



GRANT INFORMATION GUIDE

Title I, Part A Section 1003(a) School Improvement Grant

Maryland State Department of Education

200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Deadline

January 16, 2024
No later than 5:00 p.m. EDT

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Interim State Superintendent of Schools

Najib Jammal

Chief of School Improvement and Supports

Wes Moore

Governor

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Program Description

Title I, Part A Section 1003(a) school improvement funds are derived from a 7% reservation based on the state's total Title I, Part A allocation from the United States Department of Education. The grant is non-competitive and Local Education Agency (LEA) allocations are based on a per pupil formula. The funds awarded under this grant are intended to provide additional support to schools identified by the Maryland State Department of Education for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) as defined in The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i). Schools identified through this process will receive grant funds each of the three years of the school improvement cycle to carry out activities as outlined in ESSA Section 1111(d)(1)(B) for CSI schools and Section 1111(d)(2)(C) for ATSI schools.

Authorization

[Title I Section 1003\(a\) of The Elementary and Secondary Education Act \(1965\) as reauthorized by The Every Student Succeeds Act \(2015\)](#)

GRANT OVERVIEW

Name of Grant Program

Title I, Part A, Section 1003(a) School Improvement Grant

Purpose

The Title I, Part A, Section 1003(a) School Improvement funds provide financial resources to LEAs on behalf of schools identified as CSI or ATSI. School improvement funding supports the identified needs outlined in the school's improvement plan.

- Funds are awarded to districts on behalf of the identified schools. Though the LEA acts as the fiscal agent, Section 1003(a) School Improvement funds support the identified school(s) and may not be used to fund activities in non-identified schools.
- Funds are utilized to support goals/priorities identified in the schools' implementation plans.
- Funds must be expended in alignment with the reporting, monitoring, and level of evidence as defined by ESSA.
- Interventions supported with Section 1003(a) School Improvement funds must be based on strong, moderate, or promising evidence of a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes, as defined in ESEA section 8101(21)(A)(i).

Dissemination

This Grant Information Guide (GIG) will be released on November 9, 2023

Deadline

Applications are due no later than 5:00 p.m. EDT on January 16, 2024.

Grant Period

July 1, 2023 - September 30, 2024

Funding Amount Available

Approximately \$23,500,000

Estimated Number of Grants

Twenty-three (23)

Pre-Submission Questions

Please contact Shanna Edmond, Program Manager, Office of School Improvement and Supports at shanna.edmond@maryland.gov and copy to Tim Norfleet at timothy.norfleet@maryland.gov.

Submission Instructions

The School Improvement Grant application can be downloaded from the MSDE [Office of Grants Administration and Compliance website](#). An electronic copy of the application in .xlsx format together with a signed and dated C-1-25 grant budget in PDF format must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 16, 2024. Email this application to Shanna Edmond, Program Manager, Office of School Improvement and Supports at shanna.edmond@maryland.gov and copied to Tim Norfleet, Coordinator, School Improvement and Title I at timothy.norfleet@maryland.gov.

Approval

Applications will be reviewed and approved on a rolling basis. Complete grant applications will receive approval in writing from MSDE by February 16, 2024. Conditional notice of grant awards (NOGA) will be issued by MSDE to the LEAs eligible and applying for the School Improvement Grant. Refer to NOGA language for grant award compliance.

State Responsibilities

MSDE is responsible for providing required information, data, documentation, and technical assistance to facilitate the grantee's performance of the work and will provide additional assistance when requested.

Program Grant Manager

Charles Kramer, Ed.D.

Director of School Improvement and Supports

charles.kramer@maryland.gov

(410) 767-0321

Eligibility

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with identified schools may submit an application to MSDE, Office of School Improvement and Supports. In the application, LEAs must attest that they will:

- Develop a district plan of support for each school identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement for which the LEA receives school improvement funds;
- Ensure that all identified schools have conducted comprehensive needs assessments to create school improvement plans;
- Monitor schools receiving funds under ESEA Section 1003(a);
- Recruit, screen, select, and evaluate any external partners using a rigorous review process;
- Align other federal, state, and local resources to carry out the activities supported with school improvement funds;
- Modify practices and policies to provide flexibility that enables effective implementation of comprehensive or targeted support and improvement plans, as appropriate; and
- Engage in ongoing efforts to examine the effects of interventions purchased with 1003(a) funds.

Use of Funds

School improvement funds may only be used to support the implementation of CSI and ATSI school improvement plans.

