



FY25 Stronger Connections Grant

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Federal Programs and Oversight*

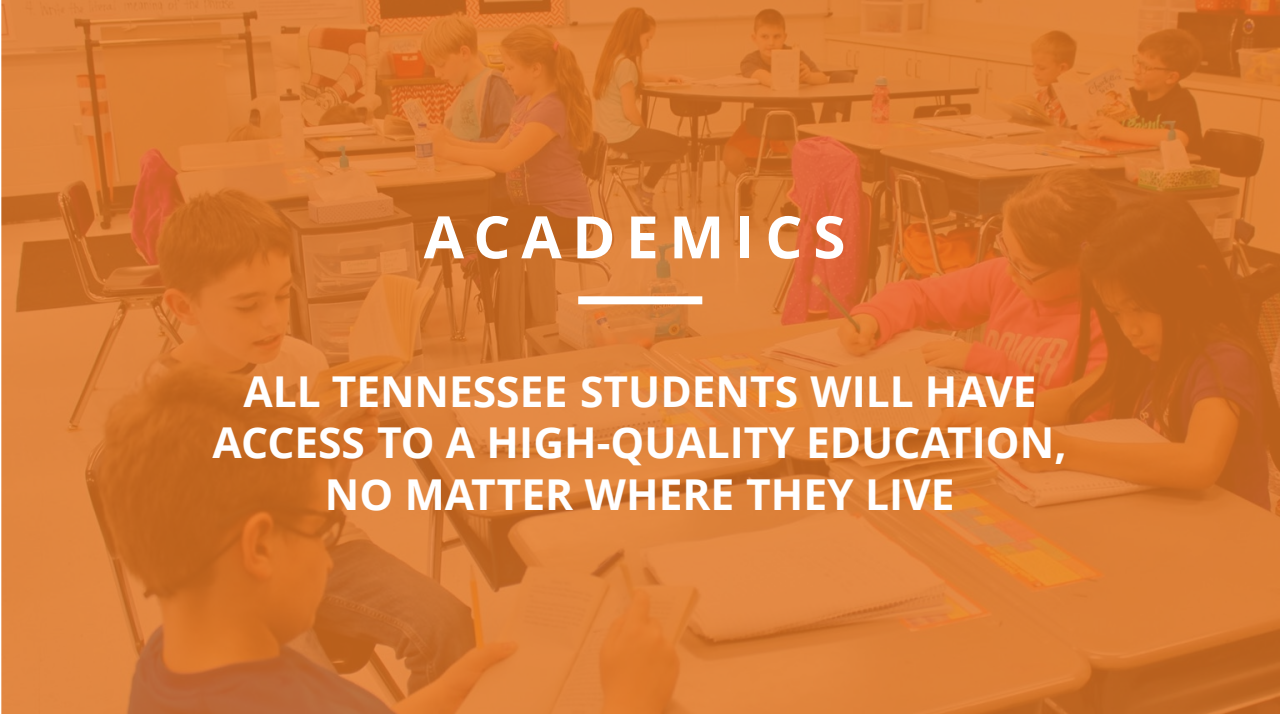


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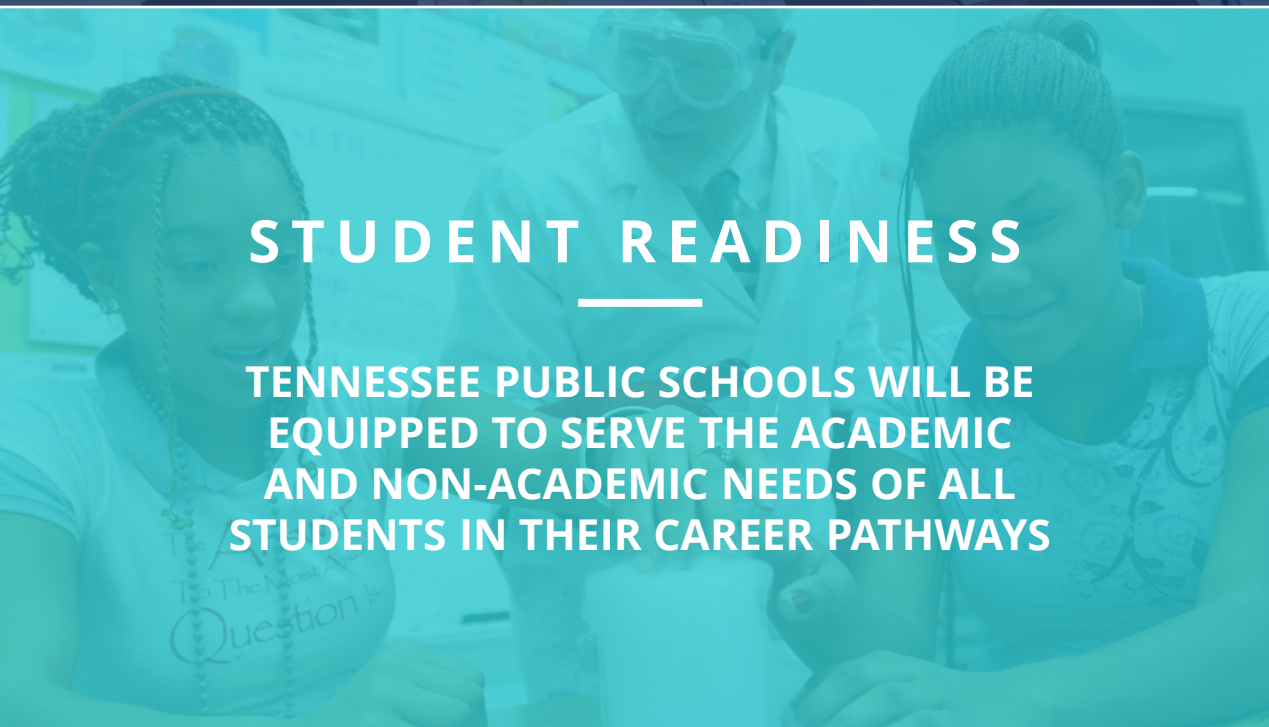
BEST FOR
ALL

