K-12 Guide to
Funding Digital Safety

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About this document

These days digital safety is far more than just staying away from inappropriate websites. Today's definition of digital safety has expanded to cover social media, cyberbullying, network dangers, cybersecurity, even physical safety as our digital interactions facilitate real-world interactions.

The pressure on schools to foster digital safety is at an all time high yet funding is at an all-time low. There are funds available however.

Finding them and bridging the funding gap is essential to ensuring all students can attend school safe, healthy, and ready to learn.

This guide provides a practical insight into the federal resources available to fund digital safety technology within K-12.

Essential reading for: Technology directors and district administrators looking to improve their digital safety provision.

If you have any questions about threat detection, its implementation or digital safeguarding in general please do not hesitate to contact the Smoothwall team.

We'd be happy to help.

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1.0 E-Rate – Category 2 Services

Grant amount available: $159.669053922 per student (Category 2)

The most popular funding program for digital safety is the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) E-Rate program. It provides discounts to allow qualifying communications products and services more affordable for eligible schools and libraries.

To be eligible for E-Rate funds, schools must comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). This means certifying that they have an Internet safety policy that includes technology protection measures. The protection measures must block or filter Internet access to pictures that:

A	Are obscene
B	Contain child pornography
C	Are harmful to minors (for computers that are accessed by minors).

The funding program is managed by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC).

USAC is a third-party corporation created to collect universal service contributions from telecommunications carriers and administer universal support mechanisms (programs) designed to help communities across the country secure access to affordable telecommunications services.

USAC carries out its functions as the administrator of the federal universal service programs and Universal Service Fund (USF) under the oversight of the FCC.

Funding may be requested under two categories of service:

Category One: Services include Data Transmission Services and/or Internet Access.

Category Two: Services include Internal Connections (IC), Managed Internal Broadband Services (MIBS), and Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections (BMIC): $159.669053922 per student

Discounts for support depend on the category of service requested, the level of poverty and the urban/rural status of the appropriate school district. Discounts range from 20 percent to 90 percent of the costs of eligible services.

Whitepaper

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Today's definition of digital safety has expanded to cover social media, cyberbullying, network dangers, cybersecurity, even physical safety as our digital interactions facilitate real-world interactions.

Smoothwall Insights, 2018.

1.1 Eligible Schools

For purposes of universal service support, schools must meet the statutory definition of elementary and secondary schools found in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001:

- An **elementary school** is a non-profit institutional day or residential school, including a public elementary charter school, that provides elementary education, as determined under state law.

- A **secondary school** is a non-profit institutional day or residential school, including a public secondary charter school, that provides secondary education, as determined under state law, except that such term does not include any education beyond grade 12.

Schools operating as for-profit businesses or that have endowments exceeding $50 million are not eligible. In some cases, non-traditional facilities and students may be eligible.

An Educational Service Agency (ESA), which may operate owned or leased instructional facilities, may be eligible for E-rate Program support if it provides elementary or secondary education as defined in state law.

1.2 Eligible Services

A variety of wireless and wired network equipment, specifically firewalls, as well as maintenance and managed services are eligible for Category 2 funding:

- Wi-Fi equipment such as access points and controllers (on-premise and cloud).

- Wired network equipment such as switches, routers, and firewalls.

- Structured cabling jobs.

- Any software and licenses needed to make eligible equipment functional.

- Installation and configuration of equipment by a vendor.

- Basic maintenance of eligible components.

- Managed internal broadband services.

This is not a comprehensive list. For more details, including caveats and limitations to certain services, you should consult the eligible services list that is published for each funding year.

Note: E-Rate funding is not available for advanced security products such as user devices, security cameras, or servers. Only basic firewall functionality and servers used for caching are eligible for funding. If you are purchasing firewall equipment, you should expect to cost allocate some of the cost as ineligible.

More information: https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/universal-service-program-schools-and-libraries-e-rate

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Chronic stress can have a permanent negative effect on the chemical and physical structures of a child's brain, causing trouble with memory and creativity.

Whitepaper

2.0 STOP School Violence Act

The STOP School Violence Act was introduced in the House of Representatives before the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Its purpose is to build on the research and lessons learned from Sandy Hook and other tragic shootings and scale proven early intervention programming to schools across the country to prevent future school shootings, suicides, and other forms of school violence and victimization.

The legislation authorizes $75 million in grants to states for the purposes of training students, school personnel, and law enforcement to identify signs of violence and intervene to prevent people from hurting themselves or others.

The legislation also encourages the development and operation of anonymous reporting systems. Also the formation of school threat assessment and intervention teams to help intake and triage school threats before tragedy strikes.

Funding is authorized by the U.S. Department of Justice under the Office of Justice Program's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office).

Over 220 grants will be awarded to jurisdictions across the country to help make schools more secure.

