Securly's
Federal funding whitepaper
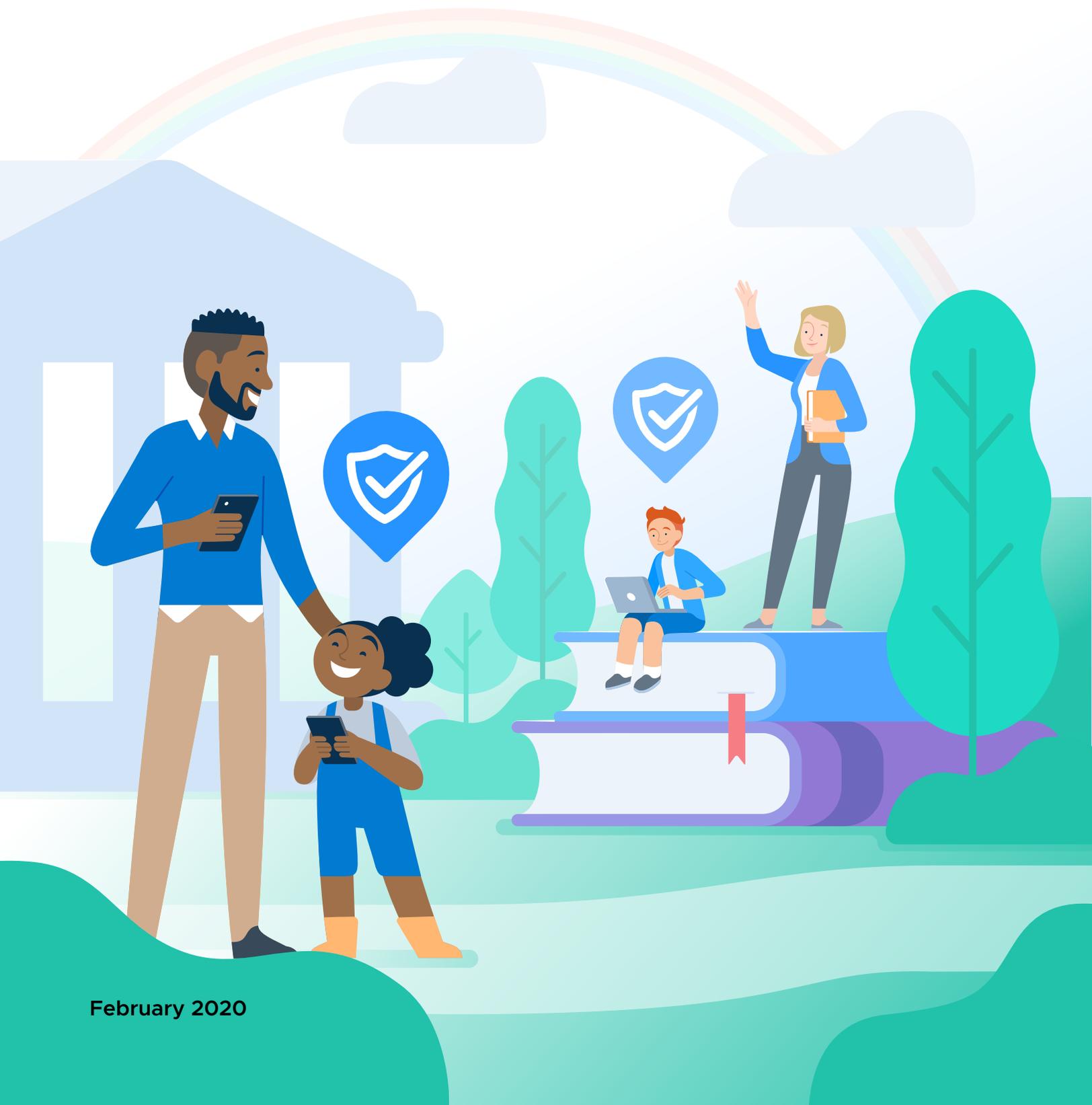
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Introduction

Student safety is a constant challenge for schools. This struggle was brought to the forefront after a gunman opened fire at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL in 2018. After the Parkland shooting, many lawmakers from both parties saw the need for legislative action to kickstart a new approach to keeping our children safe in school.

The support received by the [STOP School Violence Act](#) of 2018 is an example of a bipartisan agreement that supported a widely-viewed issue of keeping our children safe in schools. The measure, which authorizes $50 million a year (which started in 2018) for increased school security, includes technology and response training. This act was signed into law by President Trump in March 2019, but raises a key question: How do school systems get this additional money to address 21st century school safety?

Student safety programs require many human and technological resources, but they can be hard to obtain given budgetary constraints that schools have to deal with. As many know, programs and intervention options are available to help schools create safer environments for their students, teachers, and the community. This overview provides insight into how federal funding supports our local schools.

Federal grants available for schools in the US

Note that the funds available for each program are subject to change every year. The values in this table are approximate numbers based upon previous allotments.

