PLUS PROGRAM · SAMPLE GRANT · SCHOOL SAFETY

SAMPLE STOP SCHOOL VIOLENCE GRANT

MESA ARROYO JOINT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

SAMPLE APPLICATION FOR A FICTIONAL SCHOOL. FOR ILLUSTRATION ONLY.

ABOUT THIS SAMPLE

Mesa Arroyo Joint Union High School District is fictional. Every local figure in this sample is invented for illustration. The facts about the PLUS Program and Direction are accurate. Writer's notes appear in quoted boxes after each major section. They explain what the section has to do and what you replace with your own district's story.

The STOP School Violence Program (Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing School Violence) is a competitive federal grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). It is authorized by the STOP School Violence Act of 2018. BJA funds training for school personnel and education for students to prevent violence, behavioral threat assessment and intervention teams, and technology such as anonymous reporting systems. This is a different program from the COPS Office School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP). SVPP pays for physical security such as locks, cameras, access control and alarm systems, and it requires a 25 percent local cash match. BJA STOP pays for the prevention, training and education work that SVPP does not fund. PLUS fits the BJA program because it is a student-led system for preventing violence between students, and it gives the district monthly data that shows where bullying, harassment, fights and exclusion are building. The FY 2026 BJA solicitation (O-BJA-2026-172709) listed awards of up to $2,000,000, with Step 1 on Grants.gov due October 30, 2026 and the full application in JustGrants due November 6, 2026. That round is closed to new applicants. This sample is written for the next round. Confirm the new solicitation's categories, award ceilings, dates and section names when BJA posts it.

> **Writer's note.** In the FY 2025 solicitation, BJA split applicants into two categories. Category 1 (states) could request up to $2,000,000. Category 2 (school districts, local governments, tribes and nonprofits) could request up to $1,000,000, over 36 months with no cost share required. The FY 2026 listing showed a $2,000,000 ceiling, but the category split for FY 2026 was not confirmed for this sample. A school district should assume the Category 2 ceiling applies until the new solicitation says otherwise. Never apply to both BJA STOP and COPS SVPP for the same items. The COPS Office tells applicants not to submit duplicate requests.

PROPOSAL ABSTRACT

Mesa Arroyo Joint Union High School District (MAJUHSD) serves 12,600 students at six comprehensive high schools. Over the last three years the district has seen rising reports of bullying, harassment and fights between students. Most incidents begin as conflict or exclusion that adults do not see until it becomes physical. The district requests $99,165 over 36 months to implement the PLUS Program (Peer Leaders Uniting Students) Districtwide at all six high schools. PLUS is an evidence-based school climate system that uses youth participatory action research. Each month, students survey a representative sample of their campus through Direction and run a Forum that gathers qualitative data from 40 to 50 students. They identify the top issues between students and lead a response with adults. A cycle report then goes to the principal, counselors, PBIS and MTSS teams and the district office. The project falls under the deliverable area for training school personnel and educating students on preventing school violence. It connects to the district's established behavioral threat assessment and management (BTAM) teams and its comprehensive school safety plans. PLUS does not replace either one. The district contributes the PLUS Advisor at 0.2 FTE at each school as a non-federal contribution.

> **Writer's note.** The FY 2025 abstract was limited to 2,000 characters and could contain no personally identifiable information. Check the new limit. State the deliverable area by name. If your district has an established BTAM team, say so in the abstract. In FY 2025, BJA gave priority consideration to applicants with established BTAM teams or plans to create them, and asked applicants to note it in the abstract and narrative.

DESCRIPTION OF THE NEED (STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM)

Mesa Arroyo is a high school district in an agricultural region of California. Seventy-one percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Eighteen percent are English learners. The six high schools range from 1,400 to 2,600 students.

MEASURE	DISTRICT	YEAR	SOURCE
Suspensions for violent incidents (with injury and without) per 100 students	4.8	2025-26	District student information system
Physical fights on campus reported to administration	612	2025-26	District incident log
Grade 9 students who report being harassed or bullied at school in the past 12 months	34%	2025-26	California Healthy Kids Survey
Grade 11 students who report feeling safe or very safe at school	51%	2025-26	California Healthy Kids Survey

MEASURE	DISTRICT	YEAR	SOURCE
BTAM team cases opened	87	2025-26	District BTAM coordinator
BTAM cases where peer conflict or bullying was a contributing factor	49 (56%)	2025-26	District BTAM case review

In spring 2026 the district piloted Direction at two high schools. Direction is an anonymous school climate platform that collects no personal information from students. Each school surveyed a representative sample of fewer than 10 percent of its students.

