

# School Access for Emergency Response Grant Program Application Handbook SFY 2025



**COLORADO**  
**Office of School Safety**  
Department of Public Safety

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[OSS Grants Unit](#)

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# 1 GENERAL INFORMATION

## 1.1 Executive Summary

The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to solicit applications for the School Access for Emergency Response Grant Program (SB 18-158) and (SB23-241). This is a discretionary grant program and a total of \$4,850,000 in funding is available to eligible applicants.

This grant program provides funding to deliver training programs to teach effective communications with first responders in an emergency, to implement interoperable technology solutions, to provide or upgrade systems for effective communication with first responders in an emergency, to maintain, improve or provide interoperable communications hardware or software, and for any necessary radio system capacity expansions where school loading has been determined to have a significant impact on public safety system loading.

While funding amounts are distributed on a competitive basis, final awards are not automatic and are contingent upon:

- 1) the submission of a completed application that meets the Eligibility Criteria set in this RFA, and
- 2) an executed grant agreement.

This document contains information about the program rules and requirements, the types of expenses eligible for funding, and instructions for completing and submitting the grant application.

The program is open to schools and public safety communications system owners.

**The authority to administer this grant program rests with the Office of School Safety (OSS), Office of Grants Management, including amendments, alterations, or changes to these guidelines and award distribution.**

## 1.2 Timeline

Announcement and Application Handbook Available	April 1, 2024
Application Submission Deadline	May 06, 2024
Notification of Funding Recommendations	June 10, 2024
Requests for Reconsiderations	June 17, 2024

## 1.3 Issue/Problem Statement

This funding announcement is in response to the needs identified by the State Legislators to enhance school safety incident response.

#### 1.4 Purpose of the Funds

The purpose of the grant program is to better serve schools or public safety network owners in the state by providing funds to improve interoperable communications between schools and first responders. Grant recipients may use the money received through the grant program for the following purposes:

Deliver training programs to teach district-based security personnel and appropriate school personnel basic procedures for effective communications with first responders;

1. Implement an interoperable technology solution to provide or to upgrade the following:
  - A system or technology that can be activated and deactivated by the public safety 911 answering point, the network administrator, and the school, using both the radio system and other communications networks;
  - Radio and other technology bridge ability that is not radio vendor- specific for connecting independent school networks across the school district and public safety networks in the regions; and
  - An interoperability solution that operates over radio networks and other communications networks;
2. To maintain or improve a school's existing interoperable communication hardware or software or to provided interoperable communication hardware and/or software to a school that does not yet have it; and
3. For any necessary radio system capacity expansions where school loading has been determined to have significant impact on public safety system loading.

#### 1.5 Target Applicants

Applicant must be a school or public safety communications system owner in order to be eligible for these funds.

#### 1.6 Eligible Applicants

Any application that does not address the eligibility requirements listed below will be eliminated from further consideration. To be eligible to apply for and receive grant funding, an applicant must:

1. Submit an application to the Office of School Safety in the form prescribed by the Division on or before May 6, 2024; and
2. An applicant must be a school or a public safety communications system owner; and
3. Eligible school applicants are required to have a memorandum of understanding with any of its regional public safety 911 answering points or the local law enforcement agency or agencies which serve the school for

communications interoperability.

4. Applicant must have current school Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) with current staff contacts included.

Additionally, recipients of the grant agree to provide OSS, upon request at any time during the life of the grant contract, such cooperation and information deemed necessary by the OSS to evaluate the outcome and success of this Program.

#### 1.7 Amount Available

This grant program is appropriated from section 24-33.5-2107, C.R.S. For the 2024 Program, \$5,000,000 has been appropriated. \$4,850,000 is available for recipients of this grant program. The balance of the funds will be utilized by the OSS to manage this grant program.

## 2 APPLICATION GUIDELINES and TEMPLATE

Applicants must submit an electronic copy by **5:00 p.m. MST on May 06,**

**2024.** Please email the electronic copy of your application to

cdps\_oss\_safer@state.co.us OSS will review each application for eligibility and completeness.

Only one application per applicant can be submitted. If multiple applications are submitted by a single applicant, all applications will be rejected. All information, affirmations, and certifications will be treated as material representations of fact upon which the OSS will rely in awarding grants. The RFA package consists of this application handbook and the application template.

Applicants must complete all sections of the application as described below. Attention should be given to completeness and specificity of the responses. Indicate if a statement or question is not relevant to your agency or application.

The application template consists of three sections; Signature Page, Project/Budget Narrative, and Project Budget.

### 2.1 Applicant Info Signatures Page

***Applicant School (District) Name:*** Enter the legal name of your agency.

***Applicant Agency Type:*** Type of agency that is applying for grant funds.

***Points of Contact:*** Enter all information for all four (4) points of contact; Primary POC, Secondary POC, Official Authorized, and Fiscal Agent. Ensure each POC signs and dates their section.