We will set all students on a path to success.



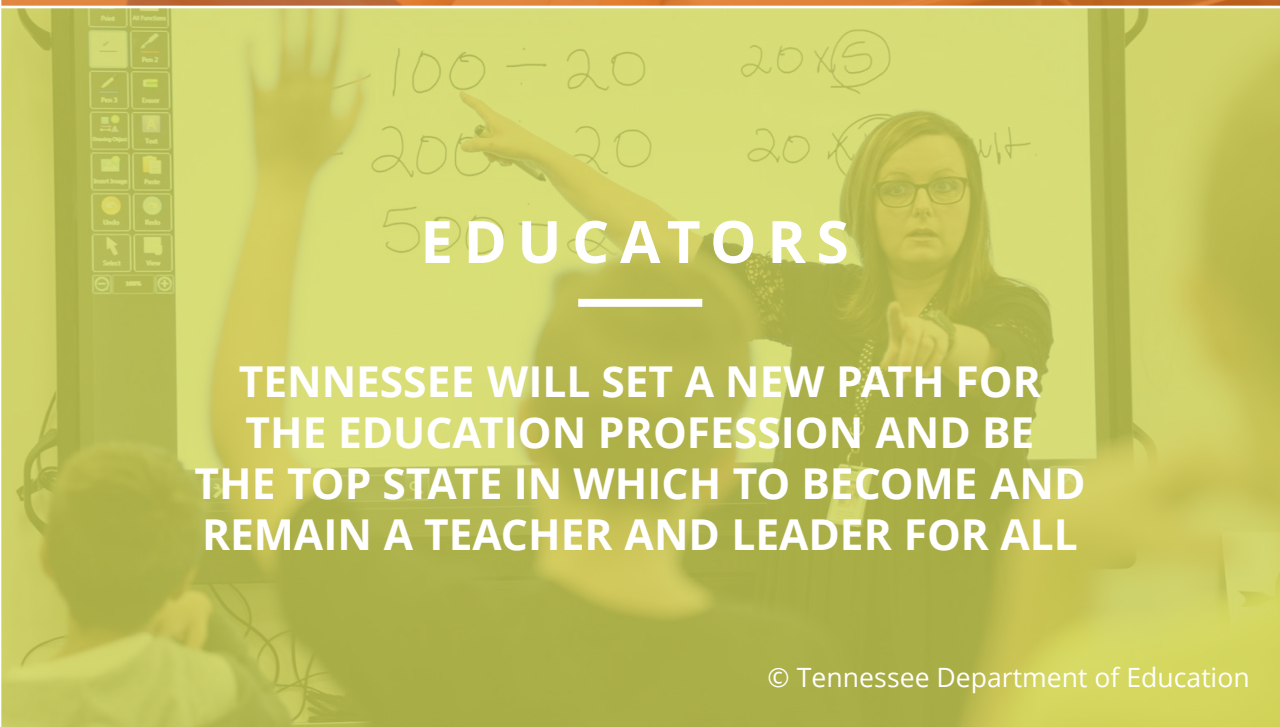
ACADEMICS

ALL TENNESSEE STUDENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION, NO MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE



STUDENT READINESS

TENNESSEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL BE EQUIPPED TO SERVE THE ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS IN THEIR CAREER PATHWAYS



EDUCATORS

TENNESSEE WILL SET A NEW PATH FOR THE EDUCATION PROFESSION AND BE THE TOP STATE IN WHICH TO BECOME AND REMAIN A TEACHER AND LEADER FOR ALL












Agenda

- FY25 Stronger Connections Grant Overview
- SCG Reminders
- Steps for FY25
 - Complete the FY24 FER
 - Complete the FY25 Application
- Equitable Services
- Program Reporting and Monitoring
- Resources



