**Workplace Wellness Space Grants (WWSG)**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**To request application development support, please contact Liz Schwarte at** **liz@adlucemconsulting.com**

**4.10.24 Application Webinar Questions & Answers**

**Can we use the grant money to pay rent? One of the programs we offer is at a college**

**campus, and we have to pay rent for the individual room that we occupy.**

* No, the money cannot be used to pay rent. Anything that would be paid after the

grant period ends, such as rent or employee salaries, cannot be paid for by the

grant.

**There are about 12 of us that are teachers on special assignments. We share a space at the district office, but we’re teachers at all the schools. Would we qualify?**

* There can’t be any spaces at the district level, they must all be at the school

level.

**What if we have an alternative school located in the district office, would a space in that**

**area work?**

* Unfortunately that is also not allowed.

**Do I need to have the specific school district in mind as I am writing my application? (In the case of an Educational Services District with multiple districts)**

* Yes. The district application must come from one district only on behalf of up to four schools.

**Do I need to partner with another ESD employee to write the application?**

* You can identify a partner at the district level, and they or you could submit the

application for the school district on behalf of up to 4 schools that are ready for wellness spaces.

**I work in transportation and that's where I would be looking to apply for — our transportation department.**

* Unfortunately the wellness space cannot be for district level transportation personnel. For this particular grant, a district can only apply on behalf of up to 4 schools and not for the district itself. The wellness space must be at the school level.

**4.4.23 Application Webinar Questions & Answers**

**Why are school district offices not eligible under a school district application?**

* We have limited resources and are focusing on schools. There is a strong evidence base for the types of changes possible through workplace wellness space creation in schools. We have made grants at a number of school districts on behalf of multiple schools and those projects have been very successful; we are looking for deep penetration and reach in school districts for sustainability. We encourage you to connect with 1-4 schools in your district to see if they are interested in workplace wellness spaces.

**Would it be okay to just carve out a section of a staff break room? (Can the room include a copy machine and staff boxes?)**

* When creating a workplace wellness space in a staff break room there needs to be a dedicated area; it may not be possible to transform the whole space but we are seeking applications where you can describe to us how that dedicated space would be quiet, without a lot of other activities going on. It may not be the best space if there is a lot of copying, etc. But overall, we want to know that the space for staff is one to rest, relax, and connect in.

**I heard you say loud and clear "No" on non-school buildings, which I totally understand. What if the building, that the District owns, has some preschool classrooms with teachers but isn't an official "school". Or rooms in which students receive services such as occupational therapy or speech pathology. Would those also be a No?**

* The grant program is for k-12 only, no pre-K and the space needs to be in the school building and accessible to teachers and staff only.

**Can district staff, instructional aides and visitors use the space at the school? Also, as we are here year-round, could we use the space for relief and relaxation during the summer, too?**

* Yes, the space can be used year-round. Yes, instructional aides and visitors can use the room – school staff and teachers are the focus, but anyone can use it. It just needs to be a staff only space, not student accessible.

**I’m at an elementary school with no extra space. We have a supply closet - it fits one person. Does that work?**

* We have had folks convert smaller spaces to make a cozy space that can be used by one person at a time on a sign-up schedule, but the space also needs to be accessible to more than one person at a time at least part of the time. One of our goals is to encourage interaction among staff.

**3/16/2022 Application Webinar Questions & Answers**

**There are nine schools in our school district, can you clarify how many schools can be included in our application?**

School districts can only apply on behalf of four schools (or up to four schools). We recommend identifying which of the four schools in your district have the most interest or readiness to develop a wellness program and then communicate with them; discuss this opportunity and make sure they are on board. On the application there will be special questions just for school districts where you can bring some data together about those four schools. You will also submit a budget on behalf of all four schools; schools covered under the application will need to have the same items in their wellness rooms. This is so that we don’t have four different budgets and a lot of different moving pieces. We have found this has worked very well in previous grant cycles. But there is still opportunity to do some customization depending on the school’s preferences. For example, your budget may list 4 sofas but the schools could identify which sofas they would like you to order within the budgeted amount.

**Can we apply for three schools *and* the district office or only schools?**

Only school sites are eligible, not district offices.

**We are looking at creating a restful outdoor space. Is there any latitude for student use of a space like this? Our students are adults.**

We have funded one outdoor space at a school district before. This was a space that came right off a place where teachers and staff already congregated regularly. So an outdoor space is definitely possible, but we realize this space might not be quite as usable because of weather. We also recognize that outdoor spaces bring fresh air and sunlight, which support relaxation. We encourage you to reach out to us to discuss your outdoor wellness space ideas before submitting an application. (Contact Liz Schwarte at Liz@adlucemconsulting.com.) If there are students that are staff members/employees themselves then they certainly could use the space but not other students who are only students and not staff/employees themselves. While we realize students need these spaces as well we really want to focus on worksite wellness with this grants program.

