


# Sustaining Community Schools Through State-Level Blending & Braiding

More than **8 states directly fund Community Schools**, and over **30 states support initiatives aligned with Community Schools**. It is essential to explore how to blend and braid state funds, which involves using different funding sources to support Community Schools.

Learn more about sustainability from [IEL's Leadership Town Hall on Durability & Partnerships](#), and a webinar on [Sustaining Community Schools](#).

## Actions & Partnerships


### Collaboration with State Partners



State Departments of Education, State Boards, State Education Agencies and Local Education Agencies can help you:

- Identify federal and state funding streams
- Learn about upcoming grants and opportunities
- Build partnerships and gain access to cross-department funds (such as funds to support health clinics)

### Educating on Impact & Advocating for Increased Funding



Loss or reduction of federal funding intensifies competition for non-federal funding and resources. Here are four steps to consider:

- Build relationships with state and local elected officials
- Share impact stories and data outcomes from your Community Schools
- Invite elected officials and media to your events or to visit your school
- Form coalitions with other education organizations and groups from your state

# Identifying Funding Streams by Community School Essential:

## Powerful Student and Family Engagement



Family engagement remains a bipartisan priority of schools. An effective approach is to focus on low-cost, high impact strategies that increase communication and trust. Examples include:

- Minnesota: MN Department of Education's [Olmstead Family and Community Engagement Grant](#)
- Kentucky: [FY26 Community Education RFA \(Closed\)](#)

## Expanded and Enriched Learning Opportunities



Continue providing before-, after-school and summer opportunities for students, by pursuing state grants to fund out-of-school programming. Examples include:

- Tennessee: [The Lottery for Education Afterschool Programs \(LEAPs\)](#)
- North Carolina: Grants like the [Extended Learning and Integrated Student Supports \(ELISS\) Competitive Grant Program](#)

## Rigorous, Community-connected Classroom Instruction



Bridge communities and classroom learning and partnership opportunities by tapping into Career & Technical Education (CTE) funds and partnership grants. Examples include:

- National: Partnership for Student Success' [Community Collaboration Challenge](#)
- State: Texas' [Summer Career & Technical Education Grant](#)

# Identifying Funding Streams by Community School Essential:

## **Integrated Student Supports**



Coordinate health and social services, academic and nonacademic supports, and enrichment opportunities through state-level health & wellness funding. Examples include:

- Texas: [Community Mental Health Grant Program](#)
- School-based Health Clinic (SBHC): Funding available in many states
- Illinois: [Illinois Afterschool Network](#) Trainings, state networks nationwide

## **Collaborative Leadership and Shared Power and Voice:**



Coordinate formal and informal structures for families, students, teachers, principals, and community partners to make decisions together through professional development and youth leadership grants. Examples include:

- National: [National Youth Leadership Council's](#) \$1,000 grants to youth led-teams to create service-learning projects

## **A Culture of Belonging, Safety, and Care:**



Develop schools as welcoming places, valuing experiences and fostering caring and trusting relationships. Examples include:

- Idaho: [Idaho Future Fund](#)
- Maryland: [Public School Opportunities Enhancement Program](#)

# Identifying Funding Streams by Geographical Area:

## Urban



Urban areas often have a expansive network of nonprofit partners, access to local government initiatives, and philanthropy funds.

- Engage with the school district, the City Mayor's office, local foundations supporting youth and education, health departments with grants for school-based services.
- Federal: HUD [Community Development Block Grant Program](#)

## Suburban



Suburban schools serve students with diverse and evolving needs. These schools can tap into general state and federal education funding to support a Community Schools model.

- Massachusetts: [SEL & Mental Health Grant](#) (Integrated Student Supports)
- Maryland: [Public School Opportunities Enhancement Program](#) (Expanded learning)

## Rural



Rural schools often serve as the hub of the community, and may qualify for funding streams specifically reserved for rural areas.

- Texas: Title V, Part B - [Rural Education Initiative](#) (Community-connected instruction, Family Engagement, Integrated Supports)
- National: Appalachian Regional Commission's [READY Grants to Grow](#) (capacity-building for individuals/organizations/ communities)