PLUS PROGRAM · SAMPLE GRANT · COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

SAMPLE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS GRANT

VALLEY VISTA HIGH SCHOOL

SAMPLE APPLICATION FOR A FICTIONAL SCHOOL. FOR ILLUSTRATION ONLY.

ABOUT THIS SAMPLE

This is a sample application written for a fictional school. Valley Vista High School and Sierra Ridge Unified School District do not exist, and every local figure in this sample is invented for illustration. The sample shows how a California high school might include the PLUS Program in its community schools work. Your application should be built on your own school's data, staff, partners and calendar.

The California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP) is administered by the California Department of Education (CDE). Beginning in 2026 it is ongoing funding of about $1 billion a year. A school site is eligible when at least 65 percent of its students are unduplicated pupils. Eligible sites receive $75,000 to $400,000 a year based on enrollment, and no match is required. A district opts its eligible sites in through CDE. The first opt-in deadline is November 1, 2026, and later opt-ins are due June 1 each year. A new site may spend up to two years planning. After that, the district submits an implementation plan every year, presents it to the governing board and posts it. Confirm current amounts and dates with CDE.

Because CCSPP is now an ongoing allocation rather than a competition, this sample is written as the PLUS portion of a site's community school plan and budget. It follows the sections most community schools plans and applications ask for. PLUS facts in it, such as pricing, research citations and how the 30-day cycle works, are accurate and may be used as written. Everything that describes Valley Vista should be replaced with your school's own story.

Writer's notes appear throughout in quoted boxes like the one below. They explain what each section needs to do and what to make your own.

> **Writer's note.** Reviewers read many applications. Shared facts about a program are expected to look similar across schools. A needs statement, goals and an implementation plan that could belong to any school are what lose points. Use this sample to see the shape of a strong application, then write each section from your own school's data and voice.

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Valley Vista High School, a comprehensive high school of 1,850 students in Sierra Ridge Unified School District, will implement the PLUS Program as a core strategy in its community school plan. Seventy-eight percent of Valley Vista students are unduplicated pupils. The school's chronic absenteeism rate of 24 percent and its school connectedness scores point to students who are not yet fully connected to the supports the community school is building.

PLUS is an evidence-based school climate program that uses youth participatory action research. A dedicated PLUS class of 25 to 30 students, led by a PLUS Advisor funded at 0.2 FTE, will gather student data each month through Direction surveys and student Forums. Students will then plan and lead campus activities that address the issues the data identifies. Each cycle ends with a report to the site shared decision-making team, the PBIS and MTSS teams, and the district office. Over three years, Valley Vista will use PLUS to increase student connection, reduce student-reported bullying and exclusion, improve attendance, and give students a regular role in the community school's decisions.

> **Writer's note.** Lead with your school and its need, then name PLUS as the strategy. Keep the abstract to the funder's word limit. Every number here should come from your own Dashboard, CHKS or local data.

STATEMENT OF NEED

Valley Vista High School serves 1,850 students in grades 9 through 12. Seventy-eight percent are unduplicated pupils, including 21 percent English learners and 3 percent foster youth. The school became a community school site in 2026-27 and is building the integrated supports, family engagement and shared leadership the California Community Schools Framework calls for.

The school's own data shows that many students are not yet connected to that work.

MEASURE	VALLEY VISTA	SOURCE
Chronic absenteeism	24 percent	California School Dashboard, 2025-26
Suspension rate	5.1 percent	California School Dashboard, 2025-26
Grade 11 students reporting school connectedness	52 percent	California Healthy Kids Survey, 2025-26
Grade 11 students reporting a caring adult at school	58 percent	California Healthy Kids Survey, 2025-26

MEASURE	VALLEY VISTA	SOURCE
Students reporting being bullied on campus in the last 30 days	9 percent, compared with a Direction norm of 6 percent for grades 9 to 12	Direction pilot, spring 2026

In spring 2026, the school's wellness center team piloted Direction with a representative sample of 160 students and held two student Forums. Students in both Forums named exclusion, vaping, mental health and fights as the top issues affecting the student body. Several students said they did not know the wellness center existed or felt uncomfortable going there.

The community school's asset mapping identified strong partners in county behavioral health, a local family resource center and the city parks department. The gap analysis found that the school has no regular, student-generated measure of campus experiences between annual CHKS administrations. It also found no structured way for students to take part in the shared decision-making team. Valley Vista needs a system that brings current student data to the adults planning supports and gives students a defined role in improving their school.

