**Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)**

**School Construction Assistance Program-FY24 (Competitive Grants)**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

*This FAQ document provides information on the School Construction Assistance Program and the process for completing the online grant application, called “SCAP”, located in VDOE’s Single Sign-on Web Systems (SSWS) portal. The* ***grant application deadline is November 28, 2023****.*

1. How do I obtain access to the SCAP application in SSWS?

Access to the SCAP application may be requested from the school division SSWS administrator.

1. Why won’t an application entered in the SCAP application in SSWS save?

First check the number of characters entered in the “project description” text box. This text box is limited to a maximum of 1,000 characters (including spaces).

1. Where can instructions and definitions for “Project Type” and “School Building Condition” for use in answering items in the SCAP application be found?

These resources are in SSWS on the SCAP application home page, under the “Instructions” tab in the gray bar on the right side of the screen**.**

1. Is there a local match requirement for a School Construction Assistance Program grant?

No.

1. Can a SCAP grant application be submitted even if total project costs exceed the $100 million cap?

Yes. However, the submitted project costs may not exceed the $100 million cap.

1. Can SCAP grant funds be combined with other sources of funding for a school project?

Yes. However, SCAP grant funds may not be used to supplant/replace other sources of funding/financing already committed to the project. If the total project costs are fully funded, school divisions are not eligible to apply for a grant since there is no funding need for the project. If the project is not fully funded, or has an existing funding gap, school divisions may apply for a SCAP grant. An exception is for those projects where construction began on or after July 1, 2022, and were already financed but debt service payments have not yet begun. Awarded grant funds may be used to pay future debt service for such projects.

1. For projects where the building HVAC system is in poor condition, but the remaining parts of the building is a combination of “Poor” and “Fair” condition, which building condition designation should be selected as the building’s overall condition on the grant application?

Building conditions need to be considered for the entirety of the building. For example, the structure overall must meet more than 50 percent of the “Poor” condition criteria listed in the School Building Condition Definitions (located in SSWS in the SCAP tab) to be considered in “Poor” condition. If the building meets 50 percent or less of the listed criteria for “Poor” condition, it would be considered in “Fair” condition.

1. What is the application, award, and reimbursement timelines for SCAP grant funds?

The application deadline is ***November 28, 2023***. VDOE staff will then review and score all applications submitted in SCAP. Grant award recommendations will be submitted to the Board of Education for consideration at a future business meeting. Once grant awards are approved by the Board, VDOE will notify awarded school divisions. Awarded grant funds will be paid to school divisions in quarterly installments as project costs are incurred over the course of the project.

1. Is there a deadline for the use of grant funds?

If a project is awarded, a grant, the school division must certify its intent to obligate awarded grant funds for the construction project within six months of the grant award notification by VDOE. In issuing the grant award, VDOE will work with divisions on an end-date for the use of the grant funds. There is flexibility in the end-date, since the General Assembly placed these funds in a non-reverting fund where funds may carryover across fiscal years.

1. “Commitment” criterion 7. (i) in the Board’s program guidelines states, "there is an agreement by the local governing body to maintain or increase the percentage of local revenues dedicated to public education throughout the duration of the financing proposed for the project." How should the percentage of local revenues dedicated to public education be interpreted?

This criterion is interpreted as the local governing body, during the period of financing the proposed project, maintaining or increasing the amount of revenues from local sources that are appropriated to the school division budget, compared to the total amount of revenues available from local sources (i.e., that the percentage of local revenue appropriated to the school division budget relative to total local revenues will not be decreased during the financing period for the project).

1. Is a formal local revenue sharing agreement between the locality and school division required to be eligible for the five points under “Commitment” criterion 7? (i) (i.e., “(i) there is an agreement by the local governing body to maintain or increase the percentage of local revenues dedicated to public education throughout the duration of the financing proposed for the project”)? Can the locality agree to maintain local funding to the school division based on maintaining or increasing a dollar amount only and not based on a percentage?

A formal local revenue sharing agreement with the locality is not required. However, the percentage level of local revenue for public education must be maintained, not just a dollar amount.

1. Regarding “Commitment” criterion 7. (i), it says this is demonstrated by an agreement with the local governing body to maintain or increase the percentage of local revenues dedicated to public education. What does that agreement look like? Is it a document submitted in the SCAP application?

Yes. A letter signed by the chair of the Board of Supervisors or City-Town Council indicating a commitment to maintain the percentage of local revenues appropriated to the school division budget during the period of project financing would be sufficient documentation to meet Criterion 7. (i). VDOE will communicate this to all applicants as an additional application requirement met by uploading a PDF copy of the commitment letter in the SCAP application.