DIRECTION PULSE QUESTION (LAST 30 DAYS)	CIELO VERDE HIGH	TULE CREEK HIGH	NORM, GRADES 9 TO 12
I was bullied on campus	11%	9%	6%
I saw a fight or a threat of a fight on campus	38%	31%	Not yet set
I was left out or excluded by other students on purpose	22%	19%	Not yet set

Both pilot schools were above the 6 percent norm for students bullied on campus in the last 30 days. Direction flagged both with a warning indicator.

The district's BTAM case review found a pattern. More than half of the cases opened last year involved peer conflict or bullying that had been building for weeks. Students knew about it. Adults learned about it late. The district has a strong response once a concern reaches an adult. It does not have a schoolwide way to find patterns of conflict, harassment and exclusion early, and it has no structure that gives students a role in changing them. The CHKS is given every other year and reports results months later. Discipline data only counts incidents after they happen. The gap is early, campus-level information from students and a student-led response that runs every month.

> **Writer's note.** BJA requires local, specific and current data from the schools in the project. National statistics alone do not meet the standard. Replace every figure here with your own, and give the source and year for each. If you run a Direction pilot before you apply, report it the way this sample does: a representative sample, anonymous, compared to the norm. The BTAM case review is a strong local measure because it connects the need to the district's existing safety work. Do not describe the students in your need statement as dangerous. Describe the conditions between students on campus.

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1. Reduce violence between students at all six high schools by finding patterns of bullying, harassment, fights and exclusion early and acting on them each month.

OBJECTIVE	BASELINE	YEAR 3 TARGET
1a. Students reporting being bullied on campus in the last 30 days (Direction, district average)	10% (pilot schools)	At or below the 6% norm
1b. Students reporting seeing a fight or threat of a fight in the last 30 days (Direction)	35% (pilot schools)	25%
1c. Suspensions for violent incidents per 100 students	4.8	3.6

Goal 2. Give students a defined role in sustaining a safe school, as the Safe Schools Initiative recommends.

OBJECTIVE	BASELINE	YEAR 3 TARGET
2a. High schools with a PLUS Team running nine 30-day cycles a year	0	6
2b. Students who take part in a student-facilitated Forum each year	0	1,800 or more (six schools, 40 to 50 students a cycle)
2c. Grade 11 students who report feeling safe or very safe at school (CHKS)	51%	60%

Goal 3. Connect student data to the district's school safety structures.

OBJECTIVE	BASELINE	YEAR 3 TARGET
3a. Cycle reports delivered to site PBIS, MTSS and safety teams and the district office	0	54 a year (nine per school)
3b. Site safety plans that reference PLUS cycle data in their annual update	0	6

> **Writer's note.** Objectives must be measurable, with a baseline and a target. Tie each one to a data source you will actually collect. Do not promise outcomes PLUS does not address. Do not cite academic achievement or reading scores. Keep the focus on interactions between students on campus.

PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

WHAT PLUS IS

PLUS is an evidence-based school climate program that has been used in California schools for about 25 years. It is grounded in youth development, the resiliency framework and the Safe Schools Initiative finding that students have a role and responsibility in sustaining a safe school. PLUS uses youth participatory

action research (YPAR). Students gather and analyze data about their own school, and they lead the response alongside adults.

At each school, a PLUS Team of 25 to 30 students meets in a dedicated class section taught by the PLUS Advisor. The Advisor selects students to reflect the whole student body. Students are not elected and there are no officers. An adult PLUS staff team supports the work. It includes a site administrator, a counselor or PBIS lead, and the Advisor.

THE 30-DAY CYCLE

Each school runs nine 30-day cycles a year. An August pre-cycle teaches students the process, and Cycle 1 begins in September.

1. **Protective factors.** Students lead youth development activities during the school day that build connection and belonging across the campus.
2. **Data integration.** Direction surveys a new representative sample of fewer than 10 percent of the campus with the same questions each cycle. It measures the student body, not individual students. The PLUS Team also facilitates a Forum with 40 to 50 students, a new group each month. Forum participants identify the issues on campus, how those issues affect students and what can be done. The Forum names the top four critical issues.
3. **Action planning.** Students review both kinds of data and plan the activities the campus needs. A cycle report goes to the principal, counselors, PBIS and MTSS teams and the district office.
4. **Engagement.** Students carry out the activities with the campus, share the data with the school community and measure again in the next cycle.

