

How to Use a Grant to Promote Safety & Security at Your K-12 School



Introduction

Our nation’s K-12 students need a safe learning environment as they focus on academic success. The U.S. government recognizes the need to support state and local leaders and has taken an active role in this effort by offering grants to promote safety. This eBook outlines the grant application process and how technology plays an important role in streamlining communication and improving security measures.

“Mobile phones are misnamed. They should be called gateways to human knowledge.”

-Ray Kurzweil, Inventor

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STOP School Violence Program Grants

In 2018, Congress enacted the [STOP School Violence Act](#), authorizing nearly \$1 billion in U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) school safety and security grants over the next decade. The School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP) has allocated funding to security equipment and technology-related applications.

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) created the STOP School Violence Threat Assessment and Technology Reporting Program to improve security measures at schools through evidence-based strategies and programs. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), DOJ's research and development agency, launched the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (CSSI). The initiative focuses on developing knowledge and strategies to promote safety in K–12 schools throughout the country.

BJA manages the grant program and oversees the distribution of awards, supporting local and state efforts to prevent and reduce school violence. Here are BJA's objectives:

- Provide funding for school violence prevention, training, anonymous reporting systems, threat assessment, and crisis intervention.
- Seek applications specifically that address the development and operation of school threat assessment and crisis intervention teams and the development of technology for local or regional anonymous reporting systems.
- Help address growing concerns with inconsistent implementation of modern, effective security infrastructure nationwide, particularly since the Sandy Hook Elementary attack in 2012. After this tragic event, it was determined that a lack of basic security measures played an enabling role.

How Can a Grant Be Used?

Under the SVPP program, BJA awards school safety grants that can be used to:

- Train and educate teachers, administrators, and students on the prevention of violence.
- Install technology that expedites contact with local law enforcement during an emergency.
- Install physical security measures, such as metal detectors, locks, enhanced lighting, and surveillance.
- Develop anonymous reporting systems for violent threats, including mobile apps, hotlines, and websites.
- Create threat assessment procedures and intervention teams to coordinate with law enforcement.
- Support measures that improve training, threat assessment reporting, and violence prevention.

In your grant submission, you may request funding for one or more of the purposes listed above. Keep in mind, the more thorough your application, the better your chances for success.

Who Is Eligible for a Grant?

All states; units of local government, such as cities, counties, and townships; federally recognized Indian tribes; and public agencies, including police departments, sheriffs' departments, and school districts are eligible to apply for the SVPP grants. Award recipients must use the funds to improve the safety and security of students at K–12 schools.

Applicants must demonstrate an evidence-based, comprehensive approach to safety at their schools according to best practices that validate the use of technology and equipment needs. Some states, such as Indiana, have created specific guidelines and recommendations. The [2018 Indiana School Safety Recommendations](#) report identifies opportunities to enhance technology capabilities by developing a school safety technology hub. This centralized repository of resources helps educators streamline information sharing. Indiana schools can also use grant funds to employ Student Resource Officers (SROs) and to purchase technology and equipment that expedites communications with law enforcement and emergency personnel.

While some states haven't yet outlined school safety guidelines, two-way communication in classrooms is a common security recommendation that ensures teachers and students can call for help in emergency situations.



