Great Schools for Connecticut Budget Webinar

May 22, 2024

GSCT Great Schools for Connecticut

Connecticut Charter Schools Association

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Welcome and Agenda for Today's Session

CSP Program Budget
- Size and Structure of Program Budget
- Allowable Costs
- Tying into Sections 5 and 6 of the GSCT RFA
- CSP Budget Template

CSP Reimbursement Process
- Monthly Reimbursement Template
- Documentation and Federal Compliance requirements

Budget Management and Updates
- Monthly Reports and Tracking Spending
- Quarterly Budget Updates and Carryover

Questions

Creating and Submitting Your CSP Program Budget

Size and Structure of Subgrants

Applicants can apply for grants of up to $1,469,250 for up to a three year period, though the term of your grant period can and may differ based on a variety of factors like school type, need for planning time, and expense timing.

School Type	Maximum Funding Amount	Possible split of the available subgrant total over a maximum 36 month period		
		First Year	Second Year	Third Year
New School	$1,469,250	$489,750	$489,750	$489,750
Replication	$1,469,250	$979,500	$489,750	$0
Expansion	$1,469,250	$1,469,250	$0	$0

Breakdown of Base Award and Criterion for Escalators

Criterion	Target	Award Amount	Timing
1	Base Award	$1,250,000	Maximum base award possible. Final award amount is contingent on budget request in grant application.
2	School enrolls at least 100 educationally disadvantaged students in CSP-funded grades	$150,000	Verified upon submission of enrollment data by the school in the first year of full operations
3	School earns competitive preference points on its RFA in connection with the 'collaboration with at least one traditional public school or traditional school district' priority and provides an MOU within the prescribed timeline	$69,250	Verified upon submission of an MOU or other acceptable documentation outlining the terms of the collaboration with the traditional public school or school district in the first full year of operations.
Total		$1,469,250	

Key Concepts When Preparing Your Budget

- **Supplement, not supplant**
  - As a general matter, CSP expenditures are meant to supplement, not supplant state and local funding.
- **Allowability**
  - A cost is allowable if it used for acceptable purposes as defined by the terms of the grant and purchased during the appropriate phase of the project. To be allowable, an expense must be:

Necessary (2 CFR 200.403)	**Reasonable (2 CFR 200.404)**	**Allocable (2 CFR 200.405)**
a cost is necessary if it plays a direct role in advancing the project's goals.	a cost is reasonable if in its nature and amount, it does not exceed what a prudent person might incur.	Costs are incurred specifically for the grant; and can be distributed in proportions that approximate reasonable methods.

Applicants should schedule office hours with CSP program staff to discuss their budgets to ensure that expenses meet the allowability conditions

Section 5 – Financial Management and Monitoring (30 points)

Section 5 – Financial Management, Monitoring: Describe how the school intends to achieve financial stability and viability through implementation of proposed activities, keeping in mind federal guidelines around Allowable Costs. Refer to 2CFR 200 as the guiding document for a comprehensive understanding of allowable costs, non-regulatory guidance, and the Allowable Cost Guide when constructing a school budget. In this section explain the school's plan to be strategic, compliant and a responsible fiduciary of federal funds. All proposed expenditures and grant-supported activities will need to align with at least one of the SMART Goals applicant indicates in Section 6 (SMART Goals).					
Selection Criteria	Limited / No Evidence 0-1	Weak Evidence 2	Moderate Evidence 3	Good Evidence 4	Strong Evidence 5
1.Budget template and narrative: • Are complete and demonstrate clear understanding of allowable, allocable costs • Implementation and planning periods are broken out clearly (planning period not to exceed 18 months)					

Section 6 – Grant Project Goals (10 points))

Section 6 – Grant Project Goals: Identify 3-5 SMART grant project goals. Justify each goal through its value in supporting the planning and implementation of the proposed school. All grant spending, including future budget revisions must fit clearly within your stated project goals. All proposed expenditures and grant-supported activities need to align with at least one of the SMART Goals outlined in your Project Narrative.					
Selection Criteria	Limited / No Evidence 0-1	Weak Evidence 2	Moderate Evidence 3	Good Evidence 4	Strong Evidence 5
1. Each grant project goal is a quality goal, and the set of goals fulfill minimum requirements for content, including: • At least one project goal addresses how the school intends to achieve Connecticut's targets for school performance (School Performance Index) and academic growth (Smarter Balanced Growth) in Math and ELA					

