

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Public School Districts' Opioid Recovery Trust

Below is a list of frequently asked questions regarding the Request for Proposal ("RFP") process. Please email any questions to info@SchoolDistrictOpioidRecoveryGrants.com.

Q1. How soon can I apply for Public School Districts' Opioid Recover Trust ("Trust") funds?

Districts will be able to apply for Trust funds beginning July 15, 2024, with a deadline for applying for the first phase of the grant making by December 15, 2024. As additional funds are made available in the future, all districts will have another opportunity to apply.

Q2. When are grant applications due?

Applications are due on December 15, 2024.

Q3. When will winning grants be announced and distributed?

Grant awards will be announced by April 15, 2025, to allow districts and partners to incorporate the grants into their planning and budgets for the 2025-2026 year and beyond.

Q4. What is the intended purpose of the grants?

The purpose of the grants is to help public school districts recover from the opioid epidemic and develop responses to enhance educating students harmed by the opioid epidemic. For the purposes of this grant program, students harmed by the opioid epidemic include students born with neonatal opioid withdrawal symptoms, many of whom require special education supports, as well as students who have suffered traumatic family loss and educational interruptions because of the opioid epidemic.

Q5. Who can apply for the grants?

The grants are intended for public school districts (e.g., not private or charter school networks). Districts can apply with partner districts, as well as with partner public agencies and institutions and with private, philanthropic and community organizations. The grant awards, however, will be paid to only the districts.

Q6. Is my district eligible to apply for the grants?

Any district is eligible to apply for a grant if it is an independent public school district (e.g. not a charter or private school network).

Q7. Does receiving notice of the Trust mean that my district is a party to any litigation against any opioid defendant?

Neither receiving notice of the Trust nor applying for a grant from the Trust makes your district a party to litigation against any opioid defendant.

Q8. What will be the criteria for receiving a grant award?

Funding from the trust will be evaluated based on the specific criteria outlined in the Request for Proposal (RFP). The overall intent of the grant program is for funding to go where it will have the greatest impact, whether classroom services, school-based behavioral and mental health supports, instructional innovations, or other district and school-based supports that directly impact students harmed by the opioid epidemic.

In assessing applications and making grant award decisions, applications will be reviewed based on at a minimum the following:

- a. Geographic areas or districts most affected by the opioid crisis.
- b. Low per pupil spending or underfunding in school districts.
- c. Grant proposals focused on especially vulnerable students or categories of students where the potential gains are likely to be highest.
- d. Evidence of a clear logic of action in the proposal linking the problem or opportunity described to its root causes, and the strategies proposed to address it.
- e. A commitment to sustain programs funded by the grant beyond the time of the grant.
- f. The development or expansion of model programs and direct services in support of these especially vulnerable students designed in ways that can be replicated and scaled elsewhere.
- g. The development of innovative practices in support of these especially vulnerable students that can be piloted and tested for later replication and scale elsewhere.
- h. Engagement and coordination with families, communities, and other civic actors, such as government agencies that also have responsibility for students harmed by the opioid crisis.
- i. Evidence that the funds received will be used to leverage other funds in support of students harmed by the opioid epidemic, thus increasing the impact of the grant and the resources available to these students.

This is not an exhaustive nor final list of criteria that districts will be evaluated on. Grantees are encouraged to read the RFP thoroughly and respond accordingly.

Q9. What types of grants can my district apply for?

Districts can apply for one or more of three types of grants, each with a maximum grant value of \$500,000, to be drawn down and used three fiscal years after the grants have been distributed.

Applicants that apply for multiple grants shall submit a separate proposal, budget, and supporting documentation for each grant type.

These types of grants are:

1. **District Improvement Grants**, intended to help districts of all sizes respond to system-wide challenges triggered by the opioid epidemic. In applying for these grants districts should consider how they coordinate and align their resources with complementary resources in their wider communities in support of services for students harmed by the opioid crisis. These grants might include efforts to improve:
 - The identification of these students in need, as well as the processes and structures that channel these students into available services, especially special education services
 - The types of school programs and modifications available for these students given their needs,
 - The capacity of adults in districts to support these students,
 - The tools with which districts assess the progress of these students and respond accordingly to their needs, and
 - The bridges between the district and its schools, and among the district and surrounding civic and community resources to maximize opportunities for these students and augment the capacity of the district to serve them.

We encourage districts to partner with external agencies and organizations in applying for this type of grant. We also encourage small and/or rural districts to partner with each other to leverage resources and achieve economies of scale.

2. **Model Programs and Best Practices Grants** These grants will help districts build or adopt model programs, based on evidence, to support students harmed by the opioid crisis, including programs and best practices in areas such as teaching approaches, curricular modifications, extended learning opportunities, mental health supports and

restorative practices, forms of acceleration and enrichment, and using technology to foster student engagement and increase student learning, etc.

Districts can apply for these grants with external civic and community partners or with partner districts. We are primarily interested in improving special education programs serving these students, but we are also interested in the development and improvement of programs that address the needs of these harmed students before classification or in cases when these students have not been classified.