> **Writer's note.** This is the section reviewers weigh most heavily, and it is the one that must be entirely yours. Use your Dashboard, CHKS, discipline and attendance data, your asset map and gap analysis, and your own Direction or Forum results if you have them. If you have not used Direction yet, describe the gap it fills rather than inventing figures. Cite the year for every number.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Valley Vista will implement the PLUS Program as the student layer of its community school. PLUS is an evidence-based program that uses youth participatory action research (YPAR). Students gather information about their own school, analyze it and lead the response alongside adults. Sierra Ridge Unified is prioritizing student leadership by funding a dedicated PLUS class section and giving students the time to work on building a safe and supportive school climate.

THE PLUS CLASS AND STAFF TEAM

A PLUS Team of 25 to 30 students, selected by the Advisor to reflect the student body, will meet daily in a dedicated class section. The PLUS Advisor will be funded at 0.2 FTE. That time covers the PLUS class and an additional 0.1 FTE for collaboration, so the Advisor can serve on the site's PBIS team, MTSS team and community schools shared decision-making team. The Advisor will bring each cycle's data to those teams and carry their decisions back to the class.

The PLUS staff team at Valley Vista will be Assistant Principal [name], who oversees the school safety plan and the community school; counselor and PBIS lead [name]; and the PLUS Advisor, a social science teacher. The three will attend the 2-Day PLUS Program Development Training together, along with the

community school coordinator. Before the first year of the class, the PLUS Advisor will attend the PLUS Advisor Institute to prepare to teach the PLUS class and lead its activities.

THE 30-DAY CYCLE

The PLUS Team will run a 30-day cycle nine times a year, beginning with a pre-cycle in August and Cycle 1 in September.

1. **Protective factors.** Students lead youth development activities during the school day that build connection and belonging.
2. **Data integration.** Direction surveys a new representative sample of less than 10 percent of the campus with the same questions each cycle. A student-facilitated Forum gathers qualitative data from 40 to 50 students, with a new group each month.
3. **Action planning.** Students review both kinds of data, identify the critical issues the campus needs addressed and plan a response. A cycle report goes to the principal, the PBIS and MTSS teams, the shared decision-making team and the district office.
4. **Engagement.** Students carry out the planned activities with the campus, share the data with the school community and measure again the next cycle.

ALIGNMENT TO THE FOUR PILLARS

COMMUNITY SCHOOL PILLAR	WHAT PLUS ADDS AT VALLEY VISTA
Integrated student supports	The PLUS Team will serve as a liaison between students and the wellness center. Campaigns with QR codes will link students to the center and its self-referral form and present it as a positive part of campus.
Family and community engagement	The PLUS Team will share cycle data at Coffee with the Principal and will host an evening Forum for families each semester. Parent surveys will run in Direction by QR code.
Collaborative leadership and practice	The cycle report will be a standing item on the shared decision-making team's agenda, and PLUS students will present findings to the team each semester.
Extended learning time and opportunities	The PLUS class gives students a year-long course in research, leadership and civic engagement, with curriculum aligned to the State Seal of Civic Engagement.

PLUS also supports two cornerstone commitments of the framework: a racially just and restorative school climate, and shared decision-making and participatory practices.

CONNECTION TO MTSS AND PBIS

PLUS serves as a Tier 1 schoolwide strategy within Valley Vista's MTSS. Direction gives the MTSS team a monthly read of schoolwide patterns between annual surveys, and the team can compare student-reported data with attendance and discipline data each cycle. The PLUS Team will work alongside the PBIS team,

planning student-led campaigns that reinforce schoolwide expectations and address the behaviors the data shows. PLUS is not a counseling or referral program. Forums focus on interactions between students on campus, and students do not counsel or mediate their peers.

> **Writer's note.** Name your actual staff roles, teams and committees. Describe how PLUS connects to the supports your community school already has, such as your wellness center, family resource partners and advisory councils. If your application is for MTSS or PBIS funding rather than community schools, lead with the MTSS and PBIS section and move the pillar table to a supporting role.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND TIMELINE

Valley Vista will prepare in the spring of 2027 and run its first full year of PLUS in 2027-28. The plan below shows who is responsible for each step.