SCG Resources

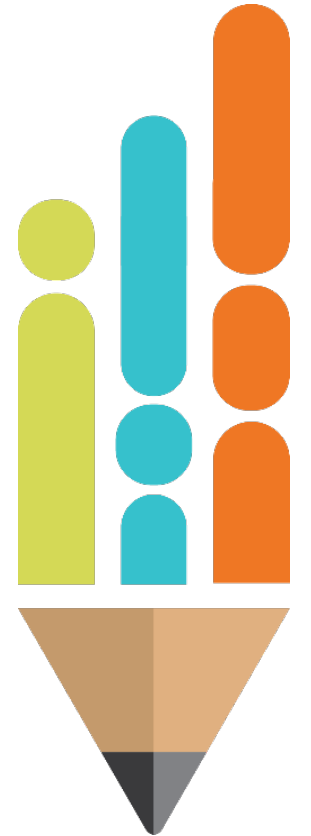
- As a reminder, Stronger Connection Grant (SCG) resources may be accessed in [ePlan > TDOE Resources](#) > ESSA Information, Guidance, PPTs, & Webinars > Stronger Connections Grant Program > Stronger Connection Grant Program.

-  **Stronger Connections Grant Program**
 -  **Public Comment and Application Period**
 -  [FY24 Stronger Connection Grant Office Hours 2023-04-21](#)
 -  [Stronger Connections Grant Technical Guide 2023-04-21](#)
 -  [Stronger Connections Grant Recipient Overview Slides 2023-07-18](#)
 -  [Non-Public School Intent to Participate Form Stronger Connections Grant 2023-03-31](#)
 -  [Equitable Services Affirmation and Agreement Form Stronger Connections Grant 2023-03-31](#)
 -  [Dear Colleague Letter: Stronger Connections Grant Program](#)
 -  [Frequently Asked Questions: Stronger Connections Grant Program](#)

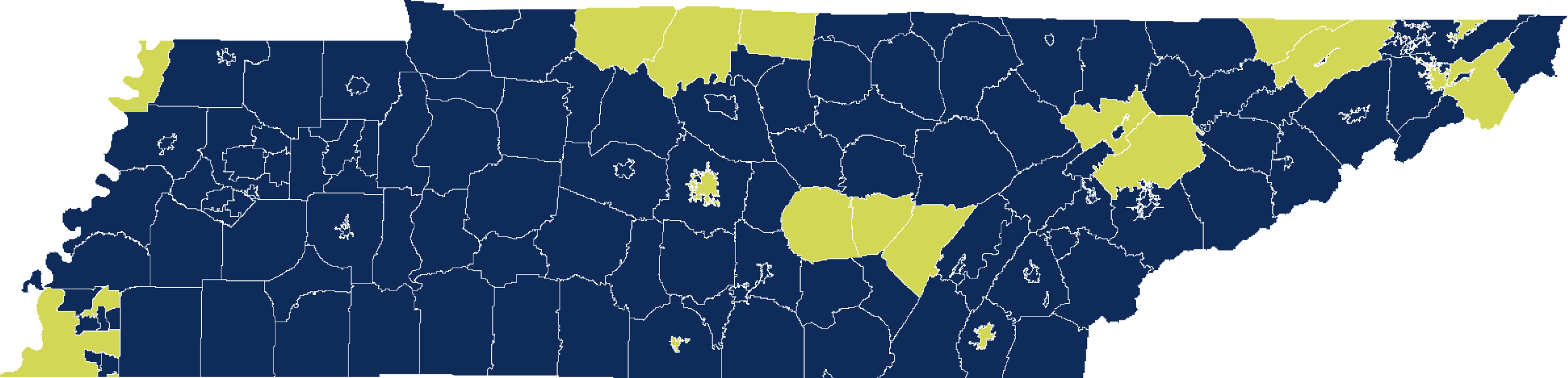
FY25 Stronger Connections Grant Overview

Background

- On June 25, 2022, President Biden signed into law the [Bipartisan Safer Communities Act \(BSCA\)](#), which includes \$1 billion through Title IV, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for state educational agencies (SEAs) to competitively award subgrants to high-need local education agencies (LEAs).
- The U.S. Department of Education (ED) has designated this component of the BSCA the Stronger Connections Grant (SCG) program.
- The purpose of the SCG is to establish safer and healthier learning environments, and to prevent and respond to acts of bullying, violence, and hate that impact school communities at individual and systemic levels, among other programs and activities.
- Detailed information regarding the SCG can be found in ED's [Stronger Connections Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions](#).



