



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

September 15, 2026

Kirsten Baesle

Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

U.S. Department of Education

Dear Assistant Secretary Baesler:

The Arizona Department of Education (Department) is requesting a Tydings waiver for the period of FFY 2022 Title IV, Part A Stronger Connections grant funds (S424F220003 - 84.424F) awarded under Section 4108 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended, until September 30, 2027. This request to extend the obligation period is submitted pursuant to section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA). This permits the Department, in accordance with the criteria it develops, to expend the remaining FY 2022 awarded balance related to this waiver request.

Please find the required information below.

1. A detailed explanation for why the obligation period needs to be extended and why the funds were not liquidated during the established period of availability.

During the past 48 months originally given to spend funds, the agency previously awarded \$19,785,581 million to eligible education organizations throughout Arizona. The Department Stronger Connections Grant opportunity was designed to provide resources to high-need Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to hire, train, and support effective School Safety Officers (SSOs) for their schools. These SSOs are full authority peace officers certified by the Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training Board.

The Stronger Connections Grant allows these officers to provide a critical police presence at public, non-profit LEAs with no School Resource Officers (SROs) at one or more of their schools. Competitive preference was given to small, rural, and remote LEAs and LEAs reporting high local school community crime rate data. By their very nature, these LEAs often struggle to find officers to work on their campuses, hence the need for a coordinated statewide deployment model.

The 2023 Arizona School Safety Task Force recommended significant legislative changes to the state's School Safety Program (SSP), with much of that change focused on enhanced training for police officers working in schools. Although the SSP is a separate, state funded program, the changes made to existing statute required that all SROs and SSOs, regardless of funding source, receive the same training. The Department did not have the staff and infrastructure necessary to meet that legislative mandate, but it does now. By providing an extension to this

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grant, the Department will properly train and ensure the effective deployment of SSOs to previously awarded schools who have been unable to fill positions.

2. The total dollar amount that the grantee wants to draw down from the balance.

The awarded balance to draw down will be \$11,077,977.

3. The Department shall ensure that the subgrantees use funds in accordance with the provisions of all applicable statutes, regulations, program plans, and applications under this waiver.
4. The Department shall ensure that the subgrantees work to mitigate any negative effects, if any, that may occur as a result of the requested waivers. However, the Department does not anticipate any negative impact.
5. The Department attests that the above information is accurate and for allowable purposes.
6. If the amendment seeking an extension of the obligation period is approved, the Department will continue to monitor the use of these federal funds in accordance with state and federal requirements.

Public Notice of Request

The Department has provided public notice regarding the extended waiver request by publicly posting information regarding the waiver request on its website. (See [Public Comment Page](#) for the Department's public notice). During the comment period, the Department received <XX> comments.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Mike Kurtenbach, Deputy Associate Superintendent, at (602) 542-1889 or Mike.Kurtenbach@azed.gov.

The Department appreciates any consideration provided and looks forward to your response.

Respectfully,



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