WHEN	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE
Winter 2027	PLUS staff team and community school coordinator attend the 2-Day PLUS Program Development Training	Assistant principal
Spring 2027	PLUS class section added to the 2027-28 master schedule at 0.2 FTE	Principal and counselor
Spring 2027	Advisor selects 25 to 30 students for the PLUS Team, reflecting the student body	PLUS Advisor and counselor
Spring 2027	Advisor joins the PBIS team, MTSS team and shared decision-making team	Principal
June 2027	PLUS Advisor attends the PLUS Advisor Institute in Temecula to prepare to teach the PLUS class	PLUS Advisor
August 2027	Pre-cycle: PLUS Team learns the Forum, Direction and the cycle process	PLUS Advisor
September 2027 to May 2028	Nine 30-day cycles, each ending with a cycle report to site teams and the district office	PLUS Advisor and PLUS Team
Each semester	PLUS students present findings to the shared decision-making team; evening family Forum	PLUS Advisor and community school coordinator
August and May	University-developed Likert surveys in Direction for annual outcomes	PLUS Advisor and assistant principal

WHEN	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE
June 2028	Annual review of outcomes with the shared decision-making team; findings added to the community school implementation plan update	Assistant principal and community school coordinator

Years 2 and 3 follow the same annual cycle. Each year the subscription includes a 2-Day training registration for one new staff member, so the school can train a new team member if staffing changes.

> **Writer's note.** Match the timeline to your own school calendar and your district's community school implementation timeline. Trainings are held regionally throughout the year; check plusprogram.org for current dates rather than writing specific dates into your application.

GOALS AND MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Valley Vista has set four goals for its first three years of implementation. Each objective has a baseline from the statement of need and a target for June 2030.

Goal 1. Reduce student-reported risk factors on campus.

- Objective 1.1: Students reporting being bullied on campus in the last 30 days will decrease from 9 percent to 6 percent or below on Direction.
- Objective 1.2: Each cycle, the PLUS Team will carry out at least one campus activity that addresses a critical issue identified in the Forum and Direction data.

Goal 2. Increase student connection and belonging.

- Objective 2.1: Grade 11 students reporting school connectedness on the CHKS will increase from 52 percent to 62 percent.
- Objective 2.2: Grade 11 students reporting a caring adult at school will increase from 58 percent to 66 percent.
- Objective 2.3: At least 360 students who are not on the PLUS Team will take part in a Forum each year.

Goal 3. Improve attendance.

- Objective 3.1: The chronic absenteeism rate will decrease from 24 percent to 18 percent.

Goal 4. Bring student voice into community school decisions.

- Objective 4.1: A cycle report will go to the shared decision-making team, the PBIS and MTSS teams and the district office after each of the nine cycles each year.
- Objective 4.2: PLUS students will present findings to the shared decision-making team at least twice each year.

- Objective 4.3: Student-generated data will be cited in each annual update of the community school implementation plan.

> **Writer's note.** Set targets from your own baselines and keep them realistic for your school. Reviewers trust modest, specific targets more than large ones. Objective 2.3 reflects nine Forums of about 40 students; adjust it to your own Forum size.

EVALUATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Valley Vista will evaluate PLUS with data the program already gathers, combined with the school's existing attendance, discipline and CHKS data. Progress will be reviewed every cycle, and outcomes will be reviewed each June with the shared decision-making team.

WHAT WE MEASURE	TOOL	HOW OFTEN	WHO REVIEWS IT
Student experiences of bullying, exclusion and connection	Direction pulse survey, same questions to a new sample of less than 10 percent of students	Each cycle	PLUS Team, PBIS and MTSS teams
Critical issues identified by students	Student Forum findings	Each cycle	PLUS Team and shared decision-making team
School climate, youth-adult partnership and student well-being	University-developed Likert surveys in Direction	August and May	Assistant principal and shared decision-making team
Connectedness and caring adults	California Healthy Kids Survey	Each year	Assistant principal
Chronic absenteeism	Student information system and California School Dashboard	Monthly and each year	MTSS team
Suspensions and incidents by type	District discipline data	Monthly	PBIS team
Fidelity to the nine-cycle model	Cycle reports, Forum dates and activities completed	Each cycle	Assistant principal

Each cycle report will show the Direction results, the top issues from the Forum, the activity the PLUS Team carried out and the next cycle's plan. The PBIS and MTSS teams will compare the student-reported data with attendance and discipline data the same month. When the data shows a rise in a risk area, the teams will review it with the PLUS Team and adjust the next cycle's activities and supports.