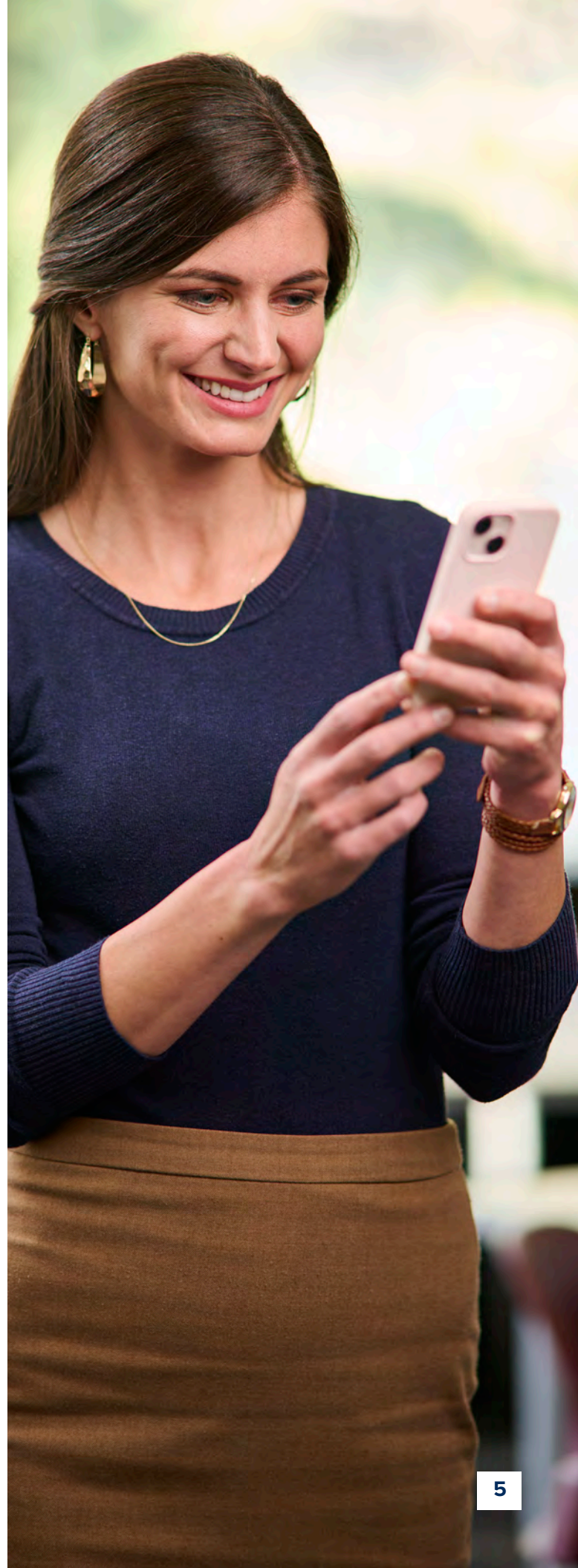
Why Technology is Critical to K–12 School Safety

Government agencies have explored the role of technology in school safety and how it can help prevent and respond to school violence. [A study sponsored by the NIJ](#) revealed that two-way communication between teachers and emergency responders was a key factor in school safety.

Strong cell coverage is essential to effective two-way communication. Teachers and students inside your school must be able to connect with emergency responders outside of the facility. Here are some of the challenges with indoor cell signal reception:

- Many schools are constructed of thick, signal-blocking concrete and brick, which prevents a cell signal from entering or leaving the building.
- Weak or nonexistent cell signals can also be problematic in classrooms located in a basement or lower level.
- Poor reception makes it nearly impossible to communicate critical information via phone calls or texts messages from inside a school.

For every one of these circumstances, WilsonPro offers a viable solution. Our repeaters can amplify an existing outside cell signal and push it to indoor areas where the signal is weak. We design a customized solution that best satisfies your coverage requirements and prioritizes your school's needs.



Increase School Safety with a Cellular Signal Repeater

Installing a repeater (sometimes known as an amplifier) system is the solution for inadequate cell signals inside K–12 schools. [WilsonPro cellular signal repeaters](#) improve call quality and data reception to ensure reliable communication. The repeaters boost signals for all cell carriers, devices, and networks, ensuring strong user connectivity from inside the building. Compatible with 5G, they support the latest developments in cellular technology. A WilsonPro repeater system detects and collects signals from distant cell towers that are much more faint than those recognized by a mobile device.

Depending on the size of your school and the coverage needed, WilsonPro signal repeaters take a few days or weeks to install.

WilsonPro repeaters operate through a passive distributed antenna system (DAS), requiring minimal overhaul and no additional carrier approval. Passive DAS provides a cost-effective solution compared to the multi-million-dollar expense of an active DAS system, which also require carrier approval and complex fiber optic networks.

Once installed, cell signal boosters and other technology expedite communication with emergency responders, making them an eligible purchase through federal school safety grants. A stronger cell connection also provides teachers and administrators the convenience of communicating with family, friends, and children's parents.

