# Restorative Practices Grant Program

**Request for Applications
2025-2027**

**Applications Due: June 13, 2025**



Administered by:
School Health and Safety Office
Whole Child Division
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 California Department of Education

May 2025

Timetables of Due Dates

| Dates | Activities |
| --- | --- |
| May 15, 2025 | Request for Applications (RFA) released and posted on the California Department of Education (CDE) website |
| June 13, 2025 | Applications must be received at the CDE by 11:59 p.m. Pacific Standard Time via email at RP@cde.ca.gov  |
| July 18, 2025 | Preliminary list of grantees announced via email  |
| October 1, 2025 | Project start date |
| June 30, 2027 | Project end date  |

## Overview

### Background

In recent years, the use of restorative practices in schools has grown rapidly. Restorative practices are designed to proactively build community, improve relationships, and help students amend harm when conflict occurs. A literature review of 34 studies1 conducted in seven countries, including 23 studies from the United States, found that restorative practices improve school climate and safety, improve student well-being, and promote positive conflict management. These studies also found that schools that increased use of restorative practices saw a decrease in schoolwide misbehavior, bullying, substance abuse, disparity, and student mental health challenges.

Recognizing the benefit of evidence-based approaches to improve school climate and culture, Education Code Section 49055 mandated that the California Department of Education (CDE) develop evidence-based best practices for restorative practices. The best practices for restorative practices developed by the CDE are posted on the CDE’s website at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/se/restorativepractices.asp>.

Senate Bill (SB) 114 (2023-24 Trailer Bill – Restorative Practices) allocates seven million one-time funds to support local educational agencies (LEAs) electing to implement best practices for restorative practices. The funding is intended to help LEAs adopt, expand, and integrate best practices for restorative practices to existing district initiatives to strengthen efforts to reduce disciplinary actions, enhance student engagement, and improve school climate to promote an inclusive, supportive, and equitable school environments.

### Best Practices for Restorative Practices

The terms “Restorative Practices” and “Restorative Justice” (RJ) are used interchangeably in this Request for Applications.

Below are the ten best practices for RJ developed by the CDE:

1. **Build a Strong Foundation**: Establish a core group of trained RJ champions, including educators, school leaders, and students, who will model and lead RJ practices across the school. This foundational team will receive intensive, comprehensive RJ training to prepare them for their leadership roles in implementing restorative practices.
2. **Engage the Entire School Community**: Promote buy-in and understanding of RJ practices among all school stakeholders through presentations, listening sessions, and roundtables. This inclusive approach involves students, parents, staff, and community members to ensure a shared commitment to RJ principles.
3. **Integrate RJ into School Policies**: Review and revise disciplinary policies to support restorative responses over punitive measures. Removing non-legally mandated suspensions and integrating restorative alternatives help create a discipline policy that aligns with RJ principles.
4. **Provide Ongoing Professional Development**: Deliver continuous training on RJ principles and techniques, such as circle facilitation and conflict resolution, to all staff members. This ensures sustainable, consistent implementation across the school.
5. **Create Restorative Spaces**: Designate areas within the school for restorative practices, such as mediation and circle activities. These dedicated spaces should be inviting, private, and conducive to open dialogue.
6. **Focus on Relationship-Building**: Promote proactive relationship-building activities, like community-building circles and social-emotional learning sessions, to foster trust and respect. These activities aim to reduce potential conflicts and strengthen the sense of belonging among students and staff.
7. **Implement a Tiered Approach**: Use a multi-tiered framework to address varying levels of support, including universal community-building circles, targeted restorative conferences for specific conflicts, and reintegration circles for students returning from suspension.
8. **Monitor and Evaluate**: Regularly assess the effectiveness of RJ practices on school climate, discipline, and student outcomes. Collect and analyze data to refine implementation and maximize impact.
9. **Foster Collaboration**: Facilitate collaboration among educators, administrators, students, and parents to ensure a unified approach to RJ practices. This collective effort will strengthen the overall impact and longevity of the program.
10. **Address Challenges and Resistance**: Recognize and address any resistance to RJ practices among staff or students by offering resources, support, and success stories. Highlighting positive outcomes will encourage acceptance and commitment.

