



Request for Applications (RFA)

**Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Wellness and Nutrition Services Division**

Healthy Schools Act Evaluation Grant

Announcement Date: August 1, 2014

Request for Application Release Date: August 15, 2014

Pre-Application Question Period Ends: August 29, 2014

Application Submission Deadline: September 12, 2014

**LATE OR INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS
WILL NOT BE REVIEWED**

The Request for Applications and application forms are available at <http://osse.dc.gov/service/healthy-schools-act-assessment-and-evaluation-program-aep> or by contacting Nancy Brenowitz Katz at nancy.katz@dc.gov.



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Section I: General Information

Introduction

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) Wellness and Nutrition Services Division (WNS) is soliciting applications for the Healthy Schools Act Evaluation Grant. The purpose of this grant is to (1) document the behavioral, health, and academic impacts of the Healthy Schools Act (HSA), (2) identify promising practices for HSA implementation and education, and (3) add to the body of evidence on the effectiveness of policies that promote healthy school environments.

Background

The Healthy Schools Act of 2010 (D.C. Law 18-0209) was developed to address childhood obesity in the District of Columbia. The rates of obesity and overweight in the District are above the national average. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 35.4% of children in D.C. are overweight or obese and 37.4% of children live in households that are food insecure. In 2011, the Trust for America's Health reported that among states, the District of Columbia had the third highest obesity rate among 10-17 year olds, based upon 2011 CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey data. The HSA aims to reduce these numbers through nutritional standards for school meals, vending and fundraising, required minutes for health education (HE), required minutes for physical education (PE), promotion of physical activity (PA), and support for farm to school and school garden programs. The implementation of the HSA is housed in multiple District agencies including the Department of General Services and the District Department of the Environment; however the majority of implementation activities reside within OSSE.

Evaluating the impact of policy is essential as it helps stakeholders understand the “merit, worth, and utility” of a policy.¹ The Center for Disease Control's Policy Evaluation Framework recommends that implementation evaluation take place during the policy enactment and implementation stages. Implementation evaluation of the HSA occurs on a yearly basis through collection and analysis of the HSA School Health Profile and through compliance monitoring visits to schools. The next step in policy evaluation is impact evaluation which demonstrates the impact that the policy has had on desired outcomes. This grant will support an impact evaluation of the HSA, which will be accomplished by assessing the current level of HSA implementation in a sample of schools, and then conducting an intervention to demonstrate the impact that high versus low HSA implementation has on behavioral, health, and academic outcomes.

Application Checklist

Applications must meet the following requirements to be eligible for review:

- The completed Narrative Form has been submitted to Nancy Brenowitz Katz at nancy.katz@dc.gov before 5:00 pm on September 12, 2014. The Narrative Form is in PDF format utilizing the form provided and attached to an email with the subject line “EvaluationGrant15_Institution/CompanyName_Application”.

¹ Centers for Disease Control (2013). *Step by Step – Evaluating Violence and Injury Prevention Policies*. Brief 1: Overview of Policy Evaluation.

- The completed Budget & Timeline Form has been submitted to Nancy Brenowitz Katz at nancy.katz@dc.gov before 5:00 pm on September 12, 2014. The Budget & Timeline Form is in Excel format utilizing the form provided and attached to an email with the subject line “EvaluationGrant15_Institution/CompanyName_BudgetTimeline”.
- The completed Documents Form has been submitted to Nancy Brenowitz Katz at nancy.katz@dc.gov before 5:00 pm on September 12, 2014. The Documents Form is in PDF format utilizing the form provided and attached to an email with subject line “EvaluationGrant15_Institution/CompanyName_Documents”.
- All required components of the application are complete.
- All components of the application have been thoroughly reviewed and signed by the appropriate stakeholders.
- Email size does exceed 5mb.

Contact Information

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Pre-Application Question Period

To ensure an equal opportunity for all applicants, OSSE requests that applicants submit questions regarding the RFA electronically to nancy.katz@dc.gov by 5:00 pm on August 29, 2014. Questions submitted after this deadline date will not receive responses. Answers to submitted questions will be made available at <http://osse.dc.gov/service/healthy-schools-act-assessment-and-evaluation-program-aep> by September 3, 2014.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to participate in the webinar information session on Wednesday, August 20, 2014 from 11:00 am – 12:00 pm (register at <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/436712298>). A recording of the information session will be posted at <http://osse.dc.gov/service/healthy-schools-act-assessment-and-evaluation-program-aep>.

Submission Requirements

The application must be submitted electronically to Nancy Katz at nancy.katz@dc.gov. There are three required forms: the Narrative Form, the Budget & Timeline Form, and the Documents Form. Application forms are available at <http://osse.dc.gov/service/healthy-schools-act-assessment-and-evaluation-program-aep>.