**Do we have the option of using an outdoor space or does it need to be indoors?**

Yes, you definitely have the option to do an outdoor space but we would need to hear a little bit more from you about its use and access. It needs to be somewhere where staff would naturally congregate. Of course an ideal space is a patio with a covering so it can be used as often as possible and that it not be too far away and exposed to the elements. Please reach out to further discuss your ideas for the outdoor space.

**General Questions & Answers and Helpful Tools**

**How can my school district/school/workplace have the biggest impact with the Workplace Wellness Space Grant?**

There are a number of ways to get a bigger bang for your grant bucks!

* Develop a clear plan to assure that all employees know about the wellness space, including activities to introduce the space and events to maintain a high level of interest and usage.
* Work with your school district/school/workplace administration or partners (e.g. unions, Parent-Teacher organization, human resources department) to provide incentive items or person power for project activities.
* Negotiate with facilities personnel to install equipment, paint or clean and maintain the wellness space.
* Ask a local business your employees frequent to provide supplies or equipment.

**What advice do other school districts/schools/workplaces have around creating a workplace wellness space?**

Suggestions for building a strong project include:

* Enlist leadership support.
* Gather employee needs/preferences through surveys or meeting discussions.
* Use data to describe needs.
* Identify a project lead and engage a core group of employees in implementation/problem solving.
* Guide project implementation with a step-by-step plan and timeline.
* Communicate with employees regularly so they know what to expect and excitement about the wellness space builds.
* Get creative in addressing space challenges.
* Develop community partnerships to support employee wellness goals and obtain additional wellness space equipment or materials.

***For school districts:* How should a school district coordinate with individual schools to submit an application?**

A school district can use one application to apply for workplace wellness spaces in up to four schools. Only one application per school district will be accepted and reviewed. Suggestions for working together to develop an application include:

* Talk with principals, teachers and staff at a regularly scheduled meeting to discuss employee wellness needs at each school. Ask teachers/staff to brainstorm how to best address the identified need.
* Identify common themes across participating schools to develop a district plan for creating wellness spaces. For example, the district could develop a wellness item menu that schools can select from to outfit their wellness spaces.
* Identify one district staff member to serve as the Kaiser Permanente Grant coordinator, who will submit the online application.

**How much money can I apply for with the Workplace Wellness Space Grant application?**

Grant applications will be accepted for up to $5,000 and up to $20,000 for schools districts applying on behalf of up to 4 schools; please think carefully about your project and create a realistic budget that includes costs needed to create your wellness space (e.g. equipment, tax, shipping, installation, supplies).

**How is the decision made about which grants to fund?**

Each application will be reviewed and scored on the following topics:

* Project rationale
* High need school district/workplace
* Proposed activities
* Donated resources/volunteer time/other funds used for the project
* Expected changes
* Plan to maximize reach and use of requested items

**How will my school district/school/workplace get the grant funds if my project is selected?**

Kaiser Permanente is working with an organization, Community Partners, to host the application online, process grant agreements and send out checks to funded applicants. The fiscal administrative lead listed on the application will receive the grant check in the mail.

**My workplace wants to include training/professional development in our application – how do we know what is okay to include?**

Review the *Including Training/Professional Development in Your Application* tip sheet accessible through the online application.

**We have a small school with limited space. Can we turn the staff lounge into a wellness space? People would eat in there, but we would also make a space for relaxation and for people to practice mindfulness.**

Yes – it is OK to create a wellness space within another space as long as it is a defined space dedicated for relaxation.

**Budget - is it okay to come in over or under $5000?**

Budgets will only be accepted for up to $5000, so budgets over $5000 are not allowed. It is ok to submit a budget under $5000, but we encourage you to maximize use of the funding opportunity and apply for as much as you can use in creating the wellness space.

**What if there is equipment that needs to stay in the room where we want to create the wellness space – in our space there is a laminating machine that can’t be moved right now.**

It is ok if there is equipment that needs to stay in the same room as the wellness space, but carve out a space for relaxation – purchase equipment that allows wellness space users to block out equipment noise such a player to listen to relaxing music, or put up some signage that reminds people that the wellness space is a quiet space.

**How do I know if other schools in my district are interested? It is a big district.**

If more than one school is involved the district that must apply on behalf of the schools. Please get in touch with Ad Lucem (Liz@adluceconsulting.com) and we will let you know who your district lead is so you can be in touch.

**My workplace has a wellness space but the electrical is old and only one device can run at a time – can we use this grant to upgrade the electrical?**

This grant is aimed at creating new wellness spaces, but we also want the grant to be used to expand access and use of wellness spaces. We encourage you to reach out to us via email so we can hear more details about your situation and see if applying makes sense.

**In my program there are multiple staff areas – can we create multiple wellness spaces?**

We want to make sure that comprehensive wellness spaces are created with enough amenities to really make a difference for staff rather than multiple wellness spaces that may have just few amenities.

**Can this grant purchase equipment for wellness that teachers use in their classrooms such as standing desks?**

No – this grant is for creating a common wellness space so that the wellness space facilitates team building, collaboration and socializing to address isolation at work.