Grant Project Goals

- Each applicant must articulate between 3 and 5 goals that they will pursue over the life of their subgrant project periods
- Goals must be justified in terms of their value relative to supporting in the planning and implementation of a subgrantee's proposed school
- Project goals should clearly align with the school's overall mission and key design elements but should pertain directly to the activities that will be undertaken with CSP funds
- Articulation of these goals should drive all proposed CSP expenditures including subsequent budget revisions
- Fulfillment of these goals will be how a subgrantee determines whether their CSP project has been successful
  - Active subgrantees will be required to report on progress toward these goals as part of the GSCT monitoring process

Grant Project Goals

- Requirements
  - At least one project goal must address how the school intends to achieve CT's targets for school performance and/or academic growth in Math and ELA
    - School Performance Index: A School Performance Index (SPI) is the average performance of students in a subject area (i.e., ELA, Mathematics or Science) on the state summative assessments. The SPI ranges from 0-100. An SPI is reported for all students tested in a school and for students in each individual student group. Connecticut's ultimate target for an SPI is 75.
    - ELA / Math Growth: Under CT's Next Generation Accountability System, every student in Grades 4–8 has a Smarter Balanced growth target in ELA and Math. Connecticut establishes school-level targets both for 'all students' and for a 'high needs students' subgroup
  - At least one goal must address how the school plans to measure its impact on meeting the needs of educationally disadvantaged students

Grant Project Goals

- Each goal must be clearly articulated with trackable time-bound measures and outcomes

S	**Specific**	Objectives are clearly and concisely stated, reducing the potential for misunderstanding or misinterpretation.
M	**Measurable**	Objectives are measurable using valid and reliable data that are readily available and can be tracked at least annually.
A	**Achievable**	Objectives are achievable and ambitious, reflecting an understanding of organizational capabilities and environments.
R	**Relevant**	Objectives align with project goals and performance measures and reflect the mission and values of the CSP and grantee.
T	**Timebound**	Objectives occur within a timeframe or by a target date for achieving the outcomes for long-term goals and short-term objectives.

- SMART+E / SMARTIE: Objectives promote Inclusion and Equity, measure progress toward elimination of pernicious access/opportunity/performance gaps

Grant Project Goals (examples)

- Absolute Goal
  - Our ELA School Performance Index will exceed 50 during each grant project year
  - Our Math Academic Growth Rate for High-Needs Students will exceed 60% during each grant project year

- Growth Goal
  - Our ELA School Performance Index will increase by at least 3% during each grant project year
  - Our chronic absenteeism will decrease by at least 5% during each grant project year
  - The percentage of students with disabilities testing at, or above grade level on the Smarter Balanced Math Assessment will increase at least 3% during each grant project year

- Comparative Goal
  - Our ELA School Performance Index will exceed the State Average Index during each grant project year
  - Our percentage of English learners will exceed that of the surrounding traditional public school district

Timelines for Grant Budgets for the upcoming RFA cycle

Year 1	October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025
Year 2	October 1, 2025 - September 30, 2026
Year 3	October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027