- The Narrative Form must be attached to an email with the subject line “EvaluationGrant15_Institution/CompanyName_Application”.
- The Budget & Timeline Form must be attached to an email with the subject line “EvaluationGrant15_ Institution/CompanyName_BudgetTimeline”.
- The Documents Form must be attached to an email with the subject line “EvaluationGrant15_Institution/CompanyName _Documents”.

Narrative Form contents:

- Applicant Profile
- Narrative (description of how the proposed project meets the review criteria as outlined in Section VI: Application Scoring and Review process)

Budget & Timeline Form contents:

- Budget and Budget Justification Narrative
- Timeline

Documents Form contents:

- Administrative Approval
- Certifications
- Assurances
- Acknowledgement of Compliance
- Educational Data Access and Use Agreement

The deadline for application submission is **September 12, 2014 at 5:00 PM EST**. All applications will be recorded and confirmation of receipt will be emailed to the contact provided by September 15, 2014.

Section II: Award Information

Award Period

The funds must be used between October 1, 2014 and September 30, 2017.

Length of Award

This is a three-year award that either party can terminate with cause, including, but not limited to:

- Failure of the grantee to adhere to the project timeline.
- Failure of the grantee to submit deliverables by the stated deadlines.
- Failure of the grantee to respond to OSSE inquiries in a timely fashion.
- Failure of the grantee to adhere to the approved research plan without prior OSSE approval.
- Failure of either party to adhere to all terms and conditions of the RFA or Grant Award Notice, or any other signed agreement between OSSE and the grantee.

Available Funding for Award

The total funding available for this award is \$2,400,000. Eligible applicants may apply for any amount up to the full amount.

Anticipated Number of Awards

OSSE has funding available for one award.

Funding Restrictions

Funds may be used to support activities described in the program requirements of this RFA and/or included in the applicant's submission as part of their program plan. All expenditures must be directly related to the purpose of the grant. Indirect costs must be limited to no more than 8% of the funding amount. Overhead costs are a component of indirect costs.

Pre-Award Costs

Applicants may conduct pre-award work as necessary and allowable in keeping with the following requirements:

- Pre-award costs are allowable within the 90-day period immediately preceding the effective date of the grant provided that the advanced funding is necessary for the effective and economical conduct of the project.
- OSSE describes pre-award costs as "...those incurred prior to the effective date of the award directly pursuant to the negotiation and in anticipation of the award where such costs are necessary to comply with the proposed delivery schedule or period of performance. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the award, and if the approval of pre-award spending is made and documented in accordance with the grantee's procedures."
- All pre-award expenditures must be pre-approved by OSSE.
- **OSSE is not responsible for pre-award costs incurred by applicants that are not ultimately awarded the grant.**

Documentation of Expenditures

The grantee must provide supporting documentation for expenditures to OSSE on a quarterly basis.

Audits

At any time or times before final payment and for five years thereafter, the District and/or the federal government may audit the grantee's expenditure statements and source documentation. The applicant cannot at any time prior to the application process nor during the award period be in violation of any previous grant obligations to the District of Columbia government or a United States federal agency.

Section III: Eligibility Information

Eligibility

OSSE will accept applications from institutions of higher education, research-based companies, and research-based nonprofit organizations. Partnerships between multiple organizations are highly encouraged.

Section IV: Scope of Research

Description

The research supported by this grant will be a quasi-experimental intervention to evaluate the behavioral, health, and academic impacts of the HSA on students and to elucidate the programs, policies, leadership practices, and norms which facilitate/hinder full implementation of the HSA (see Primary and Secondary Research Questions below). This research will take place in at least six elementary schools (four intervention and two control) over three years. Selection of participating schools should be guided by existing data and collaboration with OSSE and other key stakeholders, with final approval resting with OSSE.

In the first six-months of the grant period, the grantee will conduct a Community Assessment to gather baseline school- and student-level data and will provide a report on this data to OSSE. This data will guide development of an intervention to be implemented in years two and three of the grant in at least four of the participating schools. The intervention shall increase the level (as defined by the grantee in collaboration with OSSE) of HSA implementation in at least four intervention schools. The selected interventions should be based on the baseline data, strong theory or evidence-base, cultural fit, and stakeholder input, and should be rooted in the Healthy Schools Act Theory of Change (attached). The grantee shall evaluate the impact of the intervention as compared to control schools.

