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Secure • Train • Educate • Protect

2027 STEP Up for schools grant catalog



Due date: December 31, 2026

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Convergent STEP Up for schools grant program details

Convergent’s signature social responsibility initiative, STEP Up for Schools Program, was created to help underserved K–12 schools improve safety, strengthen emergency readiness, and build long-term protection for students and staff. Through grants, volunteerism, and in-kind services, we help schools with the processes and technology required to create safer learning environments. Our goal is simple: reduce barriers, accelerate improvements, and deliver meaningful impact where it’s needed most.

Program objective: The purpose of Convergent’s Secure, Train, Educate, Protect (STEP) Up for Schools Grant Program is to help strengthen school security. Working with underserved schools in communities around the world, Convergent provides free installations, upgrades, and assessments of interior and exterior security systems. As of 2018, more than 150 schools have received security donations from Convergent through this program.

Through the STEP Up for Schools Program, Convergent and its partners provide security and life safety systems and system upgrades at no cost to schools. Since its inception in 2018, Convergent and its partners have donated to over 150 schools and school districts across the globe. This no-strings-attached program brings volunteers to campus for a single day to deliver coordinated security and life safety upgrades that support safer learning environments.

Grant program at a glance	
What it is	Donated security and life safety equipment installation and or professional services delivered by Convergent and partner sponsors (not a cash grant)
What schools receive	Selected security and life safety system upgrades or services
Cost/match	Not a cash grant and carries no matching requirements
Application due date	December 31, 2026
How it works	Schools in need of security and life safety system upgrades apply for specific grant offerings. If awarded, all material and labor to install, configure and test the components will be donated at no cost to applying schools. All grants come with a no strings attached guarantee.
Who can apply	Accredited K-12 organizations worldwide

Grant structure overview

The STEP Up for Schools Grant provides selected schools with access to items listed in the 2027 Grant Catalog (page 9).

The following principles govern the award structure:

- **No pre-set quantities:** This catalog does not specify item quantities. The program works collaboratively with the awarded school during the site visit phase (page 7) to determine appropriate quantities for each applicable catalog category, based on documented need and available program funding.
- **No published pricing:** No MSRP, retail pricing, or cost estimates are published in this catalog. Pricing is managed internally by the program and is not a factor in the application or selection process.
- **No manufacturer designations:** This catalog does not specify brands or manufacturers for any item category. The program selects appropriate products that meet catalog item descriptions and program standards, in coordination with the awarded school during the site visit phase.

All awarded items under the 2027 cycle are delivered and installed by Convergent colleagues on a single scheduled **Installation Day**. This model ensures professional setup, proper configuration, and a consistent installation standard across all awarded items.

Installation day details	
Scheduled date	First friday of June 2027
Conducted by	STEP Up for schools program staff
Scope	Delivery, setup, installation, and basic configuration of all awarded catalog items
School requirement	All designated spaces must be cleared, accessible, and prepared prior to installation
Completion	Written acknowledgment of receipt and satisfactory installation required from school representative

Schools that are unable to accommodate Installation Day on the scheduled date should contact the program office immediately upon award notification. The program will make reasonable efforts to accommodate schedule constraints; however, rescheduling is not guaranteed and may affect award status.

Application process

Application window

The 2027 STEP Up for Schools Grant application window opens on **November 1, 2026** and closes at **11:59 PM on December 31, 2026**. Applications received after the close of the application window will not be reviewed or considered under any circumstances. The program does not grant extensions to the application deadline.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to begin preparing application materials well in advance of the deadline. The program office is available to answer eligibility and procedural questions during the application window.

Application components

A complete application must include all of the following components. Incomplete applications may be disqualified from review at the program's discretion:

- **Completed application form:** The official 2027 STEP Up for Schools application form, completed in full with no blank required fields. The form is available through the program's application portal.
- **School profile and enrollment data:** Current enrollment figures, grade levels served, and relevant school demographic data, as requested on the application form.
- **Narrative:** A written description of the school's current deficiencies in security technology and equipment, the specific impact those deficiencies have on students and staff, and how the grant award would address those needs. The narrative should be clear, specific, and supported by data or documentation where available.
- **Certification:** A certification from the school's principal, head of school, or authorized district representative, verifying that the information provided in the application is accurate and complete, and that the applicant meets all eligibility requirements.

All complete applications are reviewed and scored by the STEP Up for Schools review panel using a structured, needs-based evaluation rubric. Evaluation criteria include:

Evaluation criterion	Description
Demonstrated resource gap	The extent to which the school can document a current, specific deficiency in security technology or equipment resources.
Student population served	Consideration of enrollment size, the demographics of the student population, and the proportion of students from underserved or high-need backgrounds.
Vulnerability assessment	Download and complete the PASS K-12 checklist and perform a self assessment producing a prioritized risk and improvement plan.
Needs narrative quality	The clarity, specificity, and credibility of the school's written narrative describing its resource needs and the anticipated impact of the grant.
Readiness for implementation	The school's apparent capacity to receive, house, and utilize awarded items effectively, as evidenced by the application.

Application review

Following the close of the application window on December 31, 2026, all complete applications will be reviewed by the **STEP Up for Schools Review Panel**, a body of program staff and designated reviewers.

