

State-Aided Institutions (SAI) Program

Fiscal Year 2025

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Question #1	Can SAI funds be used to supplement tuition costs for students to attend our programs?
Answer	Yes, but you still have to let us know how you're spending your allocation. When you complete the budget and budget narrative, let us know how the funds tuition funds will be used to administer the educational program.

Question #2	Where can we see the FY24 budget that was recently approved?
Answer	You can see the list is approved SAIs and their funding amounts in House Bill 200 . For additional information, the requirements for the SAI program are defined in COMAR 13A.05.13.00 through 13A.05.13.06 .

Question #3	What contractual expenses can we use SAI funds for?
Answer	Funds may be used to provide a direct service to Maryland students and teachers. For specific questions, send an email to sai.applications@maryland.gov .

Question #4	If our approved budget amount is more than what we want to apply for, can we lower that amount?
Answer	Yes. Please note that it will be shared in the feedback to the State Superintendent that your program requested a reduction in funding.

Question #5	Are indirect costs/overhead allowable costs for reimbursement?
Answer	No, funds must be used for the direct service to students and teachers. (See question #19 for additional information.)

Question #6	Our educational programming doesn't really align with the school year or the state fiscal year. We run a summer camp, so all of our direct service to students takes place in the summer. Is that ok?
Answer	Yes. However, keep in mind that reporting and invoicing must align with the state fiscal year. Fiscal year 2025 runs from July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025.

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Question #7	Can we partner with other nonprofits to deliver services to students, as opposed to working directly with a school or Local Education Agency (LEA)?
Answer	This will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Please reach out to Nicole Obregon via phone at (410) 767-2939 or email at sai.applications@maryland.gov for guidance on your particular situation.

Question #8	We're a currently funded SAI. In the application, it asks for actual fiscal year 2023 numbers, but fiscal year 2023 hasn't ended yet. What should we do?
Answer	Do your best to provide accurate figures based on your projected reach, how many students you've served to-date, and the number of trips you already have scheduled on your books.

Question #9	Does the narrative have to be 10 pages?
Answer	The project narrative (mission statement, evidence of impact, goals, educational programming and outreach, evaluation, key personnel, board members, student safety, project timeline) must not exceed 10 pages. We urge applicants to be succinct in their responses, while also addressing the question.

Question #10	What does a "rolling review of applications" mean?
Answer	Applications will be reviewed by the committee as they are submitted. This does not change the timeline of important application events, though.

Question #11	We don't have an independent audit. Is there an alternative?
Answer	An independent annual audit is required by law. Please see COMAR 13A.05.13.03 which states that: "To qualify as a State-Aided Institution, an educational institution shall submit to the Department the following documentation: (3) A copy of the most recent independent annual audit or copies of the most recent internally generated financial statements until the annual audit is available."

Question #12	Is teacher professional development an acceptable use of funds?
Answer	Yes.

Question #13	Is it possible for us to change our program or funding request?
Answer	Once your application has been approved and a grant agreement has been signed, institutions may decide that a change is necessary for the success of the program. Before a change can be implemented, institutions must first gain approval from MSDE on any changes to the program or budget. To do this, institutions must submit an Amendment Request. This form can be emailed to an institution upon request.

Question #14	In prior years, grantees had to report the number of students served per Local Education Agency (LEA). Is this still required?
Answer	It is not required in the application for funding but may be required during midyear or final reporting. It is recommended that funded SAIs collect data on the field trips funded out of SAI funds such as: the date of the field trip, the school name, the type of school (public, nonpublic homeschool), the LEA, etc. A sample field trip form is provided on the SAI webpage .

Question #15	Our students conduct learning on sailing vessels. Can we use these funds to pay for the insurance for those vessels?
Answer	SAI funds may <u>not</u> be used for indirect costs or operating costs. Any costs that would be necessary to operate your business should not be paid for using SAI funds. You may, however, request that funding be utilized for direct service to students such as the compensation of employees for the time devoted and identified specifically for the direct service to students; contractual expenses related to the direct service to students; as well as the cost of materials acquired, consumed, or expended specifically for the purpose of the educational program.

Question #16	For the part where we have to list out the standards, we have a <u>very</u> long list of standards in several content areas and across all of the grade levels. Can we add an attachment? What should we do?
Answer	<p>The limit of 10 pages for the project narrative section of the application is intentional in an effort to streamline and simplify the application as much as possible. Please make an attempt to condense and simplify the curricular connections as best you can.</p> <p>If you feel the need, you may certainly attach additional information in the appendix. Also, keep in mind that the SAI application should <u>only</u> be for SAI-funded student groups. So, if SAI funds are used for only a few grade levels, there's no need to report on every grade level.</p>

Question #17	It is not uncommon for us to serve the same school multiple times in a school year, as different grade levels participate in programs on different days. For the school totals on page 8 of the application, am I correct to assume that schools should only be counted once?
Answer	Yes.

Question #18	Our Executive Director's salary will be funded using SAI funds. How should we calculate how much of their salary to put in the budget?
Answer	<p>You should base the percentage of their salary on the percentage of time they spend on SAI-related activities.</p> <p>If they spend an average of 5 hours per week on SAI-related activities, that calculates to be around 12.5% of their time out of a 40-hour workweek. If they spend 12.5% of their time on SAI, then 12.5% of their annual salary can be paid for using SAI funds.</p> <p>Be sure your institution is keeping track of and/or using a specific code or function in your payroll software to keep track of the number of hours that person spends on SAI-related activities.</p>

Question #19	What is considered an indirect cost?
Answer	<p>MSDE uses on the Financial Reporting Manual to ensure there is a uniform system of budgeting and reporting Maryland financial data. The guidance on direct vs. indirect costs can be found in appendix C of that manual.</p> <p>Indirect costs are those not readily identifiable with the activities of the grant, but incurred for the joint benefit of those activities and other activities of the organization. Indirect costs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective • Not readily assignable to the cost objective specifically benefited, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved • Expenditures for the general administration of the organization • Expenditures for Other Operation of Plant or Building <p>Typical examples of indirect costs may include: procurement, payroll, personnel functions, maintenance and operations of space, data processing, accounting, auditing, budgeting, communications (telephone, postage), etc.</p>

Updated on May 19, 2023