**Primary POC:** Main person who will oversee the day-to-day management of the project.

**Secondary POC:** Backup person for the Primary POC.

**Authorized Official:** The individual who is authorized to enter into legal contracts on behalf of the applicant agency. The Authorized Official must be a person other than the project manager or the financial officer.

**Fiscal Agent:** The Financial Officer is the person who will be responsible for fiscal matters relating to the project and is ultimately in charge of accounting, management of funds, verification of expenditures and grant financial reporting. This must be an individual other than the project manager or authorized official.

## 2.2 Project/Budget Narrative

1. **Question 1: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** Does your school/school district have an MOU with its regional public safety 911 answering point or the local law enforcement agency or agencies that serve the school for communications interoperability? This question has a drop down, please select YES or NO  
If yes, please attach a copy of the MOU when you submit your application.

\*\* A MOU is required as a part of the application. All MOU's must be updated within the last three years and include current personnel, contacts, and position titles.

\*\* MOU's must list the school and emergency service provider and alongside other emergency partners (i.e. EMS, Fire, etc.).

2. **Questions 2-15:** Answer the questions and provide detailed information. Please adjust the area to accommodate the length of your response. Please put N/A for any question that does not apply to you.
3. **Question 16 Budget Narrative:** The applicant must provide a detailed explanation of the budgeted items listed in the Project Budget. Describe the criteria used to compute budget figures, all budget figures should be justified and explained. The budget narrative should show the relationship between budget figures and proposed project operations.

The following specific information is required for each budget category:

### **Training:**

This budget category captures training costs to educate staff on security procedures, school safety best practices, and the use of equipment purchased with grant dollars.

Please provide a description of the training, who will be conducting the training, who will be the recipients of the training, and number of trainings.

Please list all costs associated with this activity.

**Exercise:**

This budget category captures the costs of exercising staff on security procedures, school safety best practices, and the use of equipment purchased with grant dollars.

Please provide a description of the exercises, who will be conducting them, and who will be participating and how often these exercises will be conducted.

Please list all costs associated with this activity.

**Maintenance:**

Describe the costs that will be associate with the maintenance of equipment purchased with these grant funds.

**Software/Hardware:**

Describe the costs and quantities of the equipment and software purchased with these grant funds.

4. **Question 17 - Total Requested Amount:** Enter the total requested amount for the project.

2.3 **Project Budget Page**

The budget must be completed entirely and each item listed should be accompanied by a description which provides justification for the budget items and details the basis for determining the cost of each item. The budget must cover the entire project duration. In figuring the budget, work with **WHOLE DOLLAR AMOUNTS ONLY**.

When necessary, round to the next highest whole dollar amount. The budget should be broken into categories, such as, Training, Exercise, Maintenance, Software and Hardware. If there are multiple projects, under Project #, use drop down to identify different projects. Please place projects in the order of priority.

**Project #:** Select from dropdown, project #1, project #2, etc.

**Category:** Select the category that best describes the activity.

**Activity/Item Description:** Enter a short description of the activity/item. **Quantity:** Enter quantity to be purchased.

**Unit Cost:** Enter the unit cost.

The Subtotal and Total fields will auto populate.

The information outlined in the Project/Budget Narrative should match the information listed in the Project Budget.

3 **ADMINISTRATION OF GRANT CONTRACTS**

The OSS will execute a grant contract with an awardee based on the contents of the submitted application and the intent of the grant program as outlined

in this RFA.

The grant contract will include standard State terms and conditions.

### **3.1 Issuing Agency**

These grant program funds are issued by the State of Colorado, Colorado Department of Public Safety, Office of School Safety (OSS).

The OSS is the sole point of contact concerning these funds and all communications must be made through the Office of School Safety.

Failure to submit a complete application or any requested documents may result in denial of funding. Part of the application submission process will be to attach needed documents. See Section 4 for a complete list of attachments.

### **3.2 Requirements and Restrictions**

Applicant must be a school, school district, or public safety communications systems owner.

### **3.3 Authorized Program Expenditures**

Funding under the Program may be used for costs related to the Grant Objectives and Program Goals. OSS has sole discretion in determining which costs are permissible.

Permissible costs include, but are not limited to, the categories listed below:

1. Delivering training programs to teach district-based security personnel and appropriate school personnel basic procedures for effective communications with first responders during an emergency Researching, developing, delivering, and evaluating training - Including costs related to administering the training, planning, scheduling, facilities, materials, supplies, and equipment.
2. The implementation of an interoperable technology solution to provide or to upgrade the following:
  - A system or technology that can be activated and deactivated by the public safety 911 answering point, the network administrator, and the school using both the radio system and other communications networks;
  - Radio and other technology bridge ability that is not radio vendor specific for connecting independent school networks across the school district and public safety networks in the regions; and
  - An interoperability solution that operates over radio networks and other communications networks
3. To maintain or improve a schools' existing interoperable communication hardware or software or to provide interoperable communication hardware and/or software to a school that does not yet have it.
4. For any necessary radio system capacity expansions where school loading has been determined to have significant impact on public safety system.