Stronger Connections Grant- Awarded LEAs



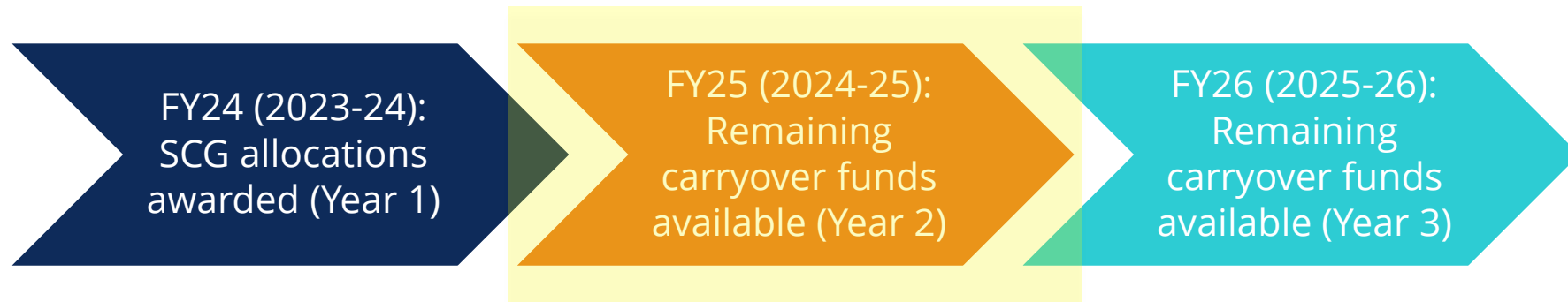
Anderson County Schools	Hancock County Schools	Memphis-Shelby County Schools
Bledsoe County Schools	Hawkins County Schools	Murfreesboro City Schools
Bristol City Schools	Johnson City Schools	Robertson County Schools
Carter County Schools	Knox County Schools	Sumner County Schools
Cleveland City Schools	Lake County Schools	Van Buren County Schools
Fayetteville City Schools	Macon County Schools	Warren County Schools

SCG Reminders



Funding Timeline

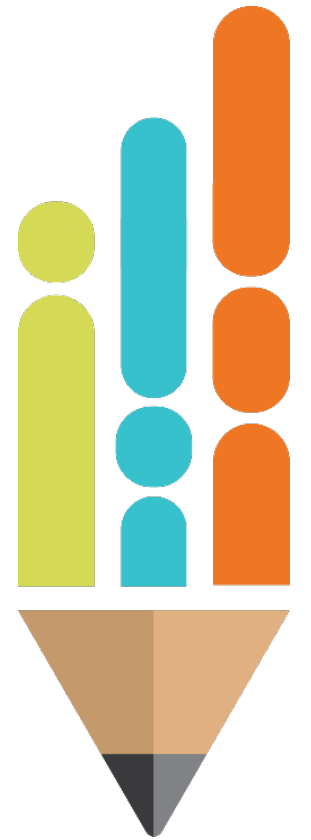
- The SCG is one-time funding: **LEAs have until Sept. 30, 2026 to obligate all grant funds.**
- LEAs who are granted an award received their total SCG allocation in FY24.
- LEAs submit a multi-year budget and then carry over the remaining funds into the next fiscal year (including funds for equitable services) through the annual completion of a final expenditure report (FER) and the SCG application in ePlan.



Allowable Uses of Funds

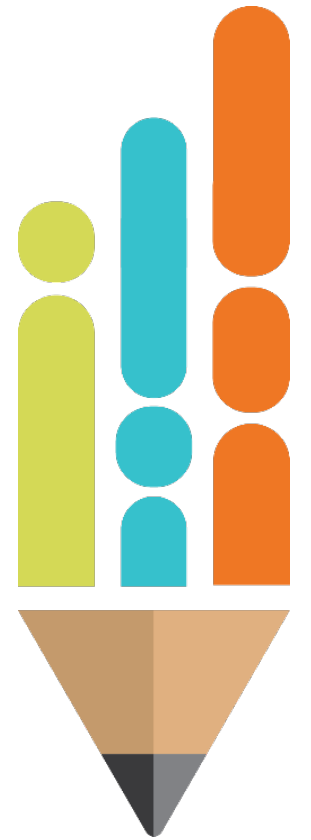
In Tennessee, the SCG is structured around allowable activities in four (4) focus areas:

1. Mental Health/Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Supports for Students
2. Mental Health/SEL Professional Development (PD) for Educators, SROs, Administrators, and Other Staff
3. Parent and Family Engagement (e.g., training and resources for families focused on mental health/SEL)
4. Improving School Climate and Culture



Stakeholder Involvement

- Engaging students, parents, families, and community members is critical to the successful implementation of activities supported by SCG funds.
- LEAs must provide **ongoing** and meaningful opportunities for educators and staff to be involved in the selection of evidence-based strategies and activities implemented under the SCG.
- Documentation of stakeholder involvement must be collected and maintained throughout the life of the SCG. Examples of documentation may include, but are not limited to:
 - Meeting invitations, agendas, sign-in sheets, minutes, etc.
 - Survey and survey results
 - Printed material or other communications regarding the SCG



Steps for FY25



FY25 Application Timeline

Event	Deadline
FY24 SCG FER due in ePlan	Aug. 15, 2024
FY25 SCG budgets and other revisions due in ePlan	Sept. 15, 2024
FY25 SCG Equitable Services Affirmation and Agreement forms due in ePlan	Sept. 15, 2024
Ongoing revisions after initial FY25 approval	Submit as needed





Step 1: Complete the FY24 FER

- To move SCG carryover funds into the FY25 application, the FY24 FER must be completed, submitted, and approved.
- FY25 FERs must be submitted no later than **Aug. 15, 2024**.
 - Best practice recommends submitting the FER in July.
- Instructions on how to complete the FER can be found [here](#).
- FERs are approved by the Regional Finance Consultants. You can find contact information for your LEA's consultant [here](#).
- Additional resources around year end close and FER reporting can be found in [ePlan > TDOE Resources](#) > *Fiscal - District Technical Assistance > Year-end Close and Final Expenditure Reporting*.