### Expected Outcomes

The following are examples of expected student outcomes as a result of the grant activities:

1. **Reduced Exclusionary Discipline**: A measurable decrease in suspensions and expulsions as restorative alternatives become the preferred response.
2. **Improved School Climate**: Positive shifts in school climate surveys, showing increased feelings of safety, respect, and belonging among students and staff.
3. **Enhanced Conflict Resolution Skills**: Students and staff develop improved skills in conflict resolution, as evidenced by the successful facilitation of mediation and conflict-resolution sessions.
4. **Higher Engagement Among Stakeholders**: Increased participation and satisfaction among students, parents, and staff in RJ-related initiatives, promoting a collaborative and inclusive environment.
5. **Sustainable Program Model**: Successful implementation of a sustainable RJ model that can be adapted and maintained beyond the initial grant period.
6. **Increased Academic Outcomes**: Long-term improvements in academic performance as a result of a supportive school climate that minimizes disruptions and enhances focus.

By addressing the goals of RJ through funded activities, LEAs will be empowered to establish RJ practices that foster positive, lasting changes within their communities.

## General Grant Information

### Eligibility Criteria

This grant is open to LEAs in California, defined as a school district, charter school, or county office of education.

* + 1. **Grant size and project duration**

The maximum grant amount is up to $100,000 per LEA. Project start date is October 1, 2025, and end date is June 30, 2027.

* + 1. **Grant Reporting Requirements**

As a requirement of funding, all grantees must agree to submit Year 1 Progress and Expenditure Reports, and Final Progress and Expenditure Reports to the CDE. The progress reports must include implementation progress, accomplishments, challenges encountered, actions to overcome barriers, and project outcomes. The due dates of these reports are as follows:

* Year 1 Progress and Expenditure Reports: July 30, 2026
* Final Progress and Expenditure reports: July 30, 2027
	+ 1. **Allowable Use of Grant Funds**

LEAs may use grant funds to support personnel, trainings, and activities aligned with the implementation of restorative practices best practices as described in Section 1B. Budgets that include non-allowable, excessive, or inappropriate items, will receive a lower score. The CDE will require applicants selected for funding to revise budgets that include non-allowable, excessive, or inappropriate items. Allowable expenditures may include, but are not limited to:

1. Training and Development for Core Groups: Cover the costs of comprehensive RJ training for educators, leaders, and student representatives who will spearhead RJ practices.

2. School-Wide Engagement Events: Fund school-wide events such as community meetings, roundtables, and informational sessions for all stakeholders focusedon RJ practices.

### 3. Policy Revision: Support LEAs in assessing and revising current discipline policies to align with RJ best practices.

### Professional Development Workshops: Fund ongoing RJ training sessions for all staff to ensure sustained competency in RJ techniques.

### Creation of Restorative Spaces: Allocate funds to design and equip designated RJ spaces within the school.

### Community-Building Initiatives: Invest in programs that support RJ goals of proactive relationship-building, such as social-emotional learning resources and team-building activities.

* 1. Implementation of Multi-Tiered RJ Practices: Fund tiered RJ activities, including group circles and reintegration processes.

### Non-Allowable Use of Grant Funds

Grant funds are intended to complement and enhance existing programs and must not be used to supplant federal, state, or other local funds now being used for existing staff or activities. Funds may not be used for the following:

* Construction, renovation, or repair of any school facilities.
* Expenditures for land, buildings, or other intangible capital assets, including items acquired through leases with option to purchase and capitalized equipment costs.
* Telephone systems, fax machines, and telephones, including cell phones and landlines.
* Purchase of vehicles.
* Travel outside the United States.
* Childcare—possible exceptions are allowed, with evidence that the provision of childcare is necessary to implement a programmatic intervention strategy or training event conducted beyond normal school hours or off site for students, staff, or parents.
* Clothing.
* Food—possible exceptions are allowed, with evidence that the provision of food is necessary to implement a programmatic intervention strategy or training event conducted beyond normal school hours or off site for students, staff, or parents.
* Preparation, delivery, and travel costs associated with the application.
	1. **Payments**

The first payment of 50 percent of the grant funds will be released upon completion and return of the AO-400 (Grant Award Notification). LEAs will be reimbursed on approved expenditure above 50 percent of the grant funds upon receipt and approval of the Year 1 Expenditure Report. The remaining balance of the grant award, up to $100,000 per LEA, will be reimbursed upon the receipt and approval of the Final Expenditure Report.

* 1. **General Assurances and Certifications**

General assurances and certifications are required of grantees as a condition of receiving funds. Applicants do not need to sign and return the General Assurances and Certification with their application. Instead, they must download the current General Assurances and Certifications, sign them, and keep the documents on file and available for compliance reviews, complaint investigations, examination of records, audits, etc. The “Assurances and Certifications” are located on the CDE Funding Forms web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/fm/ff.asp>.

