



## *School Law FYI*

# ***Important Changes within Federal Government Grants for Schools***

RICK VERSTEGEN | 10.08.25

School districts often apply for and receive grants from the federal government. Different agencies offer such grants, including the United States Department of Justice. At this time, the United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance is accepting applications for grant funding through its Student, Teachers, and Officers (STOP) School Violence Program. This grant program has been in place for years, as a result of the STOP School Violence Act of 2018. One of the goals of this law is to provide funding for training to prevent school violence and technological innovations designed to increase school safety.

Of course, whenever a school district applies for grants, it is important to review the grant application carefully and understand the requirements of the grant. For school districts applying for a grant under the FY25 STOP School Violence Program, it is important to note that there may be different language under the current grant application, which may not have been present in the FY24 application.

### **CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE**

Both the FY24 and FY25 applications informed schools that a successful applicant must comply with certain federal civil rights laws. However, the FY25 application now includes a provision that states: “Compliance with Federal civil rights and nondiscrimination laws is material to the government’s decision to make any award and payment under this program, including for purposes of the False Claims Act, and each recipient will be required to certify (in its acceptance of the conditions of the award) that it does not operate any programs (including any such programs having components relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion) that violate any applicable Federal civil rights or nondiscrimination laws.” As a result, school districts should be

prepared to submit such certification if they apply for this grant and understand the implications of such certification.

## UNALLOWABLE USE OF FUNDS

In addition, both the FY24 and FY25 identified certain unallowable uses of the funds, based on the nature of the program. However, under the FY25 application, it now includes a provision that states that certain costs and activities are out of the program scope and will not be funded, including “any program or activity, at any tier that, directly or indirectly, violates (or promotes or facilitates the violation of) federal immigration law (including 8 U.S.C. § 1373) or impedes or hinders the enforcement of federal immigration law — including by failing to comply with 8 U.S.C. § 1373, give access to DHS agents, or honor DHS requests and provide requested notice to DHS agents.” School districts should carefully review and consider such language to determine how any program implemented by the school will be consistent with this requirement.

Such language is likely intended to caution schools from implementing certain protocols, such as “sanctuary” policies. However, federal agencies likely still need to follow certain legal requirements to gain access to school property or records. Our law firm provided [guidance to school districts on access to property and records by the immigration enforcement officers](#) from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which is a division of the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

## ***Conclusion***

In short, changes in grant applications might be expected whenever there is a change in administration at the federal level. However, school district officials should always review grant applications carefully, especially based on the type of program or activity that the school district may be hoping to implement with the funding. School district officials should also consult with their legal counsel to ensure that they understand the implications of any successful grant application.

Schools should continue monitoring such changes and work with legal counsel to address these issues. Contact the author of this article or any member of Boardman Clark’s [School Law Practice Group](#) if you need assistance.

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