SVPP Grant Recipients

In 2021, the DOJ awarded 153 grants, totaling over \$51 million. States, counties, cities, and Indian tribes all received grants, benefiting millions of students across the country. Schools commonly use these grants for camera systems; security reinforcement with access controls, doors, and locks; technology for expedited notification of local law enforcement during an emergency; and training and education for school staff and students.

[The Green Bay School District](#) received a \$835,092 school safety grant for security cameras, a video storage server, portable radios, visitor management software, a public address system, panic buttons, emergency management software, training, and 3M™ Safety and Security Window Film.

[The Tennessee Department of Education](#) awarded \$35 million to benefit school districts across the state. The award included the one-time School Safety and Security grant for \$25 million and the recurring Safe School grant for \$10 million to support ongoing safety programs. Security measures included upgraded door locks, enhanced visitor screening, and shatter-resistant glass. Some districts used the funding to hire school counselors and child psychologists.

Students and educators in Virginia schools were awarded \$6 million in grants by [the Virginia Department of Education](#) for the purchase and installation of security equipment. 340 schools throughout the state installed video monitoring, internal communications, and visitor identification systems. To learn more about grant opportunities, reach out to the department of education in your state.

Tips to Apply for a Grant

As you apply for a grant, start the process as early as possible, so you don't have to scramble for last minute details and documents. Try and submit applications at least 72 hours before the deadline to allow for potential corrections. Once submitted, the approval process typically lasts about three months. For more information, visit the [DOJ SVPP web page](#). To streamline the grant application process, review the following tips:

- Start your grant application process as soon as possible.
- [Register your account today](#). This can take 10–14 business days. In the pre-application process you will need to:
 - Create an [organization applicant profile](#).
 - Enter a Data Universal Numeric System (DUNS) number. If your school doesn't have a DUNS number, you can request one from [Dun & Bradstreet](#).
 - Register in the System for Award Management (SAM) database.
 - Designate an authorized organization representative and obtain a Grants.gov username and password.

- Read the solicitation, which outlines the basic requirements of the grant application. When the opportunity is released, the announcement and solicitation will be posted on [BJA's funding page](#).
- Develop proposal ideas for your school's project.
- Create a plan that includes a collaborative approach for writing the grant. Consider hiring a grant writer for a polished final product.
- Develop a budget that includes allowable expenses. Use the [Budget Detail Worksheet](#) to help guide you.
- Create a proposal that includes the goal of your project, timeframe, results evaluation, and a preliminary budget.
- Review grant criteria and how scoring is evaluated.
- Solicit community support. Letters endorsing the project will impact the grant review process.
- Review the BJA webinar: Submitting Your Application: [Avoid These Common Mistakes](#).
- Submit your application 72 hours prior to the deadline.

Additional Resources

As you plan out your grant application, remember that the next round of grants will be released in 2024. Here are some extra tools to help you prepare:

- Subscribe to the [NewsFromBJA](#) newsletter and receive information about new funding opportunities, tools and resources, and BJA programs and initiatives.
- [Sign up for email notifications](#) and stay up-to-date with new information from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS).
- [Register for BJA webinars](#) and learn how to ensure a successful grant application process.

- Contact your state policy advisor listed on pages 50–52 in the [BJA Guide to Grants](#) for more information on available funding and deadlines.
- Review the Office of Justice Programs [Grant 101 Toolkit](#).
- [Contact Grants.gov](#) Applicant Support: 800-518-4726 or 606-545-5035 (international) or [email](#).

Conclusion

Safety is critical in every K–12 learning environment. An all-inclusive, ongoing protection strategy is the foundation for emergency preparedness, and technology plays an important role in keeping your students and educators safe. We are ready to help you implement effective safety measures tailored for your school, centered on enhanced two-way cellular communication. We have worked with elementary schools, colleges, and everything in between, and we want to help your school connect.

Contact WilsonPro today for a free consultation regarding cell phone signal repeaters and safety for your K–12 school.



Take the next step to ensure your school stays connected: wilsonpro.com/contactus

