



Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant- Program Guidelines

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Program Background

Recognizing that drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages 1-4 and that climate change will increase extreme heat events, Governor Hochul announced New York Statewide Investment in More Swimming (NY SWIMS). One component of NY SWIMS that is administered by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) is a new reimbursement grant program for expenses related to transportation to swimming instruction and is called the "Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant" program.

What is the Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant program?

The Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant program:

- connects New York school age children (pre-K through grade 12) with swimming instruction by reimbursing transportation costs (including parking and vehicle use fees) incurred by eligible entities for travel to facilities in New York State that are operated by State, municipal, and not-for-profit organizations and offer swim instruction for a nationally recognized learn to swim curriculum (e.g., the American Red Cross, YMCA, Starfish Aquatics).
- is a reimbursement grant program funded through the Environmental Protection Fund starting in 2024.
- allows eligible entities to submit multiple applications and to receive multiple grant awards but limits the total amount of funding to be reimbursed to any single entity to no more than \$250,000 per fiscal year (April 1- March 31).

What must I know before applying?

Applications must demonstrate that the Applicant meets all eligibility criteria, and all anticipated costs are eligible for reimbursement.

The Applicant must cover all upfront-initial costs related to the approved transportation to swimming instruction travel.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis in the order they are received, while funding is available.

Applicants submitting applications prior to August 31, 2024 should be aware that their application may not be processed before the swimming instruction transportation is needed and any expenses incurred are at their own risk.

Applications submitted after September 1, 2024 must be submitted four (4) weeks before the transportation to swimming instruction is planned to occur.

All Applicants must have an approved NYS Vendor ID Number (VIDN).

Successful Applicants will be notified via email with an attached notification letter indicating approval and a maximum value for reimbursement.

After the approved transportation to swimming instruction has occurred, the Applicant can seek reimbursement with valid proof of payment for eligible expenses for transportation to swimming instruction.

Reimbursement of eligible expenses only occurs after proof of payment is submitted with the Reimbursement Request Form.

Applications submitted for the Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant only relate to the OPRHP grant program itself and do not represent a reservation for transportation service nor registration for swimming instruction. The Applicant is solely responsible for scheduling and payment of transportation services, and the registration and fee payment for swimming instruction. Prior to submitting the Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant application, Applicants should directly engage with transportation service providers and the swimming instruction facility's staff. The rules set forth by those vendors are independent of this grant program.

Eligible entities with existing transportation resources (see "What costs can be reimbursed?") and those who will be scheduling transportation services specifically to support transportation to swimming instruction can apply for a Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant. If an Applicant does not have existing transportation resources, three (3) written price estimates (i.e., price quotes) for transportation service are required. The "Request for Quote" Form must be used and should be completed, in part, by the transportation service provider. Information from those written price estimates will be entered on the application. If the Applicant is awarded a grant the three completed "Request for Quote" forms must be submitted with the Reimbursement Request.

What is the NYS Vendor ID Number (VIDN)? And How Can I Get One?

A NYS Vendor ID Number (VIDN) is a 10-digit number that corresponds to each organization in the Statewide Financial System (SFS). Reimbursements are electronic and will only be made using the organization's NYS Vendor ID Number as submitted on the application.

The NYS VIDN is not the organization's Tax ID Number/EIN.

Prior to applying, Applicants must be registered in SFS with a NYS VIDN, and not-for-profit organizations must be prequalified.

Effective January 16, 2024, all not-for-profit organizations seeking grant funding from the State must prequalify in SFS unless explicitly exempted by the Division of the Budget (DOB). Not-for-profit organizations must receive approved prequalification status prior to submitting a grant application. Not-for-profit organizations will need to prequalify once a year and are responsible for keeping all information submitted in the Prequalification Application current throughout that period. Prequalification information can be found here: <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/get-prequalified>.

For Applicants that are public schools or BOCES, the Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation grant application provides a menu listing all public-school districts in NYS. By entering your affiliated school district or BOCES, the NYS VIDN will be automatically filled on the application form.

Applicants that are Non-public schools, municipalities, or not-for-profit organizations are required to submit the organization's NYS VIDN. The Applicant's administrative or finance offices should be contacted for specific information about the organization's NYS VIDN.

Who can apply for a Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant?

Entities eligible to apply for a Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant must be:

- a public school (including public charter school), BOCES, non-public school (including non-public charter school), municipality, or a not-for-profit

organization that serves underserved, environmental justice, and/or inner-city communities in New York State, and

- physically located within a New York State school district that receives Title I funds.

Ineligible entities include:

- any entity that does not meet the eligibility criteria for Applicants.
- for profit entities.
- Federal or State agencies.

What costs can be reimbursed?

Eligible transportation costs reimbursable by the Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant include the rental, use or services cost for a motor vehicle common carrier or private carrier, including gas and tolls for transportation to and/or from swimming instruction at a facility in New York State operated by State, municipal, or not-for-profit organizations that offer swim instruction for a nationally recognized learn to swim curriculum (e.g., the American Red Cross, YMCA, Starfish Aquatics).

Vehicle use fees (charged by State Parks for vehicles entering facilities) and parking fees can be reimbursed if they are associated with eligible transportation.

What costs cannot be reimbursed?

Costs that are ineligible for reimbursement include:

- Any travel that is not related to transportation to and/or from swimming instruction.
- Any travel to privately-owned, for-profit swimming facilities.
- Costs associated with personal passenger vehicle use (no exceptions).
- Wages or stipends for Applicants' staff, chaperones, or student aides.
- Lodging.
- Equipment purchases or fees.
- Cost of emergency and/or first aid support.
- Food.
- Any costs not described on the submitted Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant application, even if it would otherwise be eligible.