**Ok to buy different equipment or amenities for each school? The schools will be addressing the same wellness needs, but addressing the needs in different ways.**

Find as much in common across the schools as possible, but OK to have some tailoring for each school. Some districts have created a menu of wellness equipment amenities from which schools select items - this creates a more district wide approach.

**Do you have any resources to help me cost out the items/equipment that I have in mind?**

Costs of items vary by vendor and change frequently. Start by thinking about what you might like to purchase to reduce stress by promoting relaxation, social interaction, and collaboration, e.g. a divider, comfortable chairs, or yoga equipment. You can go online to places such as Amazon or IKEA to cost items out/comparison shop. If you are a school district, your district may already have specific vendors you need to work with. Please contact them for prices. When you are to ready to apply for the grant, please download and complete the budget template in the application. You will be surprised by how much you can afford for the grant amount!

**Do you have any research supporting paint color and relaxation?**

The application itself does not provide information on colors that promote relaxation. There is no need to specify the color in your application; you can simply state that you will choose paint colors that are relaxing. There is a vast body of research on color psychology. To get you started, here is a brief, accessible piece on the properties of different colors: www.wow1day.com/blog/paint-colors/9-peaceful-paint-colors-help-you-relax/

**As a community college, it is not unusual for staff to also be students. May these staff use the wellness room?**

Yes. As long as a person is an employee they may use the wellness room. In order to support staff wellbeing more effectively we are requiring that the space be dedicated to employees.

**We recently re-designed a space. If awarded, may we use the grant to purchase supplies and equipment?**

Yes, if this is a dedicated staff space and you want to buy equipment that promotes relaxation, collaboration and interaction to enhance the space for staff wellness.

**Please clarify school districts applying on behalf of up to 4 schools.**

When a school district applies on behalf of up to 4 schools each school is its own workplace with $5,000 provided for each individual wellness space. The district applying needs to propose a wellness space approach for each school – this is to unify the project and lay a foundation for scaling staff wellness. The district would hopefully spread these types of wellness spaces throughout the district when this grant ends.

**Could a community college district apply on behalf of up to four sites?**

A community college would need to apply for one location. For community colleges, we are only accepting applications for single workplace wellness spaces and not community college districts on behalf of multiple sites. We are prioritizing school districts because of the significant existing evidence on school employee stress; we don’t have that evidence yet for community colleges.

**If my plans are bigger than what $5,000 would cover can the project be supplemented from other sources?**

Yes. If the district/school/workplace can obtain other funds, perhaps from the district itself, in-kind donations, workplace general funds, or a foundation, that is fine and would be a strong point of the application because it demonstrates a commitment to putting additional resources toward the space(s).

**Please clarify what you mean by which supplies the workplace won’t be able to purchase after the grant ends.**

These are items that get used up during the grant period and would need to be purchased again to refresh the supply. Examples include consumable items such as water or food. These are not allowed under the grant.

**My district already has a workspace. Before our budget was cut we had a water cooler to encourage people to drink water rather than soda.**

This grant is focused on amenities that support stress reduction and not on foods, beverages or food preparation/storage equipment. You could use funds from another source to buy a water cooler but not from this grant.

**I am in a large school district and you will only review one application from districts. What happens if more than one application comes in from my district and I don’t know about it? Which application will your review?**

We will contact the district point person who received the application invitation email (generally this invitation was sent to your H.R. department or wellness lead) to let them know the grant application is available. The district would need to decide which application we should review. If you know of other school staff members who are interested in workplace wellness, reach out to them and your district wellness lead and come up with a plan to submit a joint application.

We are encouraging larger districts to host a meeting with their school administrators to bring them together to discuss which schools are ready for this opportunity to create healthy workspaces. (At your district this may include the superintendent’s office, employee training curriculum support, and/or human resources.)

**Does the application need to include specific data for why the wellness space is needed at our worksite?**

Specific data demonstrating rationale for why the wellness space is needed at your workplace will make your application stronger, and provides ways for your district to measure progress.

**Could the grant money be used to buy games and puzzles to put in the workplace? Research shows they promote social interaction, improve morale and reduce stress.**

Games and puzzles could be among the items purchased but we would want to see in your application that this is something the staff really wants to do together on a regular basis and that there is a plan to use these items into the future beyond the grant period.

**Is there a standard test or survey to give to employees to determine their stress levels?**

The Total Brain app (available to OEBB-insured members statewide) is an excellent personal resource. It includes a 20-minute assessment that measures 12 brain capacities to define your mental health, and provides a mental fitness program designed to strengthen brain capacities and improve overall mental health. Learn more here: <https://info.totalbrain.com/oebb>

Here are ideas and additional stress resources you can share: <https://healthengagement.kaiserpermanente.org/wellness-topics/emotional-health/stress/>

Kaiser Permanente also offers an interactive tool to assess depression on its website: <https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/oregon-washington/health-wellness/health-encyclopedia/he.tx4369#tx4371>

The CDC website offers these resources on stress: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/99-101/default.html>

This simple Worksite employee health interest survey can help you evaluate your workplace environment and is available in the Kaiser Permanente Thrive resource center: <https://business.kaiserpermanente.org/thrive/resource-center>