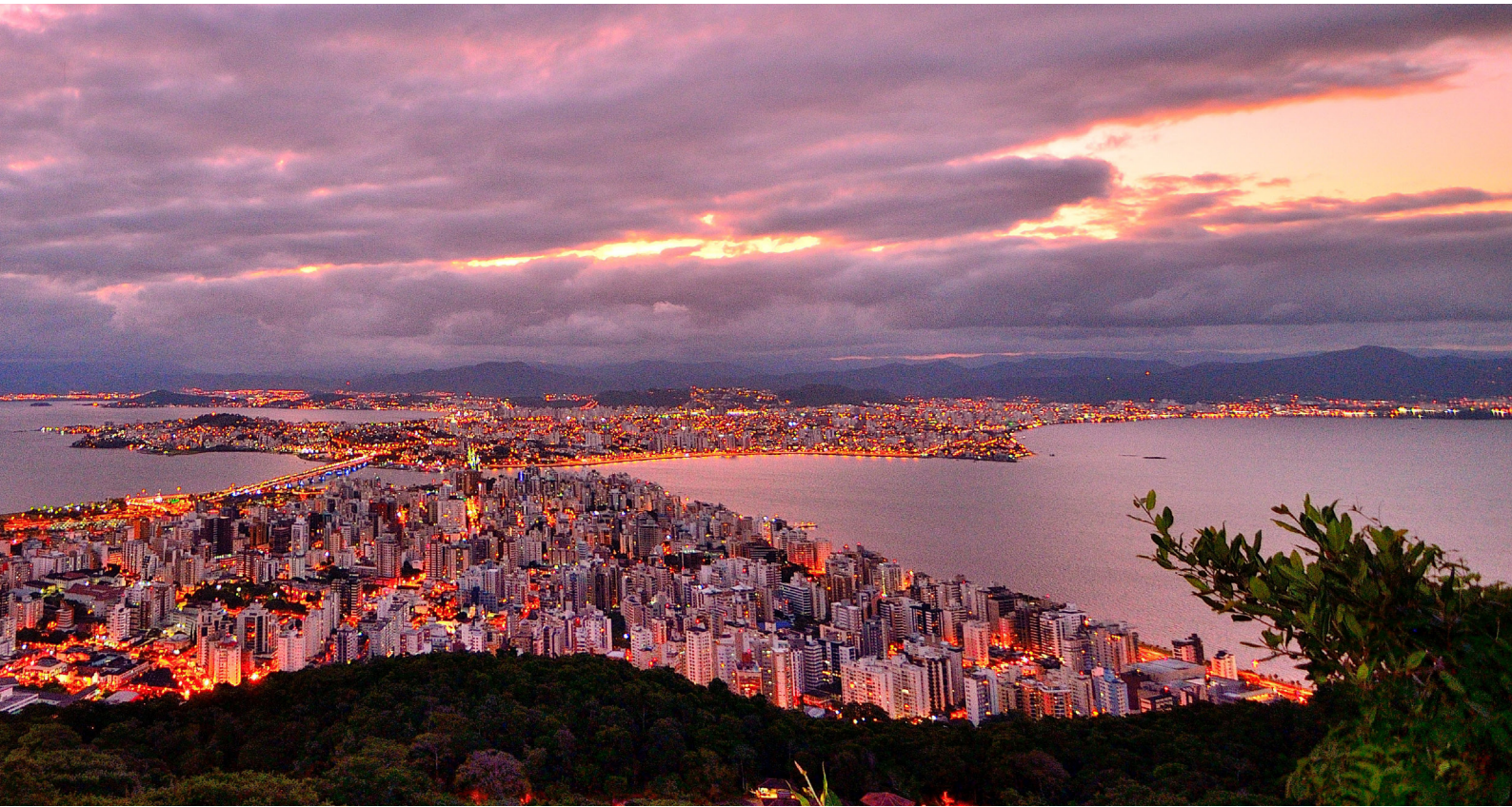
A salient aspect of this law is the flexibility it affords, enabling States and Municipalities to choose between utilizing these resources for current or capital expenses without the need for specific application plans. Proper budget allocation in the Municipal Health Plan and the Annual Budget Law of the Municipality streamlines the process for healthcare managers.