The awards, granted through three funding streams, provide new technology for reporting systems and other threat deterrent measures as well as for school safety training and education programs aimed at school administrators, staff, students, and first responders.

2.1 STOP School Violence Threat Assessment and Technology Reporting Program (managed by BJA)

Grant amount available: 68 awards valued at more than $21.5 million (2019)

The Office of Justice Program's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) manages the Department of Justice's STOP School Violence Threat Assessment and Technology Reporting Program.

The program provides 68 awards valued at more than $21.5 million. The STOP School Violence Act is designed to improve school security by providing students and teachers with the tools they need to recognize, quickly respond to, and prevent acts of violence.

This funding supports training to create and operate threat assessment and crisis intervention teams. It also supports the development of technology for local or regional anonymous reporting systems. This technology may be a mobile phone application, hotline, or website.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants are limited to states, units of local government, and federally recognized Indian tribes. The funds are distributed across seven categories. The first six categories are distributed equally among urban, suburban, and rural areas. However, the seventh category, the technology portion of the grant, does not have a population requirement.

Grant allowable uses

School Threat Assessment & Teams:

- Threat assessment for individuals

- Security surveys

- Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) training and implementation

- Target hardening prevention programs with the intention to limit access to school property to prevent acts of school violence

Crisis Intervention Teams:

- Coordination with law enforcement, school officials, and possibly other disciplines in the community

Technology that addresses Anonymous Reporting:

- Apps, hotlines or website development and implementation

- Apps that can assist with school personnel and students during an active shooter incident

- Notification and sharing information with first responders

More information:
https://www.bja.gov/funding/STOPTTA19.pdf

Affordability can be a key concern for many. But the various grants available, together with cost saving initiatives offered by Smoothwall, it shouldn't be a barrier.

2.2 School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP)

Grant amount available: $25 million to 91 jurisdictions (2019)

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) manages the Department of Justice's School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP). COPS will provide nearly $25 million to 91 jurisdictions for school safety measures, including technology, for expedited notification of law enforcement during an emergency.

The following school safety measures will be available through the Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA's) section of the STOP School Violence Act of 2018:

Technology & Security Equipment

- Consistent with best practices for school security, including applicable standards for school security established by a federal or state government agency;

- Findings and recommendations of public commissions and task forces established to make recommendations or set standards for school security;

- And is compliant with all applicable codes, including building and life safety codes.

Eligibility

Applications for SVPP must be submitted by a state, unit of local government (city, county, township, etc.), or its public agencies (state agencies and units of local government agencies, such as, county or city public school systems, public boards of education, police departments, Sheriffs' departments), or Indian tribe. Recipients of SVPP funding must use funding for the benefit of K-12, primary and secondary schools and students.

More information: https://cops.usdoj.gov/svpp

Whitepaper

3.0 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Safe and supportive schools are critical to student success. ESSA provides funding for schools and districts to implement comprehensive school safety.

The law allows States to be flexible in how they design educational systems that best serves the needs of all their children.

This flexibility extends to how a state designs its accountability system, to the interventions it chooses for low-performing schools, to its teacher evaluation system, to how it spends its federal funds in a variety of areas.

ESSA recognizes that student learning is directly affected by school climate and that it is important for schools to provide appropriate supports and services to students who have been exposed to violence and the effects of trauma.

It contains a variety of provisions and programs to provide States, LEAs, schools, and educators with resources and tools to effectively address these issues.

It also enhances reporting requirements to assist parents and the community in knowing and assessing how their schools are assisting children who need these supports.

There is now clear scientific research to show that the environments children are exposed to outside the home and the experiences they bring with them into the classroom greatly affect their ability to learn.

What is less known is the direct impact that these "Adverse Childhood Experiences" (ACEs) have on students' behavior and academic achievement. The statistics are staggering. Forty-six million children in the United States are exposed to violence, crime, abuse, or psychological trauma in a given year — nearly two out of every three children in the country.

There is a direct correlation between these ACES and students' academic and health outcomes:

- Students traumatized by exposure to violence have lower grade-point averages, more negative remarks in their cumulative records, and more reported absences from school than other students.

- Children with two or more ACEs were almost three times more likely to repeat a grade, even when adjusting for demographic characteristics and health factors.

- Trauma can affect sustained and focused attention, making it difficult for a student to remain engaged in school.

- Chronic stress can have a permanent negative effect on the chemical and physical structures of a child's brain, causing trouble with memory and creativity.

3.1 Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

Part A Improving Basic Programs Operated By Local Educational Agencies

This program, by far the largest ESSA program in terms of funding. It provides financial assistance to LEAs and schools with either a high number or a high percentage of students from low-income families.

The purpose of the program is to provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps.

Federal funds are allocated through four statutory formulas that are based primarily on census poverty estimates and the cost of education in each state.