HOW PLUS PREVENTS VIOLENCE BETWEEN STUDENTS

Forums focus on interactions between students on campus. These include bullying, harassment, exclusion, isolation and the conflicts that lead to fights. Because the Forum and the Direction sample change every month, the district hears from a wide cross section of students over the year. A rise in reported exclusion or threats of fights at one school shows up in that month's data. The PLUS Team and staff team can respond in the next cycle. The response is schoolwide. Students do not counsel or mediate their peers.

CONNECTION TO THREAT ASSESSMENT AND THE SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN

Each MAJUHSD high school has a BTAM team that follows district protocol, and each has a comprehensive school safety plan. PLUS is not a threat assessment tool and it is not a reporting system. Direction is anonymous and does not identify students, so it cannot be used to refer an individual. The connection is at the level of patterns. The PLUS Advisor brings each cycle report to the site safety committee and the PBIS and MTSS teams. The district BTAM coordinator reviews district-level Direction trends each quarter. Patterns in the data help the safety committee decide where to place supervision, which supports to promote and what to include in the annual safety plan update. Any concern about an individual student follows the existing BTAM and reporting protocols. The PLUS Team also acts as a liaison

to each school's wellness center. Students promote it through QR code campaigns and self-referral forms, which helps reduce stigma about asking for help.

VERTICAL ALIGNMENT

Information moves up from the PLUS class to the site administrator, the PBIS and MTSS teams, the district office and the school board. Decisions come back down to the class. At the district level, Direction shows results across all six schools, by grade level and student group, with trends over time and district alerts when a school rises above a norm. The district can download raw data and produce a report for the board.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

WHEN	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE
Months 1 to 3	Planning period. Finalize procurement, set up district Direction account, name site staff teams, brief BTAM and safety committees	Project Director, Director of Student Services
Months 3 to 4	On-site Days 1 and 2: 2-Day PLUS Program Development Training for all six staff teams	PLUS trainer, site staff teams
Months 4 to 5	On-site Day 3 data implementation and Day 4 activity implementation. Direction baseline at all six schools	PLUS trainer, Advisors
Months 5 to 7	Master schedule includes a PLUS class section at each school. Advisors select PLUS Teams	Principals, counselors, Advisors
Month 9	PLUS Advisor Institute (June, Temecula) for all six Advisors	Advisors
Month 11	August pre-cycle. On-site Day 5 final follow-up training	Advisors, PLUS trainer
Months 12 to 36	Nine 30-day cycles each school year. Cycle reports to site teams and the district office	PLUS Teams, staff teams
Quarterly	District review of Direction trends with the BTAM coordinator	Project Director
Months 13 and 25	One on-site follow-up day each year	PLUS trainer
Annually	Board report and safety plan updates that use PLUS data	Director of Student Services

Writer's note. The FY 2025 solicitation required a three-month planning period at the start of the award and asked for a phased approach with a timeline. Build that into your own plan. Name the deliverable area you are applying under. In FY 2025 the areas were technology solutions, behavioral threat assessment and intervention teams, and training for school personnel and students. PLUS belongs under training and education. Be precise about the line between PLUS and your BTAM team. Reviewers will notice if a prevention program is described as a threat assessment or reporting system. PLUS is also not a suicide prevention or crisis program. STOP allows training to prevent violence "against others and self," but PLUS addresses interactions between students. Leave self-harm and crisis response to the district's existing protocols and staff.

CAPABILITIES AND COMPETENCIES

MAJUHSD. The Director of Student Services will serve as Project Director at 0.05 FTE as an in-kind contribution. The Director oversees the district's BTAM program, school safety plans and PBIS rollout. The district has managed state and federal grants through its Fiscal Services department, which will handle financial reporting and drawdowns.

Site staff teams. Each school's PLUS staff team includes an assistant principal, a counselor or PBIS lead, and the PLUS Advisor. Advisors are credentialed teachers chosen for their relationships with students and their work on school climate.

PLUS Program provider. PLUS has been used in California for about 25 years. Districts using PLUS include Stockton Unified (since 2012), Hemet Unified (since 2010), Lake Elsinore Unified (more than 10 years), Kern High School District, Patterson Unified and Compton Unified. More than 80 percent of PLUS schools renew each year. The provider will deliver the on-site training and the Advisor Institute and will supply the PLUS curriculum and the Direction platform. The district will treat the provider as a contractor under its procurement policy.

Research base. University research teams at UC Berkeley, the University of Oregon and the University of Florida continue to study PLUS. A five-year University of Oregon study of student voice in California high schools, funded by the William T. Grant Foundation, is underway. Direction hosts validated instruments from the University of Oregon and the University of Florida, along with the Georgia Southern University Bullying Suite of Surveys for students, staff and parents.