Fast forward to Complementary Law No. 197/2022, a continuation of the initiatives introduced by Complementary Law No. 172/2020, which has opened doors for municipal and state healthcare managers. It grants access to approximately BRL 2.2 billion in financial balances from FNS accounts predating 2018. What sets this law apart is its commitment to enhancing healthcare infrastructure, modernizing healthcare systems and services, and providing flexibility to address various other critical needs.

Complementary Law No. 197/2022 offers Brazilian municipalities and states a pivotal opportunity to strengthen their healthcare services significantly. It allows for the use of pre-2018 financial balances from the National Health Fund to revamp infrastructure and modernize healthcare delivery. While the law's flexibility was designed to ensure comprehensive resource utilization, the year-end deadline is rapidly approaching, underscoring the vital need for a strong public commitment to achieving this goal.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

To enhance transparency, financial balances in accounts opened before January 1, 2018, underwent assessment by official federal financial institutions (Banco do Brasil and Caixa Econômica Federal). These balances were published and made accessible on the National Health Fund's Portal at the following web address: https://painelms.saude.gov.br/extensions/LC_Saldos_197/LC_Saldos_197.html.

This allows states and municipalities that have accounts in this system to go through the verification process and utilize these funds in a transparent manner in accordance with established regulations.

How to utilize the resources:

The process of requesting these resources is relatively simple, ensuring accessibility for public entities. It does not require authorization but rather only a usage report:

- Inclusion of transposed and transferred financial resources in the Annual Health Program.
- Inclusion of transposed and transferred financial resources in the Annual Budget Law.
- Notification to Health Councils.

Unlocking these resources is pivotal as it offers the chance to dramatically enhance the Brazilian healthcare system. The ability to allocate these funds strategically according to specific needs and priorities is a significant advantage that should not be overlooked. As we move forward, responsible and effective resource utilization is not just a call to action but a fundamental responsibility. Any unused funds will ultimately be returned to the federal government, underscoring the urgency of maximizing their potential.

Preparing to apply for the COPS School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP) Grant

Sam Rawdon, Grants Development Associate (K-12 School Safety)

School safety has been a primary concern for school districts over the past several years. In the wake of tragic events such as the Uvalde school shooting in 2022, K-12 school districts have made it a priority to improve the physical security of their school buildings. However, funding was not always readily available until the **Stop School Violence Act** of 2018. An important result of this act was the **STOP School Violence Prevention Program, or SVPP**, a federal grant program that provides K-12 school districts, state and local governments, and Tribes the financial means to improve the physical security of their schools through evidence-based school safety programs and technology. In fiscal year 2023, up to $73 million was available for potential applicants, with future funding available through 2028.

For all intents and purposes, Federal grant programs such as SVPP are extremely competitive and could potentially be intimidating to apply for, since applicants will be going up against a multitude of school districts, state and local governments, and Tribes throughout the country. In addition, a plethora of requirements are needed to apply. With an anticipated deadline date of sometime in May 2024, it is never too early to prepare the application process for SVPP. In other words, it is much easier to take off with a longer runway than a shorter one. There are several ways that K-12 school districts can effectively prepare ahead of applying for this program.

Possibly the most vital step to take is to make sure that the school district has a confirmed and updated System of Award Management (SAM) number, alternatively known as a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number. This number allows organizations to conduct business with the federal government, or in this case, apply for federal grants through grants.gov. Without this number, potential applicants cannot apply for federal funding. For K-12 school districts, the business or financial office will have a working knowledge of this number and is usually responsible for keeping it up to date once per year. In the event a school district does not have a SAM/UEI number, a district can register for one by accessing sam.gov. Note that registration and renewal of a SAM/UEI number can take up to ten business days.

Another key step for school districts to take is to obtain vendor quotes for any physical security-related technology they are looking to implement. This is primarily done for budgetary purposes, as an application requirement for SVPP includes submitting a budget with estimated costs of any school safety technology and how the grant award will fit into the school district's budget. It is best for a school district to request funding specifically for the technology that they need, rather than asking for less or more funding. This is key because most grants generally have reported requirements post-award and any deficit or surplus in grant funds can hurt a school district's chances of obtaining grant funding in the future or cause them to lose their funding altogether.