How do I apply?

Please review the information in “What must I know before applying?” about the timeline to submit applications.

For applications submitted after September 1, 2024, the Applicant’s authorized representative shall submit the Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant Application at least four (4) weeks prior to the first date of travel associated with the swimming instruction transportation.

Information needed to complete the Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant application includes:

- Title I status of the school district wherein the applicant is physically located.
- Applicant Name and physical address.
- Applicant Chief Financial Officer name and email.
- NYS Vendor ID Number (VIDN).
- Applicant’s authorized representative and contact information.
- Maximum number of school age children to be transported to swimming instruction on a single day for the time period related to the application.
- Name of Facility where swimming instruction will occur.
- Website URL for information about the swimming instruction, including reference to which nationally recognized swimming instruction is offered at the facility.
- Email of point of contact staff member at the facility providing the swimming instruction.
- Start date for swimming instruction.
- End date for swimming instruction.
- Total number of days for transportation to and/or from swimming instruction (i.e., round trip).
- Starting location physical address.
- Destination (swimming instruction facility) physical address.
- Round trip mileage between departure location and eligible destination.
- Mode of transportation to be used.
- Cost estimate(s) for mode of transportation to be used. *See “What must I know before applying?” for details about when written cost estimates are needed.*
- Whether the transportation provider includes gas and toll costs in the price for services.
- Estimated costs for vehicle use fees and/or parking.

Applicants will have to attest that all eligibility requirements are met and that the information on the application is true and correct, as well as that they agree to comply

with the Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant Program Guidelines.

Submitting the grant application does not guarantee approval for funding.

How do I know the status of my grant application?

Immediately after submitting an application, the Applicant will see a message appear that indicates the application has been submitted. That message does not represent approval for grant funding.

Within three (3) weeks after submitting an application, the Applicant should expect to receive an email (to the email address provided on the application) with an attached notification letter indicating the status of the application.

If approved, the notification letter sent via email will:

- list the maximum value for reimbursement to cover eligible costs described in the application, and
- provide instructions about reimbursement for eligible expenses.

If denied, the Applicant will receive an explanation for the denial. The Applicant may have an opportunity to submit a new application if the reason for the denial is remedied by the Applicant.

How will I be reimbursed for the upfront costs I pay?

The Applicant's authorized representative shall follow the instructions provided in the approval letter and submit the **Reimbursement Request Form** with accompanying documentation and proof of payment within ninety (90) days after the last day of eligible travel to avoid forfeiture of the grant award.

OPRHP shall only reimburse the Applicant for actual expenses. For example, if the Applicant received a maximum value for reimbursement of \$5,000, but actual eligible expenses are less than \$5,000, the reimbursement payment will be for the amount of the actual eligible costs, as evidenced by submitted receipts and paid invoices.

The reimbursement will be transferred electronically to the Applicant's account via their approved NYS VIDN. OPRHP does not send paper checks.

Reimbursement payments cannot be divided and sent as partial payments to multiple NYS VIDNs; there are no split payments.

Reimbursement for expenses for a grant occurs one time; after reimbursement is processed, the associated grant is considered closed.

Information needed to complete the Reimbursement Request Form and to process reimbursement includes:

- The maximum value for reimbursement indicated on the grant approval letter.
- Valid proof of payment for eligible costs incurred by the Applicant, including but not limited to paid invoices, dated receipts, cancelled checks, wire transfers. In the case of wire transfer, a screenshot of the transfer can be submitted and must include: "To" (name and account number), "From" (name and account number), date, and amount.
- Three "Request for Quote" forms if required.
- NYS VIDN.
- Physical addresses for starting and destination locations for transportation to swimming instruction.

Applicants should retain original receipts and/or paid invoices for all eligible expenses.

The Applicant's authorized representative shall certify the validity, truth, and accuracy of all submitted documents and details of the eligible travel.

What else do I need to understand about the Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant?

The Applicant shall comply with the Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant Program Guidelines including the general terms and conditions contained in this subdivision.

Failure to comply with these program guidelines may result in the denial of an application, full or partial withholding of the reimbursement, and other legal penalties or consequences.

The park/facility owner reserves the right to cancel scheduled or on-going swimming instruction at any time due to failure to comply with the facility's regulations or policies. The park/facility owner further reserves the right to exercise any controls over the swimming instruction that are felt to be in the public interest.

Areas or facilities used by the Applicant must be left in the same condition that existed upon arrival.

The Applicant understands that it will be held responsible and billed for any and all damages done to the property/facility during the eligible travel, as determined by the property owner. New York State is not liable for such damages.

Applicant shall be responsible, at their own expense, for the wages of any of their own personnel which may be considered necessary for the operation of their organization.

The Applicant may be required to provide or obtain appropriate emergency and/or first aid support. Any costs incurred shall be borne by Applicant and not covered by the reimbursement grant.

OPRHP reserves the right to amend the Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Grant Program Guidelines.

Initialisms (Acronyms) and Definitions

Authorized Representative	Individual duly authorized by Applicant to conduct official business, including submitting grant applications and reimbursement requests.
Entity	Formally established organization with a NYS Vendor ID Number
Proof of Payment	Includes, but is not limited to paid invoices, dated receipts, cancelled checks, wire transfers.
Title I	Described at ESSA Programs New York State Education Department (nysed.gov)
Transportation	rental, use or services cost for a motor vehicle common carrier or private carrier
SFS	Statewide Financial System
OPRHP	Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
NY SWIMS	New York Statewide Investment in More Swimming
NY VIDN	NYS Vendor ID Number
DOB	Division of Budget
BOCES	Board of Cooperative Educational Services