Primary Research Questions

- What is the relationship between school-level implementation of the Healthy Schools Act and student health outcomes?
- What is the relationship between school-level implementation of the Healthy Schools Act and student academic outcomes?
- What is the relationship between school-level implementation of the Healthy Schools Act and student behavioral outcomes?

Secondary Research Questions

- What programs, policies, leadership practices, and norms facilitate full implementation of the Healthy Schools Act?
- What programs, policies, leadership practices, and norms hinder full implementation of the Healthy Schools Act?

The grantee will be expected to carry out all activities pursuant to the successful completion of the intervention to include obtaining parental consent, obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, selecting and engaging appropriate schools, selecting appropriate interventions,

implementing the intervention strategies, collecting and analyzing data, and providing timely progress and financial reports to OSSE.

Data Collection

- The grantee will collect student-level data from a statistically significant sample of students in both the intervention and control schools to include measures such as height, weight, waist circumference, blood pressure, fitness level (with FitnessGram or other tool), physical activity attitudes and behaviors, healthy eating attitudes and behaviors, and/or others as deemed appropriate by the grantee in collaboration with OSSE.
- The grantee will collect school-level data in all schools to include measures such as the availability of healthy vending and fundraising, minutes of physical and health education offered, meal consumption data, and/or others as deemed appropriate by the grantee in collaboration with OSSE.
- OSSE will provide student-level data to include gender, race/ethnicity, English language learner status, special education status, TANF participation, SNAP participation, transitory status, and standardized test scores for math, reading, and health.
- OSSE will provide school-level data to include attendance, suspension rates, school health environment status, school meal participation, and local food procurement.
- Other data elements that would support research outcomes may be identified by the grantee in collaboration with OSSE.
- **The Grantee will enter into a written Educational Data Access and Use Agreement with OSSE. The agreement shall include the purpose, scope and duration of the study; data being disclosed; requirements that the student information shall be used only to further the study; requirements that student information not be re-disclosed; and requirements that student information be destroyed after concluding the study.**

Section V: Timeline and Deliverables

Timeline

The research will take place over a three-year period. Major activities are outlined below:

Major Activity	Date
NOFA Released	August 1, 2014
RFA Released	August 15, 2014
RFA Question Period Ends	August 29, 2014
Proposals Due	September 12, 2014
Research Period Begins	October 1, 2014
Community Assessment Report Due	March 1, 2015
Complete Baseline Data Collection	June 1, 2015
Year 1 Report Due	November 30, 2015
Implement Intervention Strategies	Fall 2015
Year 2 Report Due	November 30, 2016
Award Period Ends	September 30, 2017
Year 3 Report Due	December 31, 2017

*Quarterly activity reports (due in January, April, July, and September) are also required throughout the grant period. A format for these reports will be provided. Supporting documentation for expenditures must be included with these reports.

Deliverables

- All raw and edited data sets and corresponding data analyses. **Note: OSSE owns all data collected from these research activities.**
- Quarterly activity reports including interim data for reporting to stakeholders and supporting documentation for expenditures.
- A report on the findings of the Community Assessment.
- A year-one report to include:
 - An analysis of data collected to-date including methods, results, and discussion, and a narrative description of progress made towards final research goals.
 - A description and rationale for the proposed selected intervention(s) and implementation strategies.
 - A research plan for years two and three.
 - A budget reconciliation for year one.
 - A proposed budget for year two.
- A year-two report to include:
 - An analysis of data collected to-date including methods, results, and discussion, and a narrative description of progress made towards final research goals.
 - A research plan for year three.
 - A budget reconciliation for year two.
 - A proposed budget for year three.
- A final report to include:
 - An analysis of all data collected including methods, results, and a discussion of research outcomes, and recommendations for technical assistance and training to promote HSA implementation across the District.
 - A budget reconciliation for year three.
- A capacity-building plan for LEAs, schools, and parents with evidence-based strategies to improve HSA implementation.
- The grantee will collaborate with OSSE on the development of articles resulting from this research for publication in peer-reviewed journals.

Section VI: Review Process and Application Scoring

Review Process

Applications will be screened initially by OSSE staff to determine whether all application and eligibility requirements have been met. Only applications that meet all eligibility and application requirements will be evaluated, scored, and rated by the review panel. OSSE may use internal peer reviewers, external peer reviewers, or a combination of both to review and score the applications received for this RFA. An external peer reviewer is an expert in the field of the matter. Scoring and recommendations of the review panel are advisory only. The final decision to fund an applicant rests solely with OSSE. After reviewing the recommendations of the review panel and any other information considered relevant, OSSE shall decide which applicant to fund, as well as the funding amount.