Eligibility

Local Education Agency (LEA)

LEAs target the Title I funds they receive to public schools with the highest percentages of students from low-income families. Schools enrolling at least 40 percent of students from low-income families and also schools that receive a waiver from the State Educational Agency (SEA) of the 40 percent threshold are eligible to use Title I funds.

They must use them for schoolwide programs designed to upgrade their entire educational program to improve achievement for all students, particularly the lowest-achieving students.

State Education Agency (SEA)

Under ESSA, accountability systems can now be state-designed systems, under which states must develop the criteria for identifying and supporting struggling schools. The most important change regarding accountability is that states must include not less than one indicator of school quality or student success, which can include a measure of school climate and safety.

To be eligible for funds, each SEA must submit a State plan to the United States Department of Education that describes its statewide accountability system. SEAs must also demonstrate that they have consulted local school districts in developing their plans.

More information: https://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/index.html

Part D Prevention and Intervention programs For Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, Or At-Risk

This program provides formula grants to SEAs for supplementary educational services to help provide educational continuity for children and youths who are in local, tribal, or state-run juvenile institutions or who are in adult correctional institutions.

Grants help to support young people in making a successful transitions to school or employment once they are released.

Funds are also available to improve educational services to prevent at-risk youths from dropping out of school.

Eligibility

Funds are allocated by formula to SEAs, which make subgrants to the state agencies responsible for educating neglected or delinquent children and youths. However, there is also an LEA program that requires each SEA to reserve from its Title I, Part A allocation, funds generated by the number of children in locally operated institutions for delinquent youths. Funds are awarded to LEAs with high proportions of youths in local correctional facilities to support dropout prevention programs for at-risk youths.

More information: https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg9.html

3.2 Title IV: 21st Century Schools

Part A Student Support And Academic Enrichment

FY 2018 – FY 2020 Authorization: $1,600,000,000

The program is divided into three parts. Each is designed to improve students' academic achievement by increasing the capacity of states, LEAs, schools, and communities to (1) provide students with access to a well-rounded education; (2) improve school conditions for student learning; and (3) improve the use of technology. The law focuses on item two – improving conditions for student learning.

States can use the funds for a variety of activities. These include coordinating with LEAs to reduce exclusionary discipline; implementing evidence-based mental health awareness training programs; and expanding access for school-based counseling and mental health programs. LEAs have to apply to the SEA for funds. The law requires that LEAs receiving over $30,000 do a comprehensive needs assessment that examines, among other things, school conditions for student learning in order to create a healthy and safe school environment.

LEAs have the freedom to implement the programs of their choosing. These programs include school-based mental health services, school-based mental health services partnership programs that are evidence-based and trauma-informed, programs that prevent bullying and harassment, instructional practices for developing relationship-building skills, training for school personnel on effective and trauma-informed practices in classroom management, and child sexual abuse and prevention programs.

Eligibility

This is primarily a formula grant program for states, with smaller sums available for schools operated or funded by the Bureau of Indian Education and for outlying areas.

SEAs will subgrant the bulk of the funds they receive to LEAs. LEAs that receive an award of $30,000 or more must spend at least 20% of their funds on at least one activity in Sec.

4107 (well-rounded education), at least 20% of their funds on at least one activity on Sec. 4108 (improving conditions for student learning), and a portion of their funds on at least one activity under Sec.

4109 (improving the use of technology, but no more than 15% of their total allocation can be used for technology infrastructure).

LEAs that receive less than $30,000 only need to do work in one of those three areas. Subject to some exceptions, no eligible LEA will receive less than $10,000.

More information: https://www2.ed.gov/programs/ssae/index.html

4.0 Conclusion

Today's students face real dangers in the digital world and schools have a responsibility to keep them safe.

Affordability can be a key concern for many. But the various grants available, together with cost saving initiatives offered by Smoothwall, it shouldn't be a barrier.

For more information about Smoothwall's digital safety solutions, to get a quote or to discuss with our experts how we might deliver greater value on your current digital safety provision, please contact us at inquiries@smoothwall.com or visit us.smoothwall.com

Appendices

Further reading

You may also wish to download:

Reducing School Violence with Digital Threat Detection

Our free guide is designed to empower district administrators with the essential knowledge needed to make informed decisions on threat prevention technology for schools

Available at: https://us.smoothwall.com/tech-resource-hub/articles/digital threat detectiong-guide/

Web Filtering in Education: Cloud, On-premise or Hybrid?

Our free guide is designed to empower district administrators with the essential knowledge needed to make informed decisions on threat prevention technology for schools.

Available at: https://us.smoothwall.com/tech-resource-hub/articles/web-filtering-deployment/

Get in touch

To see a free, no-obligation demonstration of Smoothwall Signal or to ask any questions please contact us.

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