Direction surveys are anonymous and comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. No personal information is collected from students, and results are reported for the student body and student

groups only.

> **Writer's note.** Name the people and teams at your school who will actually review the data. If your district runs PLUS Districtwide, add the district-level reporting: results across sites, by grade level and student group, and trends over time.

SHARED DECISION-MAKING AND EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS

PLUS gives Valley Vista a regular way for student information to reach the people who make decisions. Information starts with students in the PLUS class and moves up to the site's teams and the district office. Decisions made there come back down to the campus.

PARTNER	ROLE IN PLUS AT VALLEY VISTA
Shared decision-making team	Receives each cycle report and hears PLUS student presentations each semester. Uses the data in the annual implementation plan update.
PBIS and MTSS teams	The PLUS Advisor serves on both teams. The teams use Direction data alongside attendance and discipline data to plan supports.
Wellness center and county behavioral health	The PLUS Team promotes the wellness center and its self-referral form and helps reduce stigma around using it.
Family resource center	Co-hosts the evening family Forum each semester and shares Direction parent survey results with families.
Sierra Ridge Unified district office	Receives each cycle report. Director of Student Services reviews results across PLUS sites.
PLUS Program	Provides the curriculum, Direction, the activity resource database, staff training and one conference registration each year.

Sierra Ridge Unified has collected the signed commitment letters CCSPP requires from the superintendent, the principal, and representatives of teachers, classified staff, students and parents. A letter of support from the PLUS Program is kept on file with the implementation plan as an added partner letter.

> **Writer's note.** List your real partners and what each one will do. CCSPP requires the district to attest that it collected signed commitment letters from the superintendent, principals, and representatives of teachers, classified staff, students and parents. A letter from PLUS or another partner is a letter of support. It does not take the place of the required letters.

EVIDENCE BASE

PLUS meets ESSA Tier 2 (moderate evidence). A third-party quasi-experimental study of the year-long PLUS class in six California high schools compared 153 participating students with similar peers who did not participate. Participation significantly improved attendance. This finding is directly relevant to Valley Vista's chronic absenteeism goal.

University research teams at UC Berkeley, the University of Oregon and the University of Florida continue to study PLUS, with a focus on youth participatory action research. Their published work includes a study of how PLUS integrates YPAR into schoolwide PBIS to address bullying and school climate, and a study of how YPAR can inform school district decisions. A five-year University of Oregon study of student voice in California high schools, funded by the William T. Grant Foundation, is now underway.

PLUS has operated in California schools for about 25 years. Hemet Unified has run it since 2010, Stockton Unified since 2012, and Lake Elsinore Unified for more than 10 years.

References

- Youth Participatory Action Research in the High School Curriculum: Education Outcomes for Student Participants in a District-Wide Initiative. Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness.
- Abraczinskas, M., Kornbluh, M., Golden, A. R., Glende, J., Velez, V., Vines, E., and Ozer, E. J. (2022). Preventing Bullying and Improving School Climate Through Integrating Youth Participatory Action Research Into School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Journal of Prevention and Health Promotion, 3(2).
- Cohen, A. K., Ozer, E. J., Abraczinskas, M., Voight, A., Kirshner, B., and Devinney, M. (2019). Opportunities for Youth Participatory Action Research to Inform School District Decisions. Evidence and Policy.
- Gauna, R. (2017). The Peer Leaders Uniting Students (PLUS) Program: The Impact on School Climate, Student Engagement, and Student Mentoring. Doctoral dissertation, Concordia University Irvine.

> **Writer's note.** The research facts in this section can be used as written. Connect the findings to your own goals, as this sample connects the attendance finding to Valley Vista's absenteeism goal.

THREE-YEAR BUDGET

Valley Vista budgets $80,980 for PLUS from its CCSPP allocation over three school years. The Advisor line uses an illustrative salary and benefits total of $120,000 and is held flat across the three years for simplicity. Lodging and travel for the PLUS Advisor Institute use illustrative amounts.