General Provisions of the Allowable Cost Guide

| Allowable	Unallowable
Personnel expenses, including fringe benefits, associated with initial planning activities (i.e., as opposed to ongoing operations).	Facility construction or capital improvement, except those that bring the building up to code for sections of the school serving eligible grades (require additional burden of proof)
Professional development activities for staff in CSP-eligible grades.	School apparel and uniforms.
Travel costs for school personnel to attend conferences / training.	Lobbying efforts.
Costs associated with creating and implementing back office functions (HR, audit, accounting).	Extra-curricular student activities.
Costs for services, supplies, and furniture/equipment related to implementation and set-up for CSP-eligible grades.	Utilities and other facility operating expenses on or after the first day of school
Rental, repair costs related to the facility in preparation for the school's opening.	Salaries or related fringe benefits after the school opens for essential staff.
Costs related to student outreach, recruitment, and enrollment.	School transportation costs on or after the first day of school.
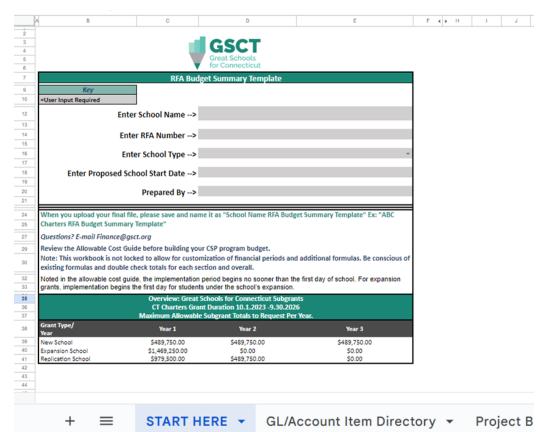
CSP Program Chart of Accounts

- The Budget Summary Template contains a GL/Account Directory that provides you with a description of each cost category and GL code.

- There are 31 GL codes, which match those used in the CSDE Charter School RFA Guide for ease of cross-walking CSP expenses within your larger operating budget.

- The GL codes should be used to organize and specify expenses in the following allowable cost categories, which can be found in the Allowable Cost Guide.

- Structure of the template:
  - Budget Summary tab – links to the other tabs and provides overall summary
  - Salaries and benefits for eligible personnel
  - Services and activities
  - Physical plant costs for either pre-operating rental payments or small scale repairs
  - Marketing and development costs related to recruitment and enrollment in CSP-eligible grades
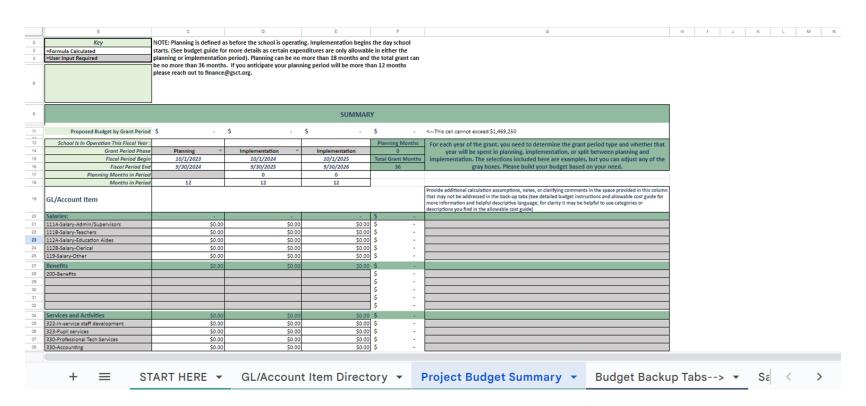 - Supplies and equipment

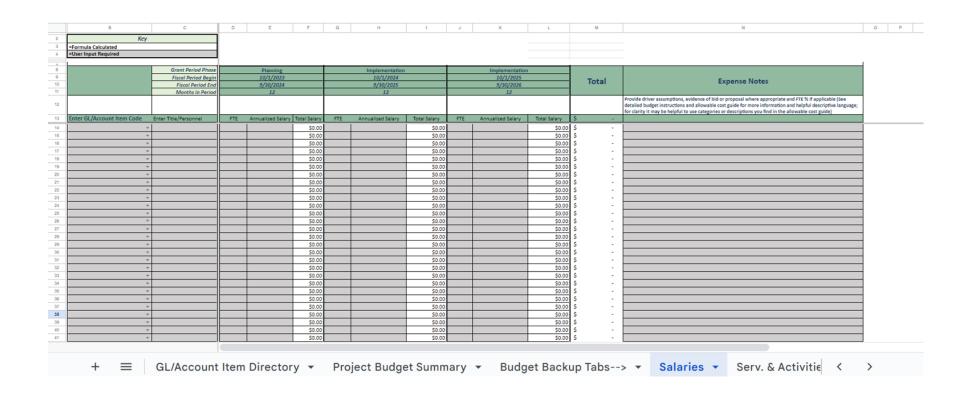# The GSCT RFA Budget Summary Workbook: Start Here Tab