Grant name	Program funding	When do you apply?
[STOP School Violence Act (2018)](#)	$75,000,000	By March 2020.
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) formula grants (Title 1, Part A) *Note that these funds are distributed by the US Department of Education to State Departments, who in turn distribute them among schools districts.*	Varies every year as per population demographics of the time.	Spring of the academic year as part of your overall budget.
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) formula grants (Title II, Part A) *Note that there are state-specific details for the grant that should be considered before applying.*	Varies every year as per money received by the states and percentages defined for each district.	Spring of the academic year as part of your overall budget.
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) formula grants (Title III)	Varies every year.	Spring of the academic year as part of your overall budget.
[Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) formula grants (Title IV, Part A)](#)	~$10,000 per LEA	Spring of the academic year as part of your overall budget.
[COPS School Violence prevention program (SVPP)](#)	$50,000,000	The month of May every year for states to apply (then offer opportunities to districts once awarded).

Grant name	Program funding	When do you apply?
OJJDP FY 20 Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Program Support	$2,000,000	TBA
BJA FY 20 Supporting Innovation: Field-Initiated Programs to Improve Officer and Public Safety	$6,000,000	TBA
Investigator-Initiated Research and Evaluation on Firearm Violence, Fiscal Year 2020	$2,000,000	TBA
BJA FY 20 Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program	$19,000,000	TBA
State Homeland Security Program (SHSP)	~$415,000,000	The month of May, every year.
Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education) State Education Agency Grants	$1,800,000	The month of May, every year.

Other grant options (private & local)

Most of states have some form of grants allotted for student and school safety programs. Twenty-nine states with dedicated school safety funding include: AL, AZ, AK, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, ID, IN, KS, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, NV, NH, NJ, NY, NC, ND, OH, PA, TN, TX, VT, VA, WI. Securly is working with partners to make sure we're up-to-date with every locale to better our relationship with each individual district and school.

The Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) grant provides funds to improve student achievement and address personnel/resource needs of rural, low-income schools. RLIS allowable grant activities mirror those authorized under Title I-A, Title II-A, Title III, and Title IV-A.

Examples of some local grants available to schools:

Grant name	Program funding	When do you apply?
Tennessee School Safety Grant (Safe School Grant)	$20,000,000	September each year.
PA Safe School Grant	$25,000	July each year.
VA School Security Equipment Grant	$100,000	August each year.
Mental Health Service Professional Demonstration Grant Program	NA	NA
Arizona School Safety Program Grant	NA	April & September every year

Determining which grant suits you

Determine what type of grant suits you best before starting the application process.

1. Identify and list your school's safety needs. For example, do you need a surveillance system? Do you have existing systems but lack the human resources to manage and implement them? Is bullying/cyberbullying one of the biggest problems in your school? Do you want to implement training programs for your staff to equip them for emergency situations?

2. Estimate how much money you'll need to fulfill each of your safety needs.

3. Refer to the tables in this document to identify grants that cater to your needs. It's necessary that you ensure that your needs fall within the range of the grant's scope to avoid grant rejection.

How to apply

Once you have identified the type of grant or the specific grant that meets your requirements, visit www.grants.gov or US Department of Education website depending on the grant you are applying for.

The grants.gov website includes a step-by-step guide on how to apply to specific grants, from identifying eligibility to tracking applications. It also includes training materials and videos to help you through the process.

Register at the grants.gov website and download the Grant Application package to begin the process. The package will contain detailed information about the information to be provided including any formats of funding request letters, etc.

Similarly, the Department of Education website also includes a detailed list of grants with with links to the corresponding applications. Usually, the 'Apply' button will redirect you to the grants.gov website where you will need to complete the process as described above.

Alternatively, there are various NGOs and grant consulting firms that can help you find the right grants for you and guide you through the application process as well.

Utilizing funds

Once your school district is granted the funds, it's important to plan your utilization and maximize its impact. Here are some pointers on how you can utilize your grant funds:

1. **Creating safe and drug-free schools:** Along with the physical safety of students and other school staff, safe schools ensure that students are not cyberbullied and their online experience is academic and safe in nature. Services like Securly's signature cloud-based web filter, tipline, or team of 24/7 trained specialists, can all help create safe environments for your students in school and online.

2. **Investing in counselors:** A common problem among schools is the student:counselor ratio, which can go up to 600+:1 at time. This limits the interaction and relationship building required to help students. Grant funds should therefore be used to get more counselors on board.

3. **To Improve Student Safety:** Positive Behavior Interventions (PBIS), violence prevention programs, trauma-informed classrooms, school safety equipment (visitor management, emergency radios.)

Conclusion

Student safety programs can be expensive and overwhelming, but attainable if you have the right information and resources. From applying for grants to using your funding wisely, you can create safer environments for your students, teachers, and the community.

Resources for improving school safety

1. Webinar on why lockdowns are not enough.
2. Webinar on handling emergency drills effectively
3. Webinar on emergency response communication
4. Webinar on federal funding for school districts
5. Using Title IV Funds for student safety
6. A look back at Federal School Safety Grants awarded in 2019
7. 2020 Budget Q&A with grantsoffice.com
8. School Violence Prevention tips
9. How to Create a Positive School Climate
10. Why do some States have more competitive opportunities than others?
11. Communication during emergency situations