

Student Wellbeing for Systems Change Fund

Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

- ***Do we need to be a charity to apply?*** Technically, any type of organization can apply – a non-profit, university, hospital, social-purpose business – there are no exclusions. If you are not a registered Canadian charity, you must use a fiduciary. A fiduciary is a registered Canadian charity who will accept the funds on your behalf and transfer them to you. You can indicate who your fiduciary is on the application form. Non-profit organizations without charitable status must list a fiduciary (updated October 30 4:30pm)
- ***Does the initiative have to be focused on student wellbeing during school hours?*** Not necessarily, but it does need to be seen as an integral part of the school's approach to addressing the wellbeing of its whole student population (i.e. community after-school programs are not eligible).
- ***What do you mean by: a school board/district can apply, but the work cannot be limited to a single board/district?*** From an eligibility perspective, we are happy to accept applications from a single district, as long as the “scaling up” efforts are not simply about developing a board-level strategy. However, scale of impact is a criterion for consideration, so a school board that is scaling up or deep beyond their board (i.e. their community, region or province) would rate higher on that criteria than a school board whose efforts are limited to only their district.
- ***Should the proposed initiative be "new", or can be an extension/expansion of current initiatives to a broader systemic level?*** It does not have to be new. In fact, untested student wellbeing approaches are not eligible for this fund, and in the area of systems change, we expect to see that you have already begun to address the problem.
- ***Is this grant application just for a particular province?*** Any school district or organization in Canada can apply.
- ***Would teacher wellbeing as a pathway to student wellbeing be an acceptable approach to take?*** Yes. We would just be looking for you to make the link to how your efforts ultimately improve student social and emotional wellbeing.

Timeframe

- ***Must the program run for 3 years? Or shorter programmes (e.g. 2 years) be accepted?*** The length of the project must be 3 years.
- ***Making sustainable system change/impact is really difficult in 3 years. Are you looking for evidence that these efforts are continuing past the short span of the grant?*** We are happy for efforts to continue past the granting period. We do not require that you “achieve” systems change within the grant period, but rather that you work towards and make some progress in achieving these changes.

Completing the Application

- ***If our application is for a component of a larger project, how much of the application should deal with the component vs the overall project?*** We suggest you focus on the describing the component part, but provide information on the overall project as context.

- **What should I select for the CCRA Code?** This is technical question for the McConnell Foundation's CRA reporting purposes. We suggest you select C2 as this category most closely aligns to wellbeing in schools work, but if you pick something else, that's fine too.
- **Est-ce que l'application peut être complétée en Français?** Oui!
- **How is "proof of engagement" different from "partnerships"?** In the partnerships section of the application, we expect to see evidence that you have done an environmental scan and that you know who else is doing similar work, and learning from them (in that sense, "partnerships" is a bit of a misnomer – but we can't change it now!). In the proof of engagement section, we are asking that you list and provide information about the partners upon whom your project depends.

Budget

- **Can programme-related operations costs be included in the project budget, e.g. rental, purchase of equipment, printing, travel, auditing, etc . necessary to run the programme.** Yes – there are no exclusions to what you can include in your budget.
- **Do you have expectations/recommendations for how much of the budget should be split between "activities to support student social/emotional wellbeing" and "efforts to integrate wellbeing into the education system"? (e.g. no more than 50% can go to former, etc.?)** No, there is no specified split or distribution.
- **Shall we budget according to organization financial year/ calendar year/ school year?** The budget period should be between January 2018 and December 2020. If you prefer to use a school year calendar, you can use the 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. If you do use school years, the amounts for the 2017-2018 and 2020-2021 school years should be less because the funding is only being applied to part of that school year.
- **Should we build in time and travel for cohort retreats into the budget?** Travel expenses for any grantee gatherings or retreats will be covered separately by the McConnell Foundation. Staff time would be seen as a commitment from the grantee. As the exact amount of time that would be involved is unclear, we do not expect to see this reflected in your budget.
- **If our organization has raised the 50% match to date, is this acceptable, or do we need new funding to match our request to WellAhead?** Allocation of existing funds is acceptable as part of the 50% matching.
- **Can pending grants be listed in our budget as revenue?** Yes.
- **Can the 50% be all in-kind?** Technically, yes. However, we are looking to see whether your efforts are sustainable. Applications with some financial contribution from other sources, even an allocation of existing program revenue, would be viewed more favourably.
- **What should we do if our revenues are less than our expenses?** For the purposes of this budget, your revenue and expense lines must be balanced (total revenues = total expenses). If they do not, this means you do not have the necessary funds to complete your project, and your application will be disqualified.
- **What are examples of appropriate in-kind contributions?** In-kind contributions from the applicant are expected to demonstrate a commitment to making the project happen. For example, contribution a percentage of a staff member's salary is appropriate if this means they will be doing a different type of work or going over and above their existing work – it is not appropriate if this is something that staff member is already doing as part of their daily work. Similarly, a contribution of space can be included if it reflects a different or new use of space: listing a boardroom for staff

meetings is less appropriate, as the space is already used for that purpose. Listing a gymnasium to use for community-wide gatherings after school hours would be an example of a more appropriate in-kind contribution.

- ***Can funds be used for research and evaluation?*** Yes, you can use part of the funds to conduct ongoing evaluations. However please note that (1) we will only fund projects that have already demonstrated some impact in addressing student wellbeing and (2) we will not be making grants to major research projects, where research is the key focus of the application.

Support from WellAhead

- ***Can you speak more about the supports for developmental evaluation approaches?*** If you are interested in developmental evaluation, we have some expertise in that area on our team and would be happy to offer you some guidance. We will not conduct your developmental evaluation for you. If you are not interested in developmental evaluation, that's fine too. For more info on what developmental evaluation here, you can read [this resource](#) on the McConnell Foundation website.
- ***Is this the only time to apply? or will this opportunity come up again?*** This particular fund is a one-time opportunity within WellAhead. There may be other opportunities for funding through WellAhead in the future, but none are planned at this time.
- ***Is this a one-off grant, or will there be opportunities to extend at the end of 3 years?*** We do not expect to make extensions to grants from this fund.

Likelihood of Success

- ***How many projects do you anticipate funding?*** We have not specified how many grants we will make. However, we do anticipate the total grants to be between \$1 and \$2 million over three years.

Terms and Definitions

- ***How does McConnell Foundation see systems change? I.e. do you have examples from past programmes that you would consider to have made successful systemic impact?*** Please see the [McConnell Foundation website](#) for more details on how we define systems change.
- ***What does high fidelity mean?*** The term fidelity refers to the degree of exactness with which something is copied or reproduced. Given that we are looking to fund approaches that address the wellbeing of the whole student population, we are more interested in approaches that are flexible and adaptable to different contexts, and do not need to be implemented in an exact way.
- ***What does "scalable" mean?*** Scalability refers to the feasibility that the approach can be widely disseminated. Approaches that are high-cost, involve specific teacher training, or must be implemented in an exact way will be interpreted as less scalable than low-cost approaches that require little to no training and can be easily adapted to different contexts.
- ***Do you use a particular definition for social and emotional wellbeing?*** No, we do not adhere to a specific definition at WellAhead. However, the focus of these grants is on Tier 1/Universal wellbeing supports for the whole student population, and not targeted or indicated interventions for students at risk or students with current mental health challenges. Please refer to the [webinar](#) for more information.
- ***How do you define "evidence"? Will consideration be given to only academic or professional evaluation?*** We suggest you include the most rigorous forms of evidence you have, and their results. We will consider all forms of evaluation in our review.