* 1. **Individualized Applications**

Each application submitted must be tailored to each individual LEA. Duplications or identical applications will not be considered. An application that is copied in any part or form from another LEA’s application will automatically be rejected. Applicants must not submit an application where the text has been copied from another LEA’s previous or current application, whether another agency has voluntarily or involuntarily provided the information.

## Application Requirements

* + 1. **Application Submission**

LEAs must submit the grant application via email to RP@cde.ca.gov by June 13, 2025. Grant applications must be received at the CDE by 11:59 p.m. Pacific Standard Time. Late submissions will not be considered.

All submitted applications must include the following:

* Application Cover Sheet (Attachment 1)
* Project Abstract (1 page maximum. Single-spaced, 12-point Arial font)
* Project Narrative (6 page maximum. Single-spaced, 12-point Arial font)
* Project Budget (Attachment 2). Excel document must be uploaded with the application. Portable Document Format (PDF) file will not be accepted.
	+ 1. **Project Narrative**

Applications must address the items listed below. Applications must clearly identify and number the prompts in the narrative section.

Each section of the narrative and budget is assigned a point value with a maximum possible point total of 100 for the entire application. Applicants must achieve a minimum score of 70 points to be eligible for funding, and funding will be awarded in descending order of points until all funds are exhausted. Please refer to Attachment 3 for the Scoring Rubrics.

1. **Problem Statement (20 points)**

Provide an overview of the LEA, including geographical location, data on enrollment and student demographics, such as racial ethnic breakdown, percentage of low income, English learner, foster, homeless, and other demographics information. Describe the need related to school climate and discipline. Provide relevant data such as chronic absenteeism, in and out-of-school suspension rates, and student dropout rates, disaggregated by student groups. Include relevant student, staff, and parent school climate survey data (such as from the California School Climate, Health, and Learning Surveys) , disaggregated by student groups, on school connectedness, student wellness, and safety. Describe how restorative practices can address the needs of students and improve student outcomes.

1. **District commitment and capacity (20 points)**

Describe the commitment and capacity of the LEA in implementing and sustaining best practices for restorative practices. Describe the LEA existing non-punitive discipline policies and practices. Explain how restorative practices align and support LEA’s Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). Describe existing staff training and expertise for project implementation.

Describe current restorative practice implementation in the LEA, including which RJ best practices as specified in Section I.B. are being implemented by the LEA.

If the LEA is new to restorative practices, explain how the proposed grant application will be leveraged and sustained with existing resources.

1. **Proposed Grant Activities (30 points)**

Describe the project goals and measurable objectives. Clearly identify the proposed best practices for restorative practices that will be implemented. Provide details on how the project will be implemented, such as schools or grades selected, responsible staff and qualifications etc. Provide a project timeline, including responsible staff, and proposed activities in the timeline. The timeline will count towards the page limit. Describe how the proposed project will initiate, enhance, or align to existing LEA’s school climate initiatives, current RJ implementation, or LCAP.

1. **Measuring of Impact (20 points)**

Describe how the LEA will measure the impact of the proposed application. Describe the staffing capacity to collect and analyze data, such as attendance rate, rate of chronic absenteeism, suspension rate, and school climate survey data (e.g. California Healthy Kids Survey) to assess school connectedness, safety, and student well-being, etc. Data should be disaggregated by student subgroups to monitor equitable outcomes and address disparities.
2. **Budget (10 points)**

Using the Budget Template provided (Attachment 2), LEA must provide a budget and justification of how grant funds will be used to support the project, as described in the Projective Narrative. Provide unit cost computations for each budget line item.

### Appeals Process

Any appeal of the preliminary grant awards must be submitted to the CDE within ten business days after CDE announces the results of the grant award through email notifications.

Grounds for appeal shall be limited to an assertion that the CDE failed to correctly apply the standards for reviewing and scoring the application as specified in this RFA. Dissatisfaction with the score received by the application is not grounds for appeal. Late appeals will not be considered. The appellants must file a full and complete written appeal, including the reason(s) for appeal, issue(s) in dispute, legal authority or other basis for the appeal, and the remedy sought. The appellant may not supply or rely on any new information that was not originally included in the original application. Applicants who wish to appeal a grant award decision must submit a letter of appeal by email to the attention of:

Dominick Robinson, Director

Whole Child Division

RP@cde.ca.gov

A final decision will be made by the Division Director of the Whole Child Division within three weeks from the date appeals are due to the CDE. The decision shall be the final administrative action afforded the appeal. All appeal decisions will be made prior to the issuance of the Grant Award Notification letters.