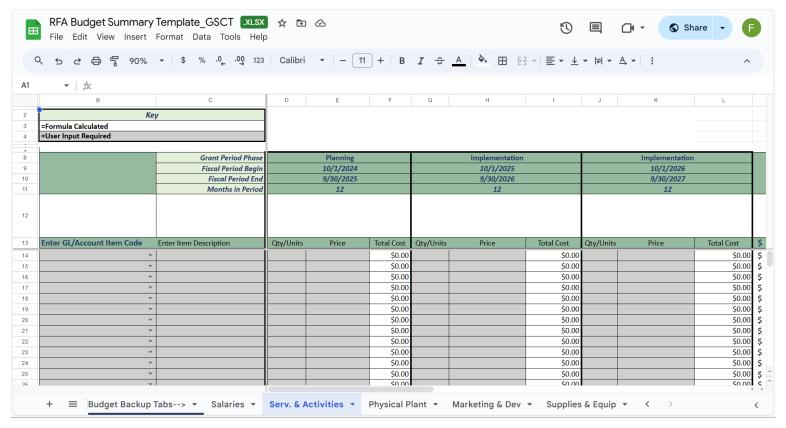# The GSCT RFA Budget Summary Workbook: Project Budget Summary Tab

	Key	
	=Formula Calculated	
	=User Input Required	

NOTE: Planning is defined as before the school is operating. Implementation begins the day school starts. (See budget guide for more details as certain expenditures are only allowable in either the planning or implementation period). Planning can be no more than 18 months and the total grant can be no more than 36 months. If you anticipate your planning period will be more than 12 months please reach out to finance@gsct.org.

		SUMMARY				
Proposed Budget by Grant Period	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	<---This cell cannot exceed $1,469,250	
School Is In Operation This Fiscal Year :				Planning Months	For each year of the grant, you need to determine the grant period type and whether that year will be spent in planning, implementation, or split between planning and implementation. The selections included here are examples, but you can adjust any of the gray boxes. Please build your budget based on your need.	
Grant Period Phase	Planning	Implementation	Implementation	0		
Fiscal Period Begin	10/1/2023	10/1/2024	10/1/2025	Total Grant Months		
Fiscal Period End	9/30/2024	9/30/2025	9/30/2026	36		
Planning Months in Period		0	0			
Months in Period	12	12	12			
GL/Account Item					Provide additional calculation assumptions, notes, or clarifying comments in the space provided in this column that may not be addressed in the back-up tabs (See detailed budget instructions and allowable cost guide for more information and helpful descriptive language; for clarity it may be helpful to use categories or descriptions you find in the allowable cost guide)	
Salaries:	-	-	-	$ -		
111A-Salary-Admin/Supervisors	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$ -		
111B-Salary-Teachers	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$ -		
112A-Salary-Education Aides	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$ -		
112B-Salary-Clerical	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$ -		
119-Salary-Other	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$ -		
Benefits	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$ -		
200-Benefits				$ -		
				$ -		
				$ -		
				$ -		
				$ -		
Services and Activities	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$ -		
322-In-service staff development	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$ -		
323-Pupil services	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$ -		
330-Professional Tech Services	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$ -		
330-Accounting	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$ -		

START HERE ▾   GL/Account Item Directory ▾   **Project Budget Summary** ▾   Budget Backup Tabs--> ▾   Sa

The GSCT RFA Budget Summary Workbook: Budget Back-up Tabs

The GSCT RFA Budget Summary Workbook: Budget Back-up Tabs

How Your CSP Program Budget Interacts with Your Operating Budget

- As part of the RFA process, you will submit both your **CSP Program Budget** (maximum of three years/36 months using the CSP budget template) along with your **school's five-year full operating budget**.