Step 2: Complete the FY25 SCG Application

- Once the FY24 FER has been approved, all remaining carryover funds will move to the FY25 application in ePlan.
 - The FY25 SCG application will be available in ePlan in early July 2024.
- Navigate to the SCG application from the ePlan homepage by hovering your mouse over the *Funding* tab on the left menu bar, then selecting *Funding Applications*.
- Select the desired fiscal year (2025) in the upper left corner of the screen. Funding applications are stored in ePlan according to the state fiscal year; 2025 indicates the 2024–25 school year.

The screenshot displays the ePlan application interface. At the top, there are two dropdown menus: the first is set to '2025' and the second is set to 'All Approved Applications'. Below these are two main sections: 'Entitlement Funding Application' and 'Competitive Funding Application'. Under 'Entitlement Funding Application', there are two items: 'Consolidated' and 'CTE Perkins Basic'. Under 'Competitive Funding Application', there are five items: '21st CCLC Cohort 2023', 'CTE Perkins Reserve', 'Lottery for Education: Afterschool Programs (LEAPS)', 'Stronger Connections Grant', and 'Voluntary Pre-K'. The 'Stronger Connections Grant' item is highlighted with a red box, and the '2025' dropdown menu is also highlighted with a red box.

Step 2: Complete the FY25 SCG Application

- Complete the **Cover Page, Needs Assessment, Spending Plan, Personnel, and LEA Program Administration** pages as needed to align with the final budget.
- Based on your carryover funds, complete your budget.
 - Enter the budget on the **Budget** page of the application.
 - See pp. 16-20 of the [SCG Technical Application Guide](#) for assistance with the *Budget* page.
- If the LEA has participating non-public schools, complete the **Equitable Services** page.
 - See pp. 11-13 and 25-26 of the [SCG Technical Application Guide](#) for assistance with this section of the application.

FY25 Needs Assessment Page

For FY25, **refer back to the needs assessment submitted as part of the initial grant application** (see FY24 application or PDF in *Related Documents*) to complete the prompts on this page.

More information regarding the required Needs Assessment can be found in the [Stronger Connections Grant Technical Guide](#).

For FY25, refer back to the needs assessment submitted as part of the initial grant application (see FY24 application or PDF in Related Documents) to complete the prompts below.

FY25 Needs Assessment

* **Year One Evaluation:** Reflect upon and evaluate the first year of SCG implementation. Provide relevant data in your response. (1) Describe the successes and challenges of year one. (2) Based on your evaluation, what changes need to be made in year two?

Check Spelling

0 of 36000 characters

* **Stakeholder Engagement:** Describe how the LEA will continue to provide ongoing and meaningful opportunities for students, families, community partners, educators, and staff to be involved in the selection of evidence-based strategies and activities implemented to be funded through the SCG program

Check Spelling

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LEA Program Administration Page

- Program administration is the reasonable and necessary costs to manage the federal grant in a compliant and effective manner.
- Awarded LEAs may charge up to **2% of the total allocation** (i.e. amount awarded in year one) as direct administrative costs.
 - Grantees should calculate how much admin is remaining from year one and enter information based on that amount on this page.
- Indicate whether:
 - The LEA is utilizing grant funds to administer the SCG (maximum of 2%). Complete the table and narrative prompt; or
 - The LEA is not utilizing grant funds to administer the SCG. Provide information on how the grant program will be administered, including the title of the staff responsible for the grant administration, the FTE(s), and the other funding sources that will contribute to administrative staff salaries/benefits.
- Utilize the *Copy Previous Fiscal Year Details* link at the top of the page to copy last year's information in the FY25 application.

Personnel Detail Pages

- Complete the pages to align with the budget. Click N/A at the top of each page if not applicable.
 - **Systemwide** (funded with SCG funds and work across multiple school sites as needed)
 - **Regular School Year - K-12 School-Level** (funded with Stronger Connections Grant and work in schools during the regular school year)
 - **Summer School - K-12 School-Level** (Summer school personnel funded with SCG)
- Utilize the *Copy Previous Fiscal Year Details* link at the top of the Personnel pages to copy last year's information to the FY25 application.

Note: *FTEs must match FTEs identified in budget narratives (individually and sum). Titles of staff must match titles identified within the budget narratives and Spending Plan page.*



Spending Plan with Budget Tag Autofill Page

As you are completing the *Spending Plan* page, please remember:

- Amounts listed for each focus area will auto-populate based on the budget tags used on the *Budget* page.
- Grantees may consider manually copying and pasting narrative information from the FY24 application to this page.
 - Information must be edited to align with the FY25 budget.
- Each narrative on the *Spending Plan* page must be complete and include all requested information.
- Be sure all purchases are discussed in full on the *Spending Plan* page.
- If a project will span multiple years, please provide these details on the *Spending Plan* page.