ALLOWABLE

Expenditures must support the intended purpose of the CSI and/or ATSI Program. In addition, all spending must adhere to the Federal Cost Principles that are reasonable, allowable, necessary, and allocable. School Improvement Section 1003(a) funds can be used for the following, but is not all inclusive:

- Evidenced-based strategies, activities, and interventions
- Salaries and positions (central office and school level)
- Equipment
- Stipends (i.e., PD, OST activities)
- Professional learning (Including conferences and travel)
- Material and supplies
- Professional and consultant services
- Software licenses
- High-quality tutoring/interventions
- Extended learning opportunities
- Parent and family engagement activities
- Social emotional learning initiatives
- Food for parents to attend trainings and meetings (must meet Federal Cost Principles)
- District-level activities to support the implementation of comprehensive or additional targeted support and improvement plans.

Parent Family Engagement Food Allowance Guidance	Allowable Costs
Light Snacks	\$3 - \$4 or less
Breakfast	\$4 - \$6 or less
Lunch	\$6 - \$10 or less
Dinner	\$10 - \$14 or less

ALLOWABLE WITH CONDITIONS

- Staff salaries for employees who serve CSI/ATSI identified schools and non-identified schools must be allocable for the portion spent in or supporting CSI/ATSI identified school(s). For example, if a district or school employee serves CSI/ATSI students, parents, or teachers, 50 percent of the time, then school improvement funding should cover a maximum of 50 percent of the employee's salary and each job-related benefit.
- Purchasing office equipment that is required for the daily operation of the LEA's School Improvement office must be reasonable and necessary.
- If a parental involvement meeting or activity for school improvement occurs during a typical mealtime (breakfast, lunch, or dinner), funding may be used to cover the cost of meals or light snacks. If the meeting does not occur during a typical mealtime, the LEA or school may provide snacks only. LEAs and identified schools should make every effort to schedule parent meetings at times other than mealtimes and at convenient times for parents to attend. RSVPs are highly encouraged.

UNALLOWABLE

School Improvement Section 1003(a) funds cannot be used for the following:

- Athletic equipment
- Food or meals for staff meetings/professional learning
- Building construction or maintenance
- School uniforms
- Fundraisers
- Student incentives, gift cards, gifts etc.
- Furniture
- Promotional items or merchandise
- Salaries for staff serving schools not identified for CSI or ATSI or feeder schools
- Office equipment for general use

Application Requirements

COVER PAGE

To complete this section, identify the program manager, and the point of contact (if applicable) for the LEA that MSDE should defer all communication regarding the dissemination, process, and inquiries for the School Improvement Grant Application. Additionally, the LEA should designate a grants fiscal point of contact regarding topics such as reporting requirements and expenditure reports.

Title I Section 1003(a) School Improvement Application Cover Page			
Local Education Agency (LEA)		Select LEA	
Address			
Phone Number		LEA Number	
LEA Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number		Federal Identification Number	
Superintendent's Name		Superintendent's Email	
LEA School Improvement Program Manager			
Primary Contact Name		Primary Contact Title	
Primary Contact Email		Primary Contact Phone	
LEA School Improvement Point of Contact (IF different from the Program Manager)			
Primary Contact Name		Primary Contact Title	
Primary Contact Email		Primary Contact Phone	
LEA Grants Fiscal Point of Contact			
Primary Contact Name		Primary Contact Title	
Primary Contact Email		Primary Contact Phone	

ASSURANCES

Assurances must be signed by the LEA’s superintendent and grant program manager and apply to all parties responsible for the development, oversight, and implementation of the Title I, Part A Section 1003(a) School Improvement grant.

Assurances	
The LEA must assure it will:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that each school the Local Education Agency proposes to serve with this funding will receive all of the state and local funds it would have received in the absence of this funding;• Spend allocated funds at the appropriate school and on allowable expenses at the school;• Ensure funds support activities to improve student achievement in the target areas and subgroups to be addressed regarding status as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) school;• Ensure that any district-level position funded with school improvement funds has an approved job description that specifically identifies the position's responsibilities that support the grant activities, and includes information about how the effectiveness of the position will be measured;• Monitor the proposed activities to ensure goals are being met;• Ensure only evidence-based practices and properly licensed staff are used to support the strategies and action steps in the school's implementation plan;• Implement cycles of continuous improvement;• The LEA may not use Section 1003(a) funds to support district-level activities that include schools that are not receiving Section 1003(a) funds as part of this application;• Ensure Section 1003(a) school improvement funds are used to build the capacity of the building staff and community to sustain school improvement efforts;• Allocate no more than 30% of the total grant award to district-wide school improvement initiatives; and• Submit to MSDE Office of School Improvement by the 15th of each month, a monthly spend down report for the prior month.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I certify that I have read these assurances and will operate the Title I Section 1003(a) School Improvement grant in accordance with these assurances and the program requirements under the ESEA.	
Superintendent Signature:	<input type="text"/>
LEA Name:	<input type="text"/>
Date:	<input type="text"/>