One aspect of the application requires collecting raw data regarding the total number of incidents that occurred at the schools within the district's jurisdiction and were reported to local law enforcement. Typically, these include attacks, guns/firearms/explosives, illegal drugs, theft, vandalism, and knives reported at school buildings. Other data that can be collected is crime statistics in the district's jurisdiction. This data is required to determine the district's need for federal assistance in reducing or eliminating school violence.

Lastly, a school district should reach out to their local law enforcement agency. This should be the agency that will respond to an emergency call in the event of an incident, whether that be the county sheriff's office or the local police department.

A requirement for applying for SVPP is to obtain a letter of support, or LOS, from this local law enforcement agency. This letter is intended to show the local law enforcement's planned involvement in the program, as well as showing their support in the district's efforts to improve their overall security, whether that is through evidence-based practices or physical security technology related to improving their security. It is also strongly recommended that school districts obtain a LOS from a mental health advocate that either the district employs or one in the local community. These can include school social workers, counselors, or school psychologists.

K-12 schools can apply for and obtain Federal funding through SVPP to improve the overall physical security of their school facilities. They can easily prepare for this now by taking some preliminary steps. Having a confirmed and updated SAM number will allow districts to apply through grants.gov without any hiccups. Obtaining vendor quotes will fulfil the budgetary requirements of the application and will demonstrate how the technology will fit into the grant. Collecting raw data about any reported incidents on school grounds, as well as crime statistics in the area the district serves, will determine the district's need for federal funding in helping to reduce or eliminate school violence. Last, involving local law enforcement and, optionally mental health professionals, through letters of support will show community involvement and cooperation in the efforts to curb school violence at a district level. As the old saying goes, "The early bird gets the worm", and this is most certainly true for SVPP.

Congressional Earmarks Are Back (For Now): How to Use Them to Fund Your Public Safety Initiatives

Shannon M. Day, Senior Grants Development Consultant

WHAT ARE CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS?

After being placed on hiatus for ten years, federally funded earmarks have returned. Earmarks, or Congressionally Directed Spending requests, are funds that members of Congress direct to specific projects in their districts. In the public safety sector, these projects can include a wide range of activities, such as:

- Funding for emergency operations centers and other public safety facilities
- Purchasing new equipment for law enforcement and criminal justice agencies
- Funding for violence prevention and intervention programs
- Supporting community policing initiatives
- Funding for training and education programs for public safety personnel

HOW DO EARMARKS WORK?

Members of Congress submit requests to the House or Senate Appropriations Committee. The Appropriations Committees then review all the submissions and decide which will be included in annual federal appropriations bills.

Once Congress approves an earmark, the funding is allocated to the relevant federal agency. The agency is then responsible for administering the grant and ensuring that the funds are used for the intended purpose. At this point, the funding is treated like any other federal grant program.

EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC SAFETY GRANT PROGRAMS FUNDED THROUGH CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS

Here are a few examples of public safety grants funded through congressional earmarks:

- **FEMA's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Grant Program** supports EOC operations by equipping, upgrading, and/or constructing emergency operations centers to provide fully capable facilities to ensure continuity of operations and continuity of government in major disasters or emergencies. Projects designated for funding in 2023 can be found here.
- **COPS Technology and Equipment Program (TEP)** aids applicants who respond to and prevent crime in developing and acquiring effective equipment, technologies, and interoperable communications. Projects designated for funding in 2023 can be found here.
- **BJA's Byrne Discretionary Grant Program** supports projects that improve the functioning of the criminal justice system, prevent or combat juvenile delinquency, and assist victims of crime. Projects designated for funding in 2023 can be found here.

BENEFITS & DRAWBACKS

Congressionally directed spending can provide multiple benefits to communities, including:

- **Targeted funding for local priorities:** Earmarks allow members of Congress to direct funding to specific projects in their districts. This ensures that the funding is used to address the community's most pressing needs.
- **Flexibility:** Earmarks can fund a wide range of public safety projects, including those that may not be eligible for other grant funding programs.
- **Accountability:** Earmarks are subject to numerous transparency and accountability requirements. This helps to ensure that the funds are used for the intended purpose and that taxpayers are getting their money's worth.