1. Criterion 7. (ii) in the Board’s guidelines refers to the project design being fully or substantially completed prior to applying for grant funds. Do detailed school building plans have to be received by the division prior to the March 31, 2023, application deadline, or will a written verification from the architect that the plans are substantially completed by the March 31 application deadline suffice?

Yes. A written verification from your architect that the project design is substantially completed by the November 28, 2023, application deadline is sufficient documentation to support meeting this criterion.

1. If awarded grant funding for a project, does the entire project need to be completed by June 30, 2024?

No. The entire project does not need to be completed by June 30, 2024, but awarded grant funds must be obligated within six months from the date the funds are awarded by VDOE for the project.

1. Are regional education program facilities eligible to receive School Construction Assistance Program grants?

No. The appropriation act specifies these grants are for public schools under the control of local school boards and school divisions. As such, regional education program facilities, such as regional CTE centers, are not eligible for these grants.

1. The Board’s program guidelines include 11 competitive application criteria for which points are awarded, but divisions only provide responses to a portion of the criteria items in the SCAP application. Where do divisions find those criteria to answer not included on the SCAP application? Does VDOE populate that data from secondary data sources?

School divisions must complete all criteria items that appear in the SCAP application. The remaining criteria are based on data obtained from secondary data sources and will automatically populate in the SCAP application after the November 28 application deadline. Following the November 28 application deadline, submitted applications will be reviewed and scored on all application criteria. Once the scoring is completed, school divisions will be able to see their scores for all application criteria, including a total application criteria score, in the SCAP application.

1. May divisions apply for more than one project for the same school or should multiple project components for a school be combined in one application?

Only one project per school can be entered into the SCAP application. If multiple project components are part of the overall modernization/renovation of the facility, they should be combined in one grant application submitted for that school.

1. Are changes possible to the scope of a project due to the project budget after the original grant application is submitted (for example, a K-8 school is planned and submitted on the original application, but a K-6 school may be built if that is all the budget allows)? Is a separate application needed for both the K-6 and K-8 school scenarios? Or should this situation be described in the project description text box?

Since only one new facility will be built, only one application needs to be submitted in the SCAP application. However, the project cost entered in the application must reflect the cost of the building projected to be built at the time of application. The project description should include an explanation of the possible change in project scope. VDOE will provide some flexibility if there is a change in project scope for budgetary reasons, such as a change in grade configuration of a new school. Project costs for the change in project scope would have to be reviewed by VDOE to ensure they qualify. This may require submission of an amended application in SCAP. However, no additional grant funding can be provided after the Board awards a grant for the project that is initially approved.

1. A project combines two existing elementary schools, an elementary school with grades K-2 and another with grades 3-5, to create a combined grades K-5 elementary school. In the grant application, are responses needed on the building condition for both elementary schools being consolidated?

Since the SCAP application will not accept data for two schools, enter the conditions data that reflects the “worse” condition of the two schools being consolidated.

1. How can a grant application be submitted for a school that is not already listed in VDOE’s school database?

By submitting a “New School Form.” The link to this form is included in [Superintendent’s Memo 041-23](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/42776/638128389586300000). Send the completed form to ResultsHelp@doe.virginia.gov and copy Vijay.Ramnarain@doe.virginia.gov.

1. Do all projects submitted for SCAP grant funding need to also be submitted in the School Building Construction and Renovation (SBCR) application in SSWS for review by VDOE?

Yes.

1. Is there a recommended minimum project cost amount when applying for this grant?

No. However, this grant is intended to support significant capital construction/renovation projects and is not intended to support maintenance projects. For example, a complete roof replacement including structural changes would qualify, but a roof membrane replacement project would not.

1. Are smaller scale projects to replace HVAC systems, windows/doors, or roofs qualifying projects for grant funding?

Yes, projects of this type may be submitted and would be evaluated against the criteria in the Board’s program guidelines.

1. Does a roof replacement constitute a major renovation project? The roof is not structurally changing, just replacing the rooftop membrane and ballast.

Roof projects of this scale would not be considered a major project under the SCAP grant program and would not be eligible for grant funding. The intent of this grant is to fund new school construction project costs or major renovations/additions project costs.

1. Can grant funds be used to fully renovate a separate building currently used to accommodate students in an alternate setting?

Yes, if K-12 instruction occurs there, that building would qualify. But, not any spaces that are solely for non-instructional, administrative purposes that might share that building.

New FAQ’s 8/1/2023

Can a division apply for additional money for school previously awarded?

No

Can a division apply for additional schools even if awarded for other schools in their division?

Yes