Budget Summary

The Budget Summary is intended to provide a snapshot of how the LEA intends to support high-quality, sustainable school improvement efforts. In this section the LEA will indicate within the various categories which types of activities are to be supported with the school improvement funds. The narrative boxes are meant to allow the LEA to provide a brief description of how Parent and Family Engagement activities are designed to be sustainable and increase the capacity of staff to engage with stakeholders and provide a brief summary of the types of supplies, materials, and equipment to be purchased.

If the LEA is using school improvement funds for additional positions in the central office or in the identified schools, the LEA will enter the total FTE allocable to the grant. If the position title is different than the examples for instruction or support services, enter the title or the name of the position.

Budget Summary	
<p>Title I, Part A Section 1003(a) School Improvement funds are distributed to Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) schools in Maryland via formula. These funds are intended to support high-quality, sustainable school improvement activities that increase student achievement and address the needs of identified schools. Funds are allocated at the district level, and must be spent on activities to support identified buildings.</p>	
<p>Evidence-based Strategies: A requirement is that all funds must be used to implement ESSA Tier 1, 2 or 3 evidence-based strategies (ESSA 8101(21)(B)):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Tier 1 strategy is supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented randomized control experimental studies - A Tier 2 strategy is supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies. - A Tier 3 strategy is supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented correlational studies (with statistical controls for selection bias). 	
<p>District-level Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Grant program administrative or support staff <input type="checkbox"/> Incentive pay for school administrators/staff <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development consultant <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Explain <input style="width: 200px;" type="text"/> 	
<p>Student Services (Only for supplemental learning that does NOT replace core instruction)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers or tutors for supplemental instruction outside of core academic periods <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional paraprofessionals (who meet Title I requirements) for supplemental instruction outside of core academic periods <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Explain <input style="width: 200px;" type="text"/> 	
<p>Support Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Data coach/coaches <input type="checkbox"/> Academic coach/coaches <input type="checkbox"/> Data analysis services <input type="checkbox"/> Counselor or Social Worker <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Explain <input style="width: 200px;" type="text"/> 	

BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

The project’s budget should detail all related expenses. It should demonstrate the extent to which the budget is allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable.

A detailed budget, must include:

- Identification of the specific line item (i.e., what is being purchased?)
- Explanation:
 - Description of the proposed expenditure, which must include details such as number of hours, hourly rate, number of people, and/or frequency and duration of services, etc.
 - Provide a brief budget description that explains how the funds will be used to support each activity.
 - Amounts including how, where, and for what purpose funds were reserved.
- Calculations for the proposed expenditures, including a detailed cost breakdown.
- The total for the proposed expenditure details shared in the calculation column, which must align directly with the calculation (i.e., the calculation must yield this total).

Budget Narrative			
Title I, Part A Section 1003(a) School Improvement			
Detailed Budget Description	Detailed Cost Breakdown	Calculation Total	Total
*Insert additional rows as needed by selecting the cells to be copied, press Ctrl + C, right clicking, selecting 'Insert Copied Cells' in the dropdown, and selecting 'Shift Cells Down' in the pop up window.			
To copy and paste from another document into the cells below, you must paste into the Formula Bar above.			
LEAs may submit their own budget narrative and not use this template as long as the LEA template contains the detailed budget description, a cost breakdown, and a total amount that matches the total of the cost breakdown.			
<p>A detailed budget, must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the specific line item (i.e., what is being purchased?) • Explanation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Description of the proposed expenditure, which must include details such as number of hours, hourly rate, number of people, and/or frequency and duration of services, etc. o Provide a brief budget description that explains how the funds will be used to support each activity. o Amounts including how, where, and for what purpose funds were reserved. • Calculations for the proposed expenditures, including a detailed cost breakdown. • The total for the proposed expenditure details shared in the calculation column, which must align directly with the calculation (i.e., the calculation must yield this total). 			
Salaries & Wages (list separately for each position)			
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
Section Total			\$ -

Here is a sample complete budget narrative for the purchase of supplies for math intervention purposes:

Supplies & Materials			
Math manipulative kits for X evidence-based math intervention for Title I After School Programs in four elementary schools.			\$ 800
Kits include class sets of 25 base ten block sets, calculators, protractors, and graph paper.	20 kits x \$40 each = \$800	800	
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
Section Total			\$ 800

Note: LEAs may submit their own budget narrative and not use the application budget narrative template as long as the LEA’s template contains the detailed budget description, a cost breakdown, and a total amount that matches the total of the cost breakdown.