Budget Page

- Users may copy FY24 budget line items and narrative descriptions into the FY25 application.
- ***Important:*** *The decision to copy a previous year's budget must be made before entering the current year's budget information. If a user makes a single budget entry, the link to copy budget details becomes unavailable.*
- Once copied, please make changes where dollar amounts and narratives have changed since the previous year.
- To copy last year's budget, click ***Copy 2024 Budget Detail***. Click the verification link ***Copy***.

Copy 2024 Budget Detail Upload Budget Data Download Budget Data	
Modify All	Account Number
Modify	71100 - Regular Instruction Program
Modify	71150 - Alternative Instruction Program
Modify	72120 - Health Services
Modify	72130 - Other Student Support
Modify	72210 - Support Services/Regular Instruction Program

Budget Page

- Budget tags are required in the SCG application and will populate the amount to be spent in each focus area on the *Spending Plan* page.
- The SCG budget tags are based on the subgrant focus areas:
 - Mental Health/SEL Supports for Students
 - Mental Health/SEL PD for Staff
 - Parent and Family Engagement
 - Improving School Climate and Culture
 - SCG Administration (2% max of total allocation)

Budget Detail	
Account Number:	72210 - Support Services/Regular Instruction Program ▾
Line Item Number:	189 - Other Salaries & Wages ▾
Use of Funds: (Select at least 1, and up to 1 tag(s))	Select Tag ▾
Optional Program Code:	<input type="text"/>
Location Code:	Achievement School District (985) ▾
Quantity:	<input type="text" value="1.00"/>
Cost:	<input type="text" value="\$0.00"/>
Budget Detail Total:	\$0.00

Budget Page

In addition to being allowable under ESSA § 4108 and meeting the intent of one or more of the SCG focus areas, activities funded with SCG funds must meet the following fiscal requirements:

1. Be **reasonable and necessary** for the performance of the grant;
2. Be **allocable** to the grant;
3. **Supplement and not supplant** other non-Federal funds (i.e., state and local funds) that would otherwise be used to pay for authorized activities;
4. Not be of the **prohibited activities** in ESEA § 4001(b) or § 8526; and
5. Be consistent with any other applicable **Uniform Guidance provisions** (see [2 C.F.R. 200 et seq.](#), in particular, 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E).

Note: Narrative descriptions within the application and budget pages must contain details making it evident that all purchases and programs meet the above requirements.



Equitable Services



Equitable Services Overview

- Funding for the SCG program is provided through ESEA Title IV, Part A; therefore, LEAs receiving grant funds must provide equitable services to eligible non-public school students and educators.
- ESEA § 8501(a)(4) requires an LEA to ensure that its expenditures for equitable services for eligible non-public school students and educators under covered ESEA programs are equal on a per-pupil basis to the expenditures for participating public school students and educators, taking into account the number and needs of the eligible non-public school students and educators.
- In other words, the proportionate share for participating non-public schools must be based on the total enrollment of the non-public school—just as it works for equitable services under Title IV, Part A.



**Equitable Services
Requirements for
LEAs
Awarded SCG Funds**

Consultation requirements:

- Continue to engage participating non-public school public officials in ongoing, timely, and meaningful consultation.
- LEAs may choose to utilize the [Stronger Connections Grant Affirmation and Agreement Form](#) to document the consultation process or may design their own method.
- Provide equitable services to eligible non-public school students and educators, ensuring that expenditures for equitable services for eligible non-public school students and educators under the SCG are equal on a per-pupil basis to the expenditures for participating public school students and educators, taking into account the number and needs of the eligible non-public school students and educators.

Within the FY25 SCG application:

- Enter the non-public carryover amount. This should align with non-public purchases in the budget.
- Describe the process and timeline the LEA will utilize to conduct timely and meaningful consultation with non-public school officials in year two.
- Provide a list of participating non-public schools and remaining allocation amounts.
- Describe the services that will be provided to non-public school students with SCG and:
 - How the activities connect to one or more of the SCG focus areas, and
 - How the activities will be evaluated/assessed.
- Upload documentation of meaningful consultation (i.e., the [Stronger Connections Grant Affirmation and Agreement Form](#)) to the SCG application in ePlan by **Sept. 15, 2024**.
- Provide a detailed budget for all non-public school purchases.

Equitable Services

All	Messages	Print
History Log		Print
History Log		Print
Create Comment		
Allocations	Messages	Print
Allocations	Messages	Print
Contacts		Print
Contacts		Print
Stronger Connections Grant	Messages	Print
Budget	Messages	Print
Budget Overview		Print
Cover Page		Print
Needs Assessment		Print
LEA Program Administration		Print
Personnel Details (Systemwide)		Print
Personnel Details (Regular School Year- K-12 School- Level)		Print
Personnel Details (Summer School- K-12 School-Level)		Print
Spending Plan with Budget Tag Autofill		Print
Equitable Services		Print
Related Documents		Print
Assurances		Print
Stronger Connections Grant Checklist		Print
Stronger Connections Grant Checklist		Print
New Applicant Summary		Print
New Applicant Summary		Print
All	Messages	Print