Congressional earmarks are a controversial topic. Some people believe they are a valuable tool for directing funding for important local priorities, while others think they are a source of corruption, waste, and political gamesmanship.

Critics of earmarks, sometimes conflated with "pork barrel" spending, argue that they can be abused by Members of Congress to steer funding to their own districts, even if the projects are not the most important or deserving. They also argue that earmarks can be a source of corruption, as Members of Congress may be pressured to support earmarks in exchange for campaign donations or other favors.

In determining if your organization wants to take advantage of directed funding, weighing the pros and cons is essential. It is also important to hold Members of Congress accountable for the earmarks they request and ensure that the funds are used for the intended purpose.

If you are interested in learning more about Congressional earmarks, you can visit the websites of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. You can also contact your Member of Congress to inquire about their earmarks and how to get your project funded. If you're unsure who your congressperson is, you can find your representative here.

The Green Municipal Fund: Enabling Communities for Sustainability

Stephanie Cesar, Grants Development Consultant (Canada)

Canada has long been committed to environmental sustainability and the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In line with these goals, the **Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)** launched the **Green Municipal Fund (GMF)** in 2000 to help municipalities in the development of thriving communities that benefit people and the environment. Over the past two decades, the GMF has provided funding and support to municipalities across the country, driving innovative projects that address environmental challenges and promote sustainable development.

Since its inception, GMF has invested more than $1.25 billion into almost 2,000 municipal projects. it has also prevented the emission of 2.87 million Tonnes of GHG, facilitated the treatment of 287 million m³ of water per year, and saved 860,210 gigajoules of energy annually.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The Green Municipal Fund is accessible to municipalities and their partners across Canada. This includes all Canadian municipalities, ranging from small towns to major cities. Indigenous communities and organizations, as well as not-for-profit organizations and private-sector companies, can also access the fund in collaboration with municipalities. The inclusivity of GMF ensures that a wide spectrum of stakeholders can participate in shaping a greener future for their communities.

FUNDING

The program started with an investment of CAD $1.65 billion from the Government of Canada. In budget 2019, the government announced an additional CAD 950 million of funding. Another investment of $530 million was made through the Government of Canada Climate Adaptation Action Plan to launch a new program.

GMF offers grants for municipal environmental projects. Loans are also available at a competitive rate, and most recipients receive an additional grant of up to 15% of their loan amount. Their investment can cover between 50 and 80% of your eligible project costs. Funding is available at every stage of your project:

- Early-stage planning: you can get support for the beginning phases of a project
- Plans: develop strategies to deliver environmental solutions in your community. The Green Municipal Fund provides funds for 2 types of plans: sustainable neighborhood action plan and community brownfield action plan
- Studies: funding to assess whether your project is technically and financially possible. Feasibility studies include technical evaluations, site assessments, stakeholder engagement, and detailed project planning
- Pilot project: test a small-scale version of your project in real-life conditions. Pilot projects include novel approaches that have yet to be tested in Canada
- Capital projects: implement a full-scale version of your project. Capital projects include both natural and constructed physical infrastructure that provide a municipal service

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The GMF focuses on financing projects that address environmental challenges, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and enhance community sustainability. The fund supports initiatives in various sectors, including the following:

1. Renewable Energy Initiatives:

Municipalities can use GMF funding to develop renewable energy projects such as solar panels, wind turbines, or hydroelectric facilities. These projects not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also contribute to local energy generation and economic development.

2. Energy Efficiency Upgrades:

GMF supports energy-efficient retrofits for municipal buildings, street lighting, and public facilities. These upgrades reduce energy consumption, lower operational costs, and set an example for the community.

3. Waste Management and Recycling Programs:

Initiatives focused on reducing waste generation, increasing recycling rates, and implementing composting programs can secure GMF funding. These projects reduce landfill waste and promote a circular economy.