LEA REQUIREMENTS

Title I, Part A Section 1003(e) outlines the requirements that shall be part of the application in order for an LEA to receive school improvement funds. This section of the application allows the LEA to summarize how it will meet those requirements.

LEA Requirements	
Local Educational Agency (LEA) Requirements (ESSA 1003(e) and 1111(d))	
<p>1. Describe how the LEA will support schools receiving these funds to develop support and improvement plans.</p>	
<p>2. Provide a description of how the LEA monitors schools receiving these funds. Please include the method and timeline for the process the LEA uses.</p>	
<p>3. A.) For any ATSI schools receiving this funding, please provide a description of the additional monitoring supports these schools receive for implementation of the school improvement plan. B.) Describe the action the LEA will take if the improvement plan is unsuccessful after a number of years as determined by the LEA (for example: after 2 years of implementation). If the LEA does not use these funds for ATSI schools, please input N/A.</p>	

SCHOOL ALLOCATIONS

Title I, Part A School Improvement grant funds must be allocated to schools identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI).

These funds should be tied to a school's School Improvement Implementation Plan. When considering potential activities to fund with this grant, please review the building's Implementation Plan, including the Goals, Strategies and Action Steps.

The amount of each school's allocation is at the discretion of the LEA, but in general, schools with higher need should receive a greater allocation. If an LEA chooses to not allocate any school improvement funds from this grant to a school, it should indicate in the box provided the justification for doing so, i.e., the school is receiving additional support from another grant or from additional state or local funds.

If an LEA is reserving funds from the School Improvement grant for district-level activities or staff to support multiple schools, enter this information as well as the amount being reserved for this purpose into the text box.

School Allocations

Title I, Part A School Improvement grant funds must be allocated to schools identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI).

These funds shall be tied to a School Improvement Implementation Plan. When considering potential activities to fund with this grant, please review the school's Implementation Plan including the Goals, Strategies and Action Steps.

If an LEA is choosing to not allocate funds to a CSI and/or a ATSI school in the school allocation ranking table below, please explain the justification doing so.

If an LEA is reserving funds from the School Improvement grant for district-level activities or district staff to support multiple schools, enter this information as well as the total amount being reserved for this purpose into the text box.

Selecting the LEA name from the drop-down will generate the list of identified schools and their federal status. Enter the amount of funds being allocated to each school in the corresponding cell.

In the Rank Order column, enter the rank order in which funds were allocated to each building. If allocating equal amounts to all buildings, enter zero (0) in the Rank Order cell.

LEA Name:

Appendices

The following Appendices are to be used to fulfill the requirements of the grant:

Appendix A: Optional budget narrative worksheet

Appendix B: [Recipient assurances](#)

Appendix C: [C-1-25 MSDE Budget Form](#) (signed and dated)

Appendix D: Job descriptions for positions funded with grant funds

Appendix E: Contracts for any contractual services

Appendix F: MOUs for any external program partners

Carryover and No Cost Extensions (Tydings Amendment)

The statutory authority for the period for obligating and expending carryover funds is the so called “Tydings Amendment,” Section 412(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), 20 U.S.C. 1225(b). Also see section 76.709 of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), 34 C.F.R. § 76.709. In general, under this provision, any funds not obligated and expended during the period for which they were awarded become carryover funds and may be obligated and expended during the succeeding fiscal year. As specified in section 412(b)(2) of GEPA and §76.710 of EDGAR, any such carryover funds must be obligated and expended in accordance with the Federal statutes and regulations that apply to the program and are in effect for the carryover period, as well as the program plan or application submitted and in effect for the carryover period. The State must document and maintain records that reflect separate expenditures of carryover funds for each fiscal year that are in accordance with the approved program applications (originally or as amended) for the fiscal year in which they were awarded.

For each program where an LEA is seeking to carry over funds for use in a subsequent fiscal year, the LEA must notify MSDE in writing of the request to extend their approved application. This request must include a clear rationale for why funds were not expended within the defined grant period and how the extensions will allow the LEA to achieve the intended impact and attain the prior approved measurable goals.

In this section, the LEA will provide a brief rationale for each Title program in which the LEA is requesting the use of carryover funds during fiscal year 2025. If the extension to carry over funds into a new fiscal year includes using those funds to implement programs or provide services not included or significantly changed from the prior approved application, then the request must include as additional appendices completed C-1-25 A and B documents clearly outlining the nature and rationale of these proposed changes.