Evidence. PLUS meets the ESSA standard for moderate evidence (Tier 2) for improving attendance, based on the first study below. The studies that follow address bullying, school climate and student voice.

1. A quasi-experimental study published in the Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness used propensity score matching to compare 153 students in a year-long PLUS elective at six high schools in one California district with similar peers. Participation significantly improved attendance. (PDF)
2. 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). (PDF)

3. 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. (PDF)
4. 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. (PDF)

> **Writer's note.** This section scores the people and the organization. Name real roles and real experience. Attach resumes and letters of commitment from site principals, the BTAM coordinator and any partners, as the solicitation allows. Describe how your district has managed federal funds before. The bullying study (reference 2) matters most for this funder because it ties PLUS to bullying prevention inside a PBIS framework.

PLAN FOR COLLECTING THE DATA REQUIRED FOR THIS NOFO'S PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Project Director is responsible for performance data. A district research analyst will compile it at 0.05 FTE as an in-kind contribution.

MEASURE	TOOL	HOW OFTEN	WHO REVIEWS
Staff and students trained (staff teams, Advisors, PLUS Teams)	Training sign-in records	Each training	Project Director
Cycles completed and Forum participants	PLUS cycle reports	Monthly	Site staff teams, Project Director
Bullied, saw a fight, excluded (last 30 days)	Direction	Monthly	PLUS Teams, site teams, district office
Schools above a Direction norm	Direction district alerts	Monthly	Project Director, BTAM coordinator
Suspensions for violent incidents	Student information system	Each semester	Director of Student Services
Students feeling safe at school, harassment	California Healthy Kids Survey	Every other year	District office, board
Safety plan updates that use PLUS data	Site safety plans	Annually	Director of Student Services

The district will download the BJA performance measures for this program when the award is made. It will map each measure to the sources above and enter data in JustGrants on the schedule BJA sets. Direction's raw data download and participation tracking make the monthly figures easy to verify. Data will guide the project in real time. If a school stays above a norm for two cycles, the Project Director will meet with that school's staff team to adjust the plan.

> **Writer's note.** In FY 2025, recipients submitted performance data semiannually in JustGrants and financial reports quarterly. The application itself does not need performance data. It must show who collects the data, who is responsible and how it will guide the project. Use the measures list BJA publishes for the new round. Do not invent BJA measures in your narrative.

PLAN FOR SUSTAINABILITY

PLUS Districtwide costs drop sharply after Year 1. The training and Institute costs are one-time. The ongoing cost is the subscription for each site and for the district. The district already funds the Advisor's 0.2 FTE. By Year 3 the district will move the subscriptions into its LCAP under its school climate goal. It will also include PLUS in its Title IV, Part A safe and healthy students plan. Each year's PLUS subscription includes a 2-Day training registration for one new staff member at every site, so the district can replace staff without new grant funds. Board reports each year will show trends in Direction and discipline data, which supports the case for continued funding.

> **Writer's note.** The sustainability plan cannot assume another STOP award. Name the specific local or state funds that will carry the work. Show that the costs that continue are small and predictable.

BUDGET DETAIL FORM

FEDERAL REQUEST

LINE	CALCULATION	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	TOTAL
PLUS Districtwide site subscriptions	6 sites × $1,495 per year	$8,970	$8,970	$8,970	$26,910
PLUS district subscription	$2,995 per year	$2,995	$2,995	$2,995	$8,985
On-site training days	Year 1: 5 days × $3,500. Years 2 and 3: 1 day × $3,500	$17,500	$3,500	$3,500	$24,500
Trainer travel and lodging (estimate)	Year 1: 5-day visit. Years 2 and 3: 1-day visit	$2,500	$800	$800	$4,100

LINE	CALCULATION	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	TOTAL
PLUS Advisor Institute registration	6 Advisors × $1,495	$8,970	$0	$0	$8,970
Advisor Institute lodging (illustrative)	6 Advisors × 3 nights × $250	$4,500	$0	$0	$4,500
Advisor Institute travel (illustrative)	6 Advisors × $250	$1,500	$0	$0	$1,500
Substitute coverage for training (illustrative)	Year 1: 12 teachers × 5 days × $200. Years 2 and 3: 12 teachers × 1 day × $200	$12,000	$2,400	$2,400	$16,800
BJA grantee meeting travel (illustrative)	2 staff × ($650 airfare + $550 lodging + $250 per diem)	$2,900	$0	$0	$2,900
PLUS Team student leadership training	Request a quote. Not included in totals	Quote	Quote	Quote	Quote
Total federal request		**$61,835**	**$18,665**	**$18,665**	**$99,165**