- Why include your five-year operating budget?
  - Both are reviewed to determine the following:
    - School's financial sustainability over time
    - Intent to enroll sufficient number of students
    - How the CSP funds will be used to *supplement* the school's fulfillment of its programmatic goals in CSP-eligible grades.
    - Be able to determine the difference in the use of funds between planning and implementation stages for your school.

Completing the Budget Narrative

- All subgrant applicants will be required to complete both a Budget Workbook and a [Budget Narrative](). The narrative should emphasize how project funds will supplement the school's efforts to achieve programmatic goals in CSP-eligible grades and fund specific efforts. All proposed expenditures and grant-supported activities will need to align with at least one of these SMART Goals.

- The narrative should use the included [template]() and be formatted to contain two parts:
  - Part I: A table of proposed expenditures consisting of five columns broken out by spending category: expenditure description; (2) amount of funds; (3) timeline; (4) activity or SMART goal; and (5) justification.

  - Part 2: Describes how applicants intend to maintain financial sustainability after the end of the subgrant period and to make overt connection between the CSP Program budget and its five-year operating budget.

- Budget Narrative Formatting Requirements:
  - 5 pages or less in length
  - Double spaced with text in size 11 or 12 in Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman font
  - One-inch margins

Completing the Budget Narrative

Budget Narrative Template
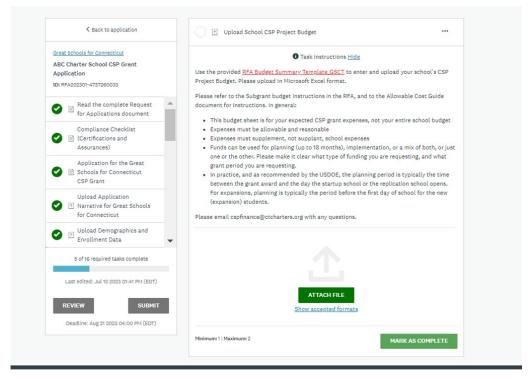
Please complete the tables below with your description of expenditures in each spending category and how they tie back to your program activities and SMART Goals. You may add additional rows in each table to highlight additional expenditures.

I.Salaries

Expenditure Description	Amount of Funds	Timeline (PLAN, IMP, BOTH)	Activity/ SMART Goal	Justification

Submitting Your CSP Program Budget Workbook, Budget Narrative, and Five-Year Operating Budget

Federal Compliance Requirements

- All subgrant applicants will be required to demonstrate compliance with federal requirements throughout the grant period. This includes:
  - Demonstrating that financial policies and procedures meet federal requirements as outlined in 2 CFR 200, Uniform Grant Guidance
  - This includes (but is not limited to):
    - policies related to disposal of assets, asset and inventory management, financial record keeping, internal and budget controls, source documentation, procurement guidelines, time and effort tracking, and single audit requirements
  - If you are already the recipient of one or more federal grants you may be required to track time and effort across multiple grants

- Please become familiar with the Monitoring Guide and the Monitoring Rubric Sheet – these two documents provide guidance on the kinds of monitoring we are required to carry out

The CSP Reimbursement Process

How Grant Funds Will Be Disbursed

- CSP funds will be released to subgrantees as reimbursement payments for previously expensed, allowable costs.

- Subgrantees will conduct monthly reimbursement requests and submit a monthly cover sheet through the subgrantee's Basecamp platform.

- In addition to submitting a monthly cover sheet itemizing the CSP-eligible expenses, subgrantees will submit monthly reimbursement packets that contain all necessary documentation related to expenses.