- 3. Innovation Grants** These grants will enhance the ability of districts to introduce and test new, innovative approaches to support students impacted by the opioid crisis. These approaches can be at the level of the student, the class, the school and/or the district in relation to the family and community and include areas such as teaching approaches, curricular modifications, extended learning opportunities, mental health supports and restorative practices, forms of acceleration and enrichment, and using technology to foster student engagement and increase learning, etc.

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Q10. Does the application require letters of support?

Letters of support from partners are welcomed but not a requirement of the application.

Q11. Are there any restrictions on the use of the funds?

The funds must be used exclusively for the purposes described in the RFP. The grants **cannot supplant funding for legally mandated or existing services**. They must extend, expand, or be used to provide new services to students harmed by the opioid epidemic. To be awarded a grant, districts must provide evidence of this commitment in their proposals and will attest to compliance with this requirement as part of the terms and conditions of the award, as well as through ongoing reporting and monitoring. Funds cannot be used for research activities.

Q12. How do I remain up to date on the latest developments with the trust?

Submit a Notice of Intent to Apply! Enroll for updates on the trust website and check your email address for updates from the Special Trustee. Also check for announcements and updates on the grant-making process here <https://SchoolDistrictOpioidRecoveryGrants.com>.

Q13. Does registering my district's interest in the Trust commit my district in any way?

Registering for updates and expressing interest or intention to apply for any type of grant does not commit your district in any way. Your information will be used to communicate with you in the future and to help the Trust plan for the intake and review process.

Q14. Is there an application fee?

No, there is no fee to apply for a grant under this Program.

Q15. Where does the grant money come from?

The money comes from settlements of litigation between school districts and opioid distributors, manufacturers, pharmacies, and other entities involved in the opioid crisis.

Q16. Does applying for a grant involve the district in any litigation?

Applying for a grant does not involve the district in any litigation. If the district is successful in its application, it will agree to the terms and conditions set forth in the RFP, [provided here](#).

Q17. What is the Trust and who are the trustees?

You can read about the Trust [here](#).

The trustees are Dr. Andres Alonso, the Special Trustee, and Truist Bank, Trustee. Truist Bank is the administrative trustee (<https://www.truist.com/>). Truist holds trust funds and makes distributions under the direction of the Special Trustee. As Special Trustee, Dr. Alonso is spearheading the program design and evaluation metrics of the grant program. He will also work collaboratively with a review team to ensure an open, fair, competitive process. With his educational expertise and leadership, Dr. Alonso holds the overall program authority and will serve as the primary decision-maker guiding the program to achieve its strategic objectives. Dr. Alonso has extensive experience in education. He has served in all levels of public education including having served as CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools, Deputy Chancellor for Teaching and Learning for New York City Schools, and Professor of Practice at Harvard Graduate School of Education, where he co-chaired its Public Education Leadership Project (PELP). Dr. Alonso taught English Language Learners and students with disabilities for more than a decade at Newark, New Jersey public schools. He has served as trustee in numerous public and non-profit boards, including the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGBE), the William T. Grant Foundation, and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. He is a former trustee of Teachers College of Columbia University and still serves in its President's Advisory Council. He presently serves as a trustee

of Data Quality Campaign, the Center for Collaborative Education, the Panasonic Foundation, and Scholastic Corporation.

Q18. What is the Committee of Public-School Districts' Representatives (PSDR)?

The PSDR is a committee of three to five individuals with experience in education to counsel, advise, and facilitate communication between public school districts and the Special Trustee, as well as to inform the Special Trustee and support the interests of school districts. The three individuals presently serving as districts representatives are Ricardo Adams, former board member of Rochester Public Schools; Karl Kristoff, general counsel at Orleans-Niagara BOCES in New York, and formerly a partner at Hodgson Russ LLP and counsel to many districts; and Lindsey McIntosh, General Counsel at Kanawha, WV County Board of Education.

Mr. Adams retired from Center for Youth in 2022. He has been involved with multiple public education groups as well as completing a four year term on the Rochester City School Board in January of 2024. Ricardo's wife Mary also served on the School Board for six years. He has two daughters currently attending Rochester City School District. One is a sophomore, and the other is a senior heading to Howard University in the fall.

Mr. Kristoff is general counsel of Orleans-Niagara BOCES in the state of New York. Previously, he was an attorney with the Buffalo New York law firm of Hodgson Russ LLP. He has been engaged almost exclusively in the practice of school law for more than 40 years. He has been admitted to practice in the courts of both New York and Illinois as well as the United States Supreme Court. In addition to his law practice, Karl has served on the adjunct faculties of the State University of New York at Buffalo Schools of Education and Law, and currently serves as an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the School of Education of the Buffalo State University

Ms. McIntosh is a West Virginia native and a graduate of West Virginia University. Her tenure as Assistant General Counsel to Cabinet Secretary at the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources gives extraordinary insight into the issues districts and communities experience tackling the opioid epidemic. She presently serves as general counsel at Kanawha, WV County Board of Education.