4. Public Transit and Active Transportation:

GMF aids the expansion and improvement of public transit systems and infrastructure for walking and cycling. These initiatives help reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions while promoting healthier and more sustainable modes of transportation.

5. Green Infrastructure:

Projects involving the development of green roofs, urban forests, and natural stormwater management systems are eligible for GMF support. These projects enhance urban resilience, improve air quality, and mitigate the urban heat island effect.

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

The impact of the Green Municipal Fund is evident in numerous successful projects that have transformed Canadian municipalities into more sustainable and resilient communities. Here are a few noteworthy examples:

1. City of Brampton's Susan Fennell Sportsplex:

The city of Brampton received $10 million to support deep energy upgrades and measures to reduce GHG emissions at the facility. The retrofit upgrades are anticipated to reduce annual GHG emissions at the facility by 91%

2. Vancouver's Zero-Emission Building Plan:

Vancouver used GMF support to develop and implement its Zero-Emission Building Plan. This initiative aims to reduce emissions from new buildings by requiring them to meet strict energy efficiency and renewable energy standards. Vancouver's plan is now a model for sustainable urban development worldwide.

3. Toronto's Green Roof Bylaw:

Toronto implemented its Green Roof Bylaw with the assistance of GMF funding. This bylaw requires new commercial, industrial, and institutional buildings to include green roofs. As a result, Toronto has seen an increase in green roof installations, promoting energy efficiency and urban biodiversity.

The Green Municipal Fund in Canada plays a pivotal role in advancing environmental sustainability and supporting municipalities in their efforts to combat climate change. By providing financial assistance to a wide range of projects and fostering partnerships among municipalities, Indigenous communities, and private organizations, GMF is contributing to a greener, more sustainable future for Canada. As Canada pursues its commitment to environmental stewardship and its goal of being net-zero by 2050, the Green Municipal Fund remains an essential resource to help communities realize their sustainable development aspirations.

What's RMUC and How Can Energy Organizations Get Involved?

Joseph Phelan, Grants Development Consultant (Broadband & Utilities)

When the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law went into effect, the administration placed an emphasis on energy. Since then, various funding has been introduced to help utility companies and organizations in the pursuit of the net-zero carbon economy by 2050 goal. One specific program, the **Rural and Municipal Utility Advanced Cybersecurity Grant and Technical Assistance Program, otherwise known as RMUC**, received $250 million to disperse to various entities.

Late last year, the Department of Energy released a Request for Information for the general public's input on what to do with the funding, who could benefit from it, and what kind of resources are most needed for the energy sector. This solicitation provided an opportunity for the utility sector to answer and discuss the key questions centering on utilities when it comes to cybersecurity. A section of the RFI asked questions about utilities serving military installations. Another dealt with the partnerships that utilities have with manufacturers, vendors, service providers, public agencies, labor unions, and other key stakeholders. The final piece of the RFI brought attention to the role that Equity, Environmental, and Energy Justice should play.

The first funding mechanism from that RFI is currently underway as nearly $9 million is available for electric cooperatives, municipally owned electric utilities, and small investor-owned utilities to boost their cybersecurity resources. There are parameters in place for military utilities to receive funding under this program.

There are three phrases to this specific program:

- Commitment, where up to 55 organizations can receive up to $50,000

- Planning, among organizations who received Commitment funding will compete for up to $50,000

- Implementation, among organizations who receive Planning funding will compete for up to $100,000

The most an organization can receive is $200,000 under this initiative.

The Commitment phase, which has a November 29, 2023, deadline, paves the way for winning utilities to receive cash prizes and technical assistance based on their commitment to improving their utility's cybersecurity posture through investments in cybersecurity technologies, staff training, and improvements to governance processes. Winners will be announced in March 2024.

Phase 2, or the Planning Phase, will see utilities working with technical assistance providers to complete system assessments, identify areas for training, understand potential risks and solutions, and draft a roadmap for implementation. Winners will be announced in October 2024.

The final phase, Implementation, will incorporate the progress of implementing a cybersecurity roadmap with those awards being announced in March 2025.

Each stage will require the utility to write a narrative describing the organization's desire for an increased cybersecurity posture.