DISTRICT CONTRIBUTION (NOT REQUESTED)

LINE	CALCULATION	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	TOTAL
PLUS Advisor at 0.2 FTE (illustrative salary and benefits)	6 Advisors × 0.2 × $120,000. Year 1 covers August and September only (2 of 12 months)	$24,000	$144,000	$144,000	$312,000
Total district contribution		**$24,000**	**$144,000**	**$144,000**	**$312,000**

Total project cost: $411,165 ($99,165 federal plus $312,000 district).

> **Writer's note.** The Advisor's 0.2 FTE is shown as a district contribution rather than a federal cost, for three reasons. First, STOP requires no cost share, so there is no penalty for showing it outside the request. Second, the PLUS class section is a regular instructional assignment that the district would staff in any case, and charging a teacher's class time to a federal grant invites a supplanting question. Third, a district that funds its own Advisors shows reviewers the commitment that makes the plan sustainable. Be careful about how you enter it. Under federal cost principles, cost share that you include in the budget becomes a binding commitment that you must track and report. Many districts describe the Advisor contribution in the narrative and leave it out of the budget detail form for that reason. Decide with your fiscal office. The 0.2 FTE covers the PLUS class section plus 0.1 FTE of collaboration time, which lets the Advisor serve on the site's PBIS team, MTSS team and safety committee. That collaboration time is what connects student data to the school safety plan.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

PLUS Districtwide site subscriptions ($26,910). Each of the six high schools receives the online subscription with unlimited Direction surveys and the activity resource database, the PLUS curriculum, one School Climate Conference or School Safety Conference registration, and one 2-Day training registration for a new staff member each year. These support the monthly cycle under Goals 1, 2 and 3.

PLUS district subscription ($8,985). The district subscription gives the district office results across all six schools, trends by grade level and student group, district alerts, survey assignment, raw data download and a board report. It supports Objectives 3a and 3b and the quarterly BTAM review. It includes one conference registration for the district office.

On-site training days ($24,500). Year 1 follows the standard PLUS Districtwide rollout. Days 1 and 2 are the 2-Day PLUS Program Development Training for all six staff teams. Day 3 covers data implementation. Day 4 covers activity implementation. Day 5 is the final follow-up training before the August pre-cycle. Years 2 and 3 each include one follow-up day. Training is billed at $3,500 per day.

Trainer travel and lodging ($4,100). PLUS on-site training is billed with travel and lodging added. These figures are estimates. Replace them with the provider's quote.

PLUS Advisor Institute ($14,970 total). The Institute is held each June in Temecula. It prepares each Advisor to teach the PLUS class and lead its activities. The 2-Day training prepares the staff team to run the program schoolwide. Registration is $1,495 for first attendance. The Institute provides lunches and refreshments. The district pays lodging and travel, shown here at illustrative rates.

Substitute coverage ($16,800). Two teachers from each school (the Advisor and one other staff team member) need substitutes on training days. Administrators and counselors do not. The $200 daily rate is illustrative.

BJA grantee meeting travel ($2,900). BJA required FY 2025 applicants to budget one trip for a meeting with federal officials. The district budgets two staff. Use current federal per diem rates.

Student leadership training (quote pending). Training for PLUS Team students is optional and is sized to the rollout. The district will request a quote and add it to the budget detail form before submission.

> **Writer's note.** Every line must tie to an activity in your design and an objective in your goals. Show the calculation for each cost, as the budget detail form requires. Confirm pricing at plusprogram.org/costs, or by email at pce@pcesolutions.org or by phone at 866.403.9484. BJA does not allow trinkets as giveaways, and food requires prior approval. If you plan Forum refreshments or materials for student activities, check the new solicitation's rules first.

SOURCES

- Funding Landscape listing: BJA FY 2026 STOP School Violence Program (O-BJA-2026-172709)
- BJA FY 2025 STOP School Violence Program solicitation, O-BJA-2025-172466 (OJP)
- BJA FY 2025 STOP School Violence Program solicitation, O-BJA-2025-172340, earlier January 2025 version (BJA)
- BJA FY 2025 STOP School Violence Program overview
- Simpler.Grants.gov listing: BJA FY25 STOP School Violence Program
- COPS Office FY 2026 School Violence Prevention Program FAQs