Application Criteria and Scoring

Criteria	Scoring Weight (%)
<p><i>Research Approach and Description</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant clearly describes the proposed quasi-experimental intervention design and methodology that will address the research goals and questions as described in this RFA. 2. The applicant demonstrates adequate knowledge of the methods and instruments that will be used in collecting data as a part of the selected research methods. 	40
<p><i>Research Experience Specific to this Project</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant clearly demonstrates their proposed team’s experience in implementing school-based interventions. 2. The applicant clearly demonstrates their proposed team’s experience in conducting childhood nutrition, physical activity, and obesity prevention interventions. 3. The applicant describes the roles and responsibilities of any partner organization(s) or professional(s) as well as the anticipated structure of the collaboration. 	20
<p><i>Organizational Background, Capacity, and Staffing</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant describes their capability and resources to ensure timely start-up and implementation of proposed activities. 2. The applicant demonstrates the proposed team’s capacity to conduct this research, including a list of each team member’s competencies and skills related to this work and the role that each member will play in the research. 3. The applicant demonstrates the ability to maintain the privacy of student information. 	10
<p><i>Stakeholder Engagement and Cultural Competency</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant describes their plan to engage stakeholders, including, but not limited to, OSSE, schools, parents, students, and partner organizations. 2. The applicant identifies how the research team will respond to stakeholder feedback and research challenges and make appropriate adjustments to the research project. 	10

<p><i>Budget, Budget Justification, and Timeline</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant is clear about how proposed costs were determined and has taken measures to ensure the research activities are cost-effective. 2. The applicant has identified the costs of all personnel, materials, and overhead necessary for the successful completion of the research project. 3. Budget is feasible to carry out all activities required for successful completion of the research project. 4. The applicant provides a timeline that clearly identifies major activities to occur during the three-year grant period and demonstrates the ability to complete all grant activities in a timely manner. 	<p>20</p>
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Section VII: Award Administration

Decision and Notifications of Awards

OSSE reviews all applications for grant funds in accordance with DC competitive funding regulations. The awarded applicant will receive a Grant Agreement Notice (GAN) that will include the award amount, award agreement, terms and conditions of the award, and any supplemental information required.

Monitoring

The grantee’s effectiveness will be determined based upon the following:

- Adherence to the timeline and budget.
- Timely submission of deliverables.
- Periodic site visits from OSSE.
- Responsiveness to requests and inquiries from OSSE.

Corrective Action and Termination of Funding

In the event that programmatic, financial, or documentation conditions of the grant are not being met in an appropriate and timely fashion, progressive actions will be taken, at the discretion of OSSE, up to and including the termination of funding and requiring the return of funds. A project which is terminated will be subject to the same requirements regarding audit, recordkeeping, and submission of reports as a project which runs for the duration of the project period.

Nondiscrimination in the Delivery of Services

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, gender, or disability be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discriminate under, any program activity receiving funds from the Healthy Schools Act Evaluation Grant. In accordance with the District of Columbia Human Rights Act of 1977, no grantee shall deny, restrict, or abridge or condition the use of, or access to, any of its facilities, services, programs, or benefits of any program or activity to any person otherwise qualified, wholly or partially, for a discriminatory reason, based upon the actual or perceived: race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender

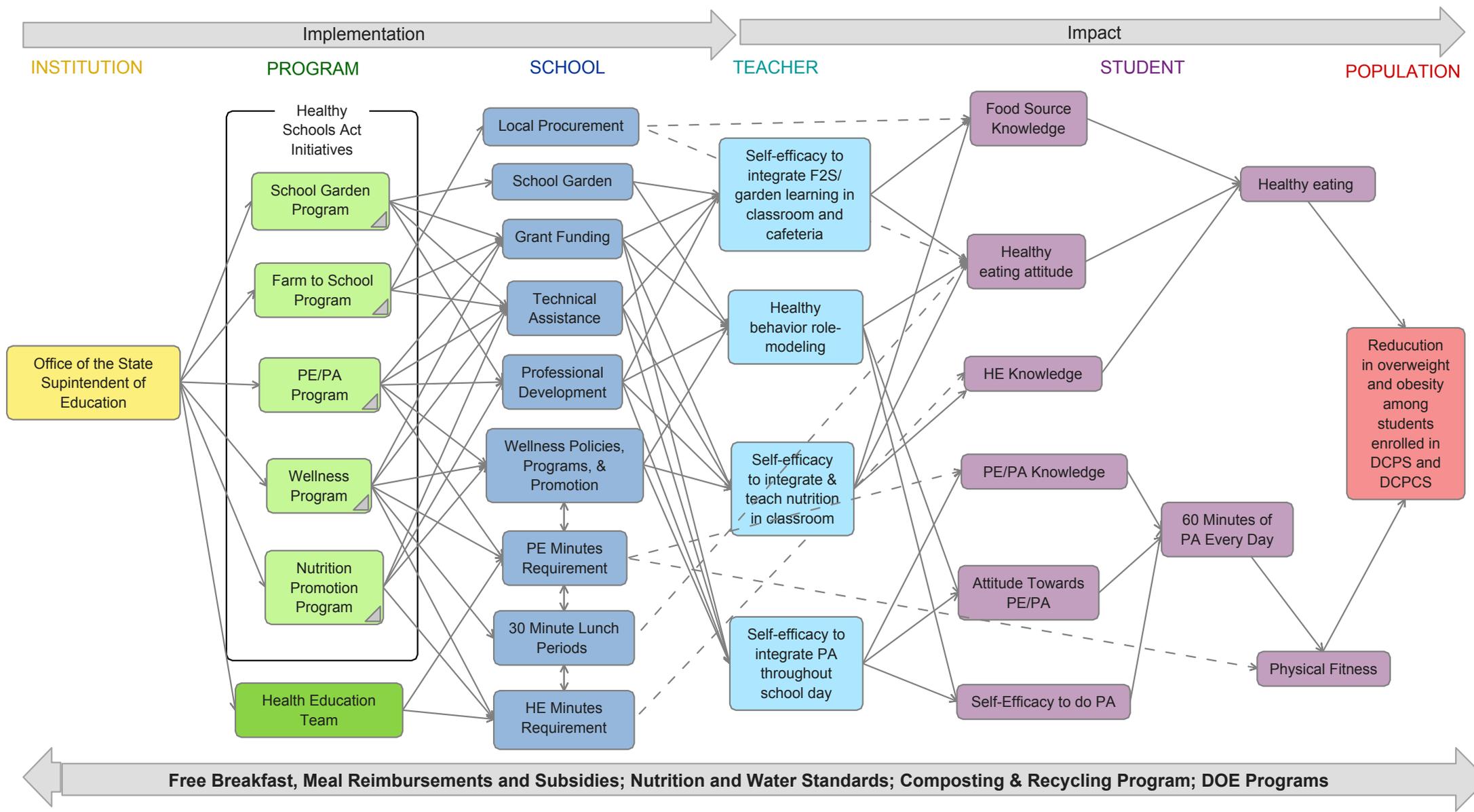
identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, or disability of any individual.

Confidentiality

Except as otherwise provided by local or federal law, no recipient of OSSE funds shall use or reveal any research, statistical information, or personally identifiable information furnished by OSSE for any person or for any purpose other than that for which such information was obtained in accordance with the OSSE program funded. Any identifiable personal information, and any copy of such information, shall be immune from legal process and shall not, without the written consent of the person identified in the information, be admitted as evidence or used for any purpose in any action, suit, or judicial, legislative, or administrative proceeding.

Terms and Conditions

- OSSE reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if the Agency determines it is in the best interest of the Agency to do so. The Agency shall notify the applicant if it rejects that applicant's proposal. The Agency may suspend or terminate an outstanding RFA pursuant to its own grant making rule(s) or any applicable federal regulation or requirement.
- OSSE reserves the right to issue addenda and/or amendments subsequent to the issuance of the RFA, or to rescind the RFA.
- OSSE shall not be liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of applications in response to the RFA. Applicant agrees that all costs incurred in developing the application are the applicant's sole responsibility.
- OSSE shall not be liable for any pre-award costs incurred by applicants prior to the award being made, except for those incurred by the applicant that is awarded the grant provided those expenditures are consistent with the requirements for pre-award costs as indicated on page six of this document.
- OSSE may conduct pre-award on-site visits to verify information submitted in the application and to determine if the applicant's facilities are appropriate for the services intended.
- OSSE may enter into negotiations with an applicant and adopt a firm funding amount or other revision of the applicant's proposal that may result from negotiations.
- OSSE shall provide the citations to the statute and implementing regulations that authorize the grant or sub grant; all applicable federal and District regulations, such as OMB Circulars A-102, A-133, 2 CFR 180, 2 CFR 225, 2 CFR 220, and 2 CFR 215; payment provisions identifying how the grantee will be paid for performing under the award; reporting requirements, including programmatic, financial and any special reports required by OSSE; and compliance conditions that must be met by the grantee.
- If there are any conflicts between the terms and conditions of the RFA and any applicable federal or local law or regulation, or any ambiguity related thereto, then the provisions of the applicable law or regulation shall control and it shall be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.



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Healthy Schools Act Theory of Change [2]