## 5. Other costs associated with program-related expenses.

Salaries, overtime, fringe benefits, travel, or other expenses associated with existing or on-going operations that are not related to this grant program are not allowed. Additionally, dual compensation is not allowed.

### 3.4 Reporting Requirements

The OSS requires quarterly reports which document the project's progress toward meeting its goals and objectives, and its expenditures under the approved budget. All quarterly reports are due by the 30th day following each calendar quarter.

### 3.5 Funding Decision Criteria

The OSS will review and judge the proposals received based on their adherence to the factors stated in this guide. Failure of the applicant to provide any information requested in the application announcement or instructions may result in disqualification of the application. In addition to other considerations, the following criteria will be evaluated in awarding the grant:

1. The likelihood that funding of the application will improve communications between the school and first responder communication systems;
2. The extent to which the school is fully compliant with the Colorado School Response Framework pursuant to section 22-32-109.1 (4) OR 22-30.5-503;
3. Whether the school has a crisis management plan in place with safety team members designated for communications with first responders.

Additionally, OSS will review the application in relation to the following subjects:

**Issue Statement:** The problem or issue to be addressed is clearly documented with relevant data and analysis substantiated by reference to research literature and/or documented prior program experience.

**Project Description:** Specific project activities and services to be developed and/or provided are clearly described. Program characteristics and features that will ensure project success are clearly identified. The project and associated costs are clearly defined.

**Population to be Served:** The applicant describes the goals and target population to be served.

**Goals and Objectives:** Applicant addresses how they will accomplish their stated goals and objectives, number of customers they intend to serve, and clearly describes the types of services which will be provided. Goal statements provide an overall understanding of the impact the project will have on the identified issue/problem. Objectives are clear, complete, concise, realistic, measurable, and relate to the goal statement. Outcomes are described in measurable terms.

**Quality Assurance Plan:** Define the outcome, impact, or product you intend to achieve and/or develop. Explain how you will document the progress on your objectives and explain how you will measure the degree to which your grant-funded

activities are achieving the intended outcome, impact, or product.

**Collaboration:** Project/program actively collaborates with other agencies and groups in the communities for purposes of resource sharing, coordination of efforts and addresses duplication of services. Evidence is provided of past successful collaboration projects.

**Budget:** The budget is reasonable, necessary, and efficient to complete this project. Budget document is completed with accuracy, including a budget narrative that describes in detail all project costs listed on the budget page.

The OSS may fund those applicants whose proposals meet the goals of the grant program. Please read these grant application instructions thoroughly.

### 3.6 Reconsideration Process

Selection criteria will be strictly adhered to and some requests may not be funded. Any applicant receiving notification of a denial of funding may exercise its right to request reconsideration if done so within six calendar days after receipt of the denial notification. The OSS will make a final decision based on the request for reconsideration. Any applicant requesting reconsideration must submit, in writing, all rebuttal information with the request for reconsideration to the OSS. Reviews will be limited to the reasons, documented in the notification letter, for which the application was denied. In all cases, the decision of the OSS will be final.

### 3.7 Rejection of Proposals

The OSS reserves the right to reject any and all applications, to waive informalities and minor irregularities in the applications received and to accept any portion of the application for funding if deemed to be in the interest of the State of Colorado. The OSS reserves the option of holding for further consideration those applications with merit which were not funded.

Any further consideration is dependent upon the availability of funds.

### 3.8 General Specifications

By submitting the application, the applicant attests that:

- 1) Applicant's signatory contact person has the authority to submit on behalf of the applicant's organization;
- 2) Submission of an application indicates the applicant's acceptance of all conditions and terms contained in this document, and all other terms and conditions of the award contract;
- 3) Recipients of the grant program must adhere to, and be in full compliance with any, resulting grant contract, and relevant State policies and regulations.

### 3.9 Special Conditions

- 1) All recipients funded through this grant program agree to provide OSS, upon request at any time during the life of the grant contract, such cooperation and information deemed necessary by OSS.
- 2) Failure to comply with any of the requirements, as listed above, may result in

sanctions up to and including the immediate suspension and/or revocation of the grant award.

#### 4 ATTACHMENTS

Attach the following document(s):

1. Completed application (Project Budget and Signature (Including an electronic certified signature) tab **MUST** be submitted as an Excel file)
2. A copy of your organization's MOU
3. A copy of the schools' crisis management plan (Emergency Operations Plan)
4. A copy of your organization's recently signed current W-9

#### 5 QUESTIONS

Questions regarding the School Access for Emergency Response Grant Program (SB 18-158) should be directed to the following email address: [cdps\\_oss\\_safer@state.co.us](mailto:cdps_oss_safer@state.co.us)  
Please check the website [OSS.colorado.gov](http://OSS.colorado.gov) frequently for any updates.

For any technical assistance completing your application, please reach out to the Grants team at [cdps\\_oss\\_safer@state.co.us](mailto:cdps_oss_safer@state.co.us)