Equitable Services Page

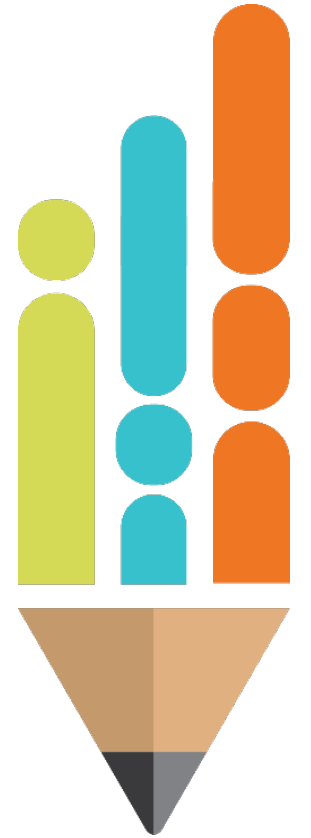
- If there are no participating non-public schools in the LEA, check the box indicating that this page is not applicable. No more information is needed on this page.
- If there are participating non-public schools, only unspent funds from FY24 are available in FY25. Non-public carryover funds will move into the FY25 application at the same time as all other SCG funds.
- Enter the total amount of carryover funds for participating non-public schools.

The screenshot shows a web form with the following elements:

- A checkbox labeled "N/A (The LEA certifies that no eligible non-public schools are in the district.)" is checked and highlighted with a red box.
- A section titled "Stronger Connections Grant" contains a sub-section "Amount for Stronger Connections Grant Equitable Expenditures".
- Within this sub-section, there is a label "Non-Public Carryover Amount" followed by an input field. The input field is preceded by a "*" and a "\$" symbol and is highlighted with a red box.

Equitable Services Page

- Describe the consultation process between the LEA and eligible non-public school(s). In the response, include:
 1. Important dates,
 2. Modes of communication, and
 3. The information provided to non-public school representatives. (Upload affirmation and final agreement form in *Related Documents*).
- Describe the process used to evaluate/assess SCG non-public school activities and/or services.



Equitable Services Page


- List the non-public schools participating in the SCG program for FY25. Provide each school's allocation amount, a brief description of the activities and services that will be provided to each non-public school, and the applicable SCG focus area(s) for the activities.
- Information provided in this section should also align with the information provided in the budget.

List the non-public schools participating in the SCG program. Provide each school's allocation amount, a brief description of the activities and services that will be provided to each non-public school and the applicable SCG focus area(s) for the activities. Information provided below should align with the information provided on the budget page.

Participating Non-Public School Name	SCG Allocation	SCG Activities/Services Description	SCG Focus Area
<input type="text"/>	* \$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Check Spelling"/> 0 of 8000 characters	* Select all that apply <input type="button" value="Clear"/> <input type="text" value="Search..."/> Select All / Deselect All <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health/Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Supports for Students <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health/SEL Professional Development (PD) for Educators, SROs, Administrators, and Other Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Parent and Family Engagement (e.g., training and resources for families focused on mental health/SEL) <input type="checkbox"/> Improving School Climate and Culture

Related Documents

- The SCG Affirmation and Agreement form may also be access in [ePlan > TDOE Resources > ESSA Information, Guidance, PPTs, & Webinars > Stronger Connections Grant Program > Equitable Services Affirmation and Agreement Form](#).

Optional Documents		
Type	Document Template	Document/Link
(SCG) Affirmation and Agreement Form	 (SCG) Affirmation and Agreement Form	Upload New
(SCG) Optional Supporting Documentation	N/A	Upload New

Program Reporting and Monitoring

Program Reporting

- The state must submit an Annual Performance Report (APR) to the US Department of Education each year of the grant.
- The SCG APR requires grantees to:
 - report on the amount of **funds budgeted and expended** under nine reporting categories and
 - report on the **FTEs** funded under seven personnel categories.
 - Include **equitable services purchases** in the report.
- Reporting is required each year funds are expended:
 - FY24
 - FY25
 - FY26



Reporting Categories - Used to report all purchases

School-based mental health services providers and programs

Mentoring or other relationship-building activities

Programs or activities that help prevent bullying and harassment

Implementation of school-wide multi-tiered systems of supports, positive behavioral interventions, and other efforts to improve positive school climates and reduce exclusionary discipline

Programs or activities that address community violence intervention and prevention

After-school programs for students (academic, enrichment, etc.)

School dropout prevention, school reentry programs, and other efforts to keep students on track for academic outcomes

Professional development for educators and school staff, aligned with purposes of the Stronger Connections Grant Program (e.g., creating safe and welcoming school environments, promoting culturally and linguistically responsive practices, etc.)

Other (e.g., threat assessments, sexual abuse awareness prevention programs, anti-drug programs, healthy lifestyle, etc.)

Personnel Categories - Use to report personnel line items

Non-personnel line item

Credentialed school-based mental health service providers

Staff administering school attendance, dropout prevention, and/or reentry programs

Staff implementing after-school programs

Staff who implement and enhance school-wide prevention activities (e.g., multi-tiered systems of supports, positive behavioral interventions and supports, and school climate)

School safety/resource officers or law enforcement

Community school coordinators or other personnel coordinating wraparound/community services and supports

Other personnel related to the purposes of the Stronger Connections Grant Program (e.g., mentoring, anti-drug, anti-harassment, relationship building, etc.)