- Reimbursement is contingent on subgrantees demonstrating full compliance with federal requirements, e.g. a federally compliant financial policies and procedures manual, documentation of all expenses
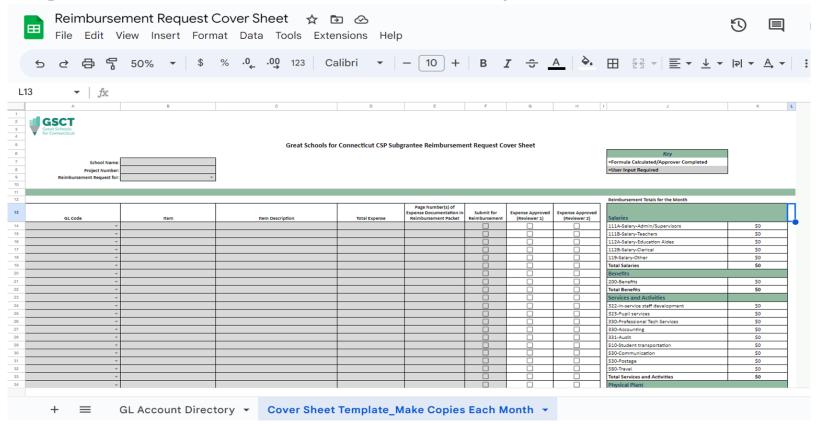
A Note on Tracking Personnel Expenses

- For any personnel expenses (salary and benefits) reimbursed through the grant, subgrantees must have a system for tracking hours spent on CSP-related work.

- Subgrantees must show the **number of hours** spent on the grant, **a short description** of the CSP-related work conducted during that time, and a calculation of the **pro-rated salary and benefit amounts** based on payroll records and hours attached to the grant.

- While subgrantees can develop their own method for tracking hours, GSCT can assist your school in developing a process for collecting and aggregating grant hours worked to easily calculate these expenses.

Daily Time Sheet

Filling out the Reimbursement Request Cover Sheet

Reimbursement Submission and Approval Process

Actions
Subgrantee will: ● Complete time sheets for hours worked that month. ● Gather invoices, expense receipts, proof of payment, and other relevant documents for reimbursable expenses (i.e. invoices, contracts) from the relevant month.
Subgrantee will: ● Gather payroll reports and timesheets to calculate the pro-rated hours worked by CSP-reimbursable staff on the grant and apply ratio to salary and benefits. ● Compile all relevant documentation into one pdf packet and upload to Basecamp. ● Complete Monthly Reimbursement Request Cover sheet itemizing expenses from the previous month.
GSCT Staff will: ● Conduct two-person review of the reimbursement packet for correctness and allowability. ● Notify subgrantee of approval or need for revision of reimbursement request.
Subgrantee will: ● Complete any revisions or adjustments to reimbursement request. **GSCT Staff will:** ● Update subgrantee's budget management tool to reflect new actuals. ● Submit drawdown request from G-5 and transfer funds to individual subgrantee accounts (may take up to 48 hours)
Subgrantee will: ● Receive updated monthly report with revised actuals against program budget. ● Receive funds for reimbursable expenses from the previous month.

Budget Management and Updates

The Subgrantee Budget Management Tool

Each month's approved reimbursement requests will be added to this tool. The purpose of this is to see how actuals are tracking each month and in total to make revisions on a quarterly basis.

Quarterly Budget Update Meetings

- At least quarterly GSCT team will meet with subgrantee representatives to discuss how their actuals are tracking against their budget and make adjustments to account for any significant overages or underages.
- These changes will be logged in the Budget Management Tool and shared on their Basecamp site.
- Quarterly Update Meetings will Occur Under the Following Cadence:
  - January 2025
  - April 2025
  - July 2025

Managing Carryover

- During a final meeting at the end of the fiscal year, subgrantees will meet with GSCT program officers to discuss how any adjustments to their program budget will necessitate carryover to the next year and alteration of the next year's program budget.

- Carryover conversations will take place during quarterly budget conversations

GSCT RFA Timeline

Eligibility Checks due on SurveyMonkey Apply	May 31, 2024
RFA opens for eligible applicants, GSCT to hold office hours for subgrant applicants.	June 7 – July 12, 2024
RFA submission deadline	July 12, 2024
GSCT review for completeness	July 15 – 23, 2024
Peer review period	July 24 – August 9, 2024
Capacity calls with subgrantees	August 19 – August 23, 2024
Pre award final review, finalize SG contracts	August 30 – September 6, 2024
Notify Applicants and CSDE of awards	**September 9 – 12, 2024**
Post award call to finalize monitoring and reporting requirements	September 9 – 13, 2024
Grant term begins	**October 1, 2024**

Questions and Closeout

Questions and Comments