



Subject: Stronger Connections Grant
Date: November 12, 2024

In March 2024, the District applied for the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) FY25 Stronger Connections Grant Program. The purpose of this proposal was to enhance access to mental health services for students and families, addressing barriers such as insurance coverage and long waitlists, entitled the CARES Program.

Our district collaborated with other districts in DuPage County and Lake County to submit separate but concurrent applications, building upon a successful model implemented by Indian Prairie School District 204. Superintendent Dr. Adrian Talley and members of his team provided guidance during the application process and continue to be a resource through implementation.

In August 2024, we were notified that our district, along with the other districts in the collaborative, had been awarded the grant. In September, the collaborative held a meeting to plan the next steps for the CARES program.

CARES Program Features:

- **Tiered Treatment Credits:** The program utilizes a tiered system of treatment credits, aligned with each district's financial allocation. This structure ensures that mental health services can be delivered flexibly while staying within budget.
- **Independent Clinicians:** Mental health services will be provided by independent, Illinois-licensed clinicians, offering both in-person and telehealth options. ReferralGPS, our vendor, will handle the recruitment, contracting, payment processing, and reporting for these services.
- **Care Navigation Support:** Families will have access to a Care Navigation team to help them connect with appropriate services, schedule sessions, and manage their mental health treatment.

The CARES program represents a vital initiative to meet the mental health needs of our students and families. Further updates will be provided as the program advances into the implementation phase.

Similarly to the Illinois Department of Public Health Enhancing Post-Covid Recovery Efforts for School Based Health Needs grant approved by the Board in January of 2024, this grant also has 2 separate agreements that need to be approved.

All of the participating school districts were sent draft agreements that have been reviewed by our law firm. In an effort to ensure the successful and timely launch of these important services, we are seeking approval of the written agreement with ReferralGPS and MNA Holdings.

MNA Contractor will be responsible for:

Contractor will provide Project Manager services in support of the Fiscal Year 2025 Stronger

Connections Grant Program, CSFA Number: 586-18-3213 CSFA Title: Stronger Connections Grant CFDA Number: 84.424F CFDA Title: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Program ("Grant").

1. Hosting of co-branded CARES landing page for District families
2. Copywriting/Design of CARES landing page specific to the District
3. Providing and maintaining HIPAA certified forms for treatment requests in compliance with all HIPAA/HITECH requirements to include obtaining business associate agreements from clinical treatment providers
4. Deploying and Hosting technology for treatment request form routing and parent communication
5. Deploying technology for email/text messaging components with parents for post appointment feedback
6. Providing periodic reporting and timely updates at the request of District in overseeing and administering the terms of the Grant (Fiscal Year 2025 Stronger Connections Grant Program, CSFA Number: 586-18-3213 CSFA Title: Stronger Connections Grant CFDA Number: 84.424F CFDA Title: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Program)

Referral GPS Contractor will be responsible for:

Contractor will provide facilitation of care services in support of the CARES Collaboration program, implementing services under the terms of the Fiscal Year 2025 Stronger Connections Grant Program, CSFA Number: 586-18-3213 CSFA Title: Stronger Connections Grant CFDA Number: 84.424F CFDA Title: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Program ("Grant"). Contractor's total fees under this Agreement for facilitation of care is \$50,000.

- Facilitation of student mental health enhancement program per Exhibit A;
- Act as point of contact for clinical practices, families, students and schools for referral process;
- Initial telephonic triage with students and families requesting mental health services for purposes of navigation to appropriate treatment resource;
- Clinical practice selection criteria for mental health treatment providers situated within the school district service area;
- Interviewing clinical practices;
- Onboarding and management of clinical practices;
- Act as point of contact for clinical practices, families, students and schools;
- Reporting of aggregate statistics to facilitate mental health sessions; and
- Provide periodic reporting and timely updates at the request of the School District in overseeing and administering the terms of the Grant.

If acceptable, these agreements will be brought back to the Board for approval under Action/Consent at the December Board meeting.