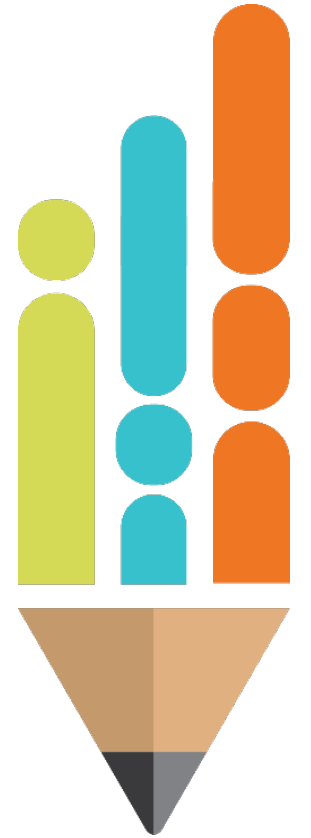
Program Reporting

- Reporting for FY24 is tentatively scheduled to take place this fall.
- More information will be shared as soon as it becomes available:
 - Guidance Documents
 - Activities Crosswalk
 - Webinar
 - Office Hours



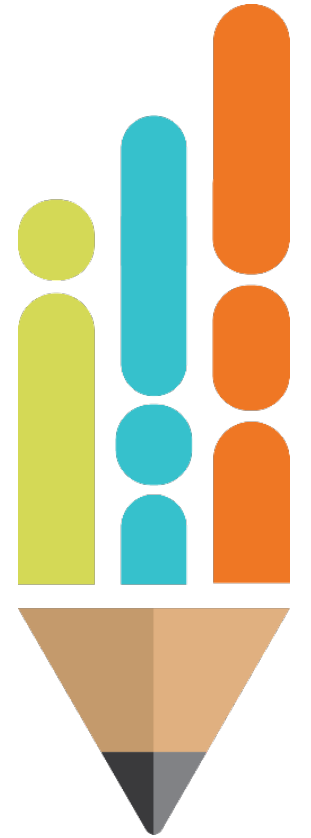
SCG Monitoring

- SCG funds will be monitored in FY25.
- All grantees must complete the ESSA Discretionary Grant monitoring instrument in ePlan.
- Monitoring will consist of a combination of:
 - Agree/Disagree prompts
 - Open response prompts
 - Document uploads



SCG Monitoring

- SCG monitoring will cover the following topics:
 - Fiscal oversight
 - Stakeholder involvement (including evidence of ongoing involvement)
 - Program evaluation
 - Priority use of funds
 - Program goals
 - Grant tracking/monitoring processes
 - Grant spending plan timeline
 - Equitable services processes as applicable



SCG Monitoring Timeline

Event	Date
Discretionary Grant Monitoring Technical Assistance Webinar	Jan. 2025
Discretionary Grant Monitoring office hours	Feb. – March 2025
FY25 ESSA Discretionary Grant Monitoring instrument opens in ePlan	Early Feb. 2025
FY25 ESSA Discretionary Grant Monitoring instrument due in ePlan	Early March 2025
Follow-up and technical assistance provided	Early April 2025

NOTE: Discretionary Grant Monitoring instructions will be posted [here](#).

Resources

Resources

- [ePlan > TDOE Resources](#) > ESSA Information, Guidance, PPTs, & Webinars > Stronger Connections Grant Program:
 - [SCG Technical Application Guide](#)
 - [SCG Equitable Services Affirmation and Agreement Form](#)
 - [Dear Colleague Letter: Stronger Connections Grant Program](#)
 - [Frequently Asked Questions: Stronger Connections Grant Program](#)
 - [Optional SCG Activity Evaluation Template](#)



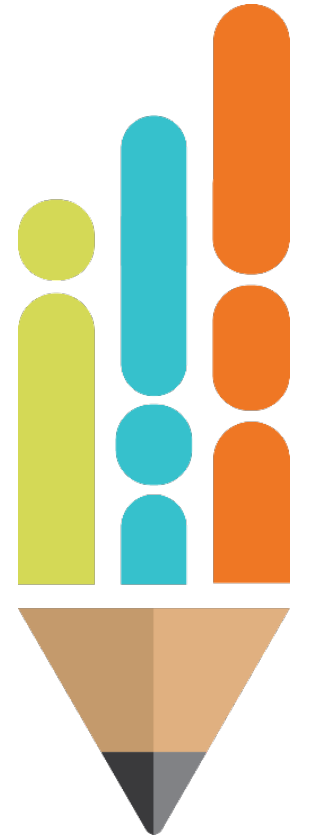
Questions

Contact

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Please Share your Feedback:

Professional Learning Evaluation:
Federal Programs and Oversight
(FPO)





Thank You!

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1-800-232-5454

Notifications can also be submitted electronically at:

<http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/hotline>