LINE ITEM	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	TOTAL
PLUS Advisor, 0.2 FTE (certificated salary and benefits)	$24,000	$24,000	$24,000	$72,000
PLUS Program first year: 2-Day training for up to four staff, online subscription, curriculum and one conference registration	$3,495			$3,495
PLUS Advisor Institute registration, PLUS Advisor	$1,495			$1,495
PLUS Advisor Institute lodging, 3 nights at an illustrative $250 per night	$750			$750
PLUS Advisor Institute travel, illustrative	$250			$250
PLUS Program subscription, three-year agreement		$1,495	$1,495	$2,990
Total	**$29,990**	**$25,495**	**$25,495**	**$80,980**

PLUS prices are from the PLUS Costs page.

> **Writer's note.** Use your district's salary schedule for the 0.2 FTE line and include step increases if your district requires them. If you renew year to year instead of signing a three-year agreement, years 2 and 3 are $1,995 each. Lodging and travel for the Advisor Institute will depend on your district's travel rates and distance to Temecula. An Advisor returning to renew every three years registers at $995. Classify each line according to your district's account codes.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

PLUS Advisor, 0.2 FTE ($24,000 per year, $72,000 total). This line funds 0.2 FTE of a certificated social science teacher to serve as Valley Vista's PLUS Advisor. The position covers two responsibilities. The first is the dedicated PLUS class section, where the PLUS Team surveys peers, holds a Forum, plans activities from the data and reports results each 30-day cycle. The second is an additional 0.1 FTE for collaboration. That time allows the Advisor to serve on the site's PBIS team, MTSS team and community schools shared decision-making team. The Advisor brings each cycle's student data to those teams and returns their decisions to the PLUS class. This collaboration time makes the Advisor an active member of the school's network of educational partners and is how student information reaches the adults who plan supports. The amount is 0.2 of an illustrative $120,000 in annual salary and benefits.

PLUS Program first year ($3,495 in Year 1). This line funds the 2-Day PLUS Program Development Training for Valley Vista's PLUS staff team of the assistant principal, the counselor and PBIS lead, the PLUS Advisor and the community school coordinator. It also funds the first year of the online subscription, which includes unlimited access to Direction and the activity resource database, the PLUS curriculum, and one registration to the School Climate Conference or School Safety Conference.

PLUS Advisor Institute ($2,495 in Year 1). This line sends Valley Vista's PLUS Advisor to the PLUS Advisor Institute, held each June in Temecula. The 2-Day training prepares the PLUS staff team to operate the program schoolwide. The Institute prepares the Advisor to teach the PLUS class and lead its activities through the year. Registration is $1,495, and the Institute provides lunches and refreshments. The school covers the Advisor's lodging for three nights, estimated at $750, and travel, estimated at $250.

PLUS Program subscription ($1,495 per year in Years 2 and 3, $2,990 total). This line continues the online subscription under a three-year agreement, which saves 25 percent compared with renewing year to year. Each year it includes unlimited access to Direction and the activity resource database, the PLUS curriculum, one conference registration, and one 2-Day training registration for a new staff member. The training registration lets Valley Vista train a replacement if a member of the PLUS staff team changes roles.

Costs not requested. Optional PLUS Team training for student leaders is not included in this request. Additional conference attendees beyond the included registration will be funded from site professional development funds.

> **Writer's note.** Tie every line to an activity in your program design. Reviewers look for each cost to answer the question of what it pays for and why the project needs it.

SUSTAINABILITY

After these three years, Valley Vista will sustain PLUS through its ongoing community schools funding and its LCAP actions for school climate and pupil engagement. The ongoing cost is the annual subscription of $1,495 and the 0.2 FTE Advisor, which the school builds into the master schedule as one class section plus collaboration time. Sierra Ridge Unified has committed to keeping the PLUS section in the master schedule as part of its community schools plan.

The annual subscription includes a 2-Day training registration for one new staff member each year, so the program can continue when staff change. Sustainability also rests on the program's track record. More than 80 percent of PLUS schools renew each year, and districts such as Stockton Unified, Hemet Unified and Lake Elsinore Unified have run PLUS for more than a decade.

> **Writer's note.** Name the funding sources your district will use over time, and get a commitment from the district office in writing if you can. State law expresses the intent that, beginning in 2031-32, ongoing CCSPP funding continue only for sites that meet the state's certification standards, so plan for certification. CCSPP funds must supplement, not supplant, other funding. A specific plan is far more persuasive than a general promise to seek future funding.