***NOTE: This section is for information purposes only. LEAs are not required to complete this section for Fiscal Year 2023 awards or any year prior. This will, however, be required for Fiscal Year 2025 and forward.**

Reporting Requirements

Grantees must comply with the following reporting requirements:

Date	Reporting Requirements for Each Year
Monthly on the 15th	Spend-down report for the prior month
Ongoing	Technical assistance, program support, and fiscal and program monitoring. This may include MSDE-led collaborative meetings, site monitoring visits, technical assistance, professional learning, etc.
January 31, 2024	First Fiscal Year 2024 Interim Report due for the period of October 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023, and prior period, if not previously reported.
April 30, 2024	Second Fiscal Year 2024 Interim Report due for the period of January 1, 2024 through March 31, 2024. Complete one C-1-25-C for Fiscal Year 2024 school improvement funds.
July 31, 2024	Third FY24 Interim Report due for the period of April 1, 2024, through June 30, 2024. Complete one C-1-25-C for Fiscal Year 2024 school improvement funds.
August 15, 2024	Last date to submit amendment request for Fiscal Year 2024. Complete one revised C-1-25, C-1-25-A, and C-1-25-B.
October 31, 2024	Fourth Fiscal Year 2024 Interim Report due for the period of July 1, 2024, through September 30, 2024. Complete one C-1-25-C for Fiscal Year 2024 school improvement funds.
November 30, 2024	Final invoices/expenditures must be posted to AFR (without an approved amendment for extension).
December 16, 2024	Final Fiscal Year 2024 Report due for the period of July 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024. Final reports must include the Final Annual Financial Report. Complete one C-1-25-D for Fiscal Year 2024 school improvement funds

Notes: Any requests for amendments must be submitted at least 45 days before the grant period ends, and must be submitted using the C-125-B form found in the [Grant Budget Forms Workbook](#) on the [MSDE grants webpage](#). Final invoices must be submitted no later than 60 days after the grant period ends.

Grant Timeline

This funding opportunity, including all attachments and updates, are found on the [MSDE grants webpage](#).

Date	Reporting Requirements for Each Year
November 9, 2023	The Grant Information Guide and the application for participating are released
November 14, 2023 November 16, 2023	MSDE will hold two virtual customer service support sessions for interested applicants
January 16, 2024	The grant application period closes
December 18, 2023	MSDE Review Committee will begin evaluating proposals on a rolling basis
February 16, 2024	MSDE will complete notifying applicants of the award status
July 1, 2023	Grant period begins
September 30, 2024	Grant period ends

The Maryland State Department of Education will provide participating eligible applicants with a more detailed implementation timeline once the grant period commences. In addition to the activities above, it will include detailed information related to meetings with MSDE staff ensuring continued connection, collaboration, and support throughout the grant period.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Maryland State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry/national origin, color, disability, gender identity/expression, marital status, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. For inquiries related to Department policy, please contact:

Equity Assurance and Compliance Office
Office of the Deputy State Superintendent for Operations

Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street - 2nd Floor Baltimore,
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2595

410-767-0123 - voice

410-767-0431 - fax

410-333-6442 - TTY/TDD

The General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)

Each application must develop and describe the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the project or activity to be conducted with such assistance, by addressing the special needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to overcome barriers to equitable participation.

[Section 427 of the GEPA Form](#)

[Section 427 of the GEPA Notice to All Applicants](#)

Customer Service Support Sessions

MSDE will hold two customer service support sessions for interested applicants. During these sessions, MSDE personnel will provide an overview of the application process. The sessions will be on:

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

10:00 am – 11:00 am

[Click Here to Join](#)

Thursday, November 16, 2023

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

[Click Here to Join](#)

MSDE program staff will also be available to provide customer service throughout the grant application process. During these sessions, MSDE program staff will provide specific guidance regarding the content and requirements relevant to the program. Contact the Office of School Improvement and Supports for additional support.

Office Hours

In addition to the customer service sessions, MSDE will hold three scheduled office hours for interested applicants. During these sessions, MSDE personnel will answer questions and offer additional support to applicants regarding the application.

Tuesday, November 28, 2023

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

[Click Here to Join](#)

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

[Click Here to Join](#)

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

[Click Here to Join](#)

This funding opportunity, including all attachments and updates, can be downloaded from the [MSDE Office of Grants Administration and Compliance website](#).

Attachment

Title I, Part A Section 1003(a) School Improvement Grant Application