An additional $241 million is available under RMUC, and recently the organization announced that a competitive FOA will be released later this calendar year. Interested applicants should sign up for updates by emailing CESER.rmuc@hq.doe.gov.

Upcoming Grantscasts

New events are added weekly. Visit https://www.grantsoffice.com/Grants-Intelligence/Grantcasts for the most updated information and to see our entire library of global Grantscasts.

Get in the Game: Gauging your Grant-readiness

A Grants Office Production (United States), sponsored by Genetec

Date: November 14, 2023, at 2pm ET

About: Over 26 federal grant-making agencies award over $700 Billion in grant funds each year. You might wonder: which among all these possible funding programs makes the most sense to pursue? Will the grant in question allow you to fund your project's necessary expenses? And, how can you best position your organization to compete for this funding? For answers to those questions and more, join us as we discuss how to get your organization "grant ready."

Register HERE

Modernizing Technology for Rural and Tribal Communities

A Grants Office Production (United States), sponsored by Ingram Micro

Date: November 16, 2023, at 1pm ET

About: Nearly 20% of all Americans live within rural areas or on tribal land and experience unique challenges for transportation, public safety, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and training. Services to support dispersed populations can be costly. If you're a tribal or public sector organization engaged in supporting tribal and/or rural citizens, join us to learn about the current funding landscape and how to effectively justify the inclusion of technology in your next grant proposal.

Register HERE

Recent Grantscasts

Green Grants Down Under: The Australian Sustainability Landscape

A Grants Office Production (Australia)

About: Governments worldwide are directing significant efforts toward advancing innovative sustainable practices and Australia stands as a noteworthy contributor to this movement. The Australian government has set a goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2050, giving rise to Australia's Technology Investment Roadmap, which will see the injection of over $20 billion in government funding towards low-emissions technologies by 2030. Learn about these initiatives and other Australian funding opportunities that focus on the implementation of more sustainable practices within business and community.

Access HERE

Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Technology into the Grant Writing Industry

A Grants Office Production (Europe)

About: AI in grant writing presents an exciting opportunity to enhance efficiency and proposal quality, while simultaneously prompting us to reflect on the broader implications and considerations of integrating advanced technology into a traditionally human-driven endeavor. Learn about an array of pioneering tools, methodologies, and transformative prospects emerging from the marriage of AI and grant writing, unraveling its potential to streamline processes, enhance proposal quality, and elevate success rates.

Access HERE

Canadian Funding Opportunities to Aid in the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

A Grants Office Production (Canada)

About: To help Canada reach its target of reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions, the federal government has set up several subsidy programs to encourage organizations to act. Learn about program details, upcoming deadlines, and useful tips to secure funding for your organization.

Access HERE

Modernizing Education and Workforce Development

A Grants Office Production (United States), sponsored by Ingram Micro

About: Education and workforce development providers must meet the needs of their students and local labor demands. They must also have technology to help them achieve these goals. Discover ways to fund these initiatives through grant programs by the Department of Education, state grantmakers, and more.

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Survive and Thrive: Securing Funding for Real-Time Cybersecurity Threat Intelligence

A Grants Office Production (United States), sponsored by Recorded Future

About: Global cyberattacks are increasing at an alarming rate. For many public sector agencies, it is no longer a matter of if they will be targeted, but when and how often they will be attacked. Bad actors, both domestic and international, target states, municipalities, school districts, and institutes of higher education. While tools are available to assist with detection, prevention, and mitigation efforts, many lack the financial resources to develop and maintain a robust cybersecurity apparatus. Learn about the latest solutions and how you can leverage grant funding to make these vital security improvements.

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Nonmarket

Market

02 Strategy
Expert support for firm mobilization to capitalize on forthcoming funding

01 Intelligence
Actionable information on the technology-friendly funding landscape

03 Timing
Actual and projected time frames for administration and disbursement of funds

GRANTS OFFICE
empowering communities

MARKET AND NONMARKET

BENEFITS OF GRANTS SUPPORT

04 Penetration
Customer-facing events and campaigns to generate new and expanded contacts

05 Targeting
Enhanced discovery of grant-ready customer business objectives

06 Sales
Market capture driven by new/increased customer budget for target solutions