Only applications determined to be complete — meeting all requirements described on page 5 — will advance to the scoring and ranking stage. The program office may, at its discretion, contact an applicant to request clarification or to remedy a minor administrative deficiency; however, applicants are not guaranteed an opportunity to correct omissions.

Award notification

Award notifications will be issued in **late January or early February 2027**. All applicants — including those not selected for the award — will receive written notification of their application status at that time. The notification to the selected school will include initial information regarding next steps, including the timeline for award agreement execution and site visits.

Award agreement

Prior to the commencement of any site visits or installation planning, the awarded school must execute a formal **Grant Award Agreement** with the STEP Up for Schools program. The award agreement sets forth the terms and conditions applicable to the grant, confirms the parties' mutual obligations, and establishes the timeline for site visits and Installation Day. No program activities will proceed until a fully executed award agreement is on file with the program office.



Site visits

Purpose

Following execution of the Grant Award Agreement, program staff will conduct one or more **site visits** to the awarded school between **March and May 2027**. The purpose of site visits is to:

- Conduct a physical assessment of the school's facilities, including classrooms, common areas, and infrastructure relevant to the awarded catalog items;
- Confirm the logistical requirements for Installation Day, including access routes, room readiness, and any special facility considerations;
- Finalize the specific item list — including product selections and quantities — based on available space, existing infrastructure (electrical, network, physical), and documented need; and
- Establish a shared understanding between program staff and the school regarding Installation Day procedures and expectations.

School responsibilities during site visits

The awarded school is responsible for the following in connection with program site visits:

- **Designated school contact:** The school must identify and designate a single point of contact — such as a principal, technology coordinator, or facilities manager — to coordinate with program staff for all site visit scheduling, access, and information needs.
- **Facility access:** The school must ensure that all areas of the building identified as relevant to the award are accessible and available for assessment on the day(s) of the site visit.
- **Infrastructure information:** The school must be prepared to provide accurate and complete information regarding existing infrastructure, including electrical capacity, network topology and access points, room dimensions, and any relevant physical space constraints.
- **Accurate representation:** All information provided to program staff during site visits must be accurate. Misrepresentation of facility conditions or needs may affect the final item list or, in cases of material misrepresentation, the award itself.



Installation day

Scheduled date

Installation Day for the 2027 cycle is the first Friday of June 2027.

Installation Day is a full-day event. The awarded school should plan for program staff to be on-site from early morning through the end of the standard school day, or as otherwise specified in the award agreement.

School responsibilities on installation day

The awarded school must fulfill the following responsibilities on Installation Day to ensure the installation proceeds efficiently and completely:

- **Space preparation:** All rooms and spaces designated for installation during the site visit phase must be fully cleared of obstructions and accessible to program staff by the designated start time on Installation Day.
- **On-Site representative:** A designated school representative with authority to make on-site decisions — such as the principal or designated technology lead — must be available and present on school grounds throughout the duration of the installation.
- **Third-party access:** Any access credentials, keys, or authorizations required to complete the installation — including network login credentials, server room access, or keys to secured spaces — must be arranged and made available to program staff in advance of or at the start of Installation Day.
- **Student and staff coordination:** The school is responsible for managing its own student and staff schedules to avoid unnecessary disruption to or interference with the installation process.

Post-Installation

Upon completion of all installation activities, program staff will conduct a **final walkthrough** of all installed items with the school's designated representative. The walkthrough serves to confirm that all awarded items have been delivered, installed, and are functioning as expected.

Following the walkthrough, the school representative will be asked to sign a written **Installation Acknowledgment** confirming receipt of all awarded items and satisfactory completion of the installation. The signed acknowledgment is required to close out the school's award record with the program.

Questions or concerns identified after Installation Day should be directed to the program office within the timeframe specified in the Grant Award Agreement.

Grant catalog items

The following catalog lists the categories of equipment and technology available for award under the 2027 STEP Up for Schools Grant. This catalog is a reference document; it does not represent a commitment that all listed categories will be included in every award. Specific products, quantities, and manufacturers for each applicable category are determined by the program in coordination with the awarded school during the site visit phase (page 7), based on documented need, facility conditions, and available program funding.

Important: No quantities, MSRP or retail pricing, or brand names are listed in this catalog. Product and manufacturer selection is the sole responsibility of the program. Applicants should not identify or request specific brands or products in their application materials.

Catalog category	Description
Access control	Badge reader and badge reader components (including electronic lock and badging software) for the front door or main entry. This equipment will help schools strengthen front-door security and control, creating a safer environment for students, staff, and visitors.
Badge and card reader	Replace outdated card readers and badges with modern, more secure technology. This equipment protects against older cards that can be easily copied, giving schools stronger control over who has access to their buildings and ensuring safer entry for students and staff.
Enterprise security risk management (ESRM)	Professional risk assessment based on the ASIS International ESRM framework. This assessment helps school leaders identify, prioritize, and manage security risks across their campuses. By aligning safety initiatives with educational goals, the assessment empowers schools to make informed decisions, strengthen emergency preparedness, and create a safer learning environment for students and staff. Upon completion of the ESRM assessment, a report will be generated and presented back to district personnel.
Environmental and vape sensor	Sensors installed in restrooms to detect vaping, smoke, or changes in air quality. These sensors do not use cameras or microphones, ensuring student privacy while helping schools respond quickly to health and safety concerns and creating a healthier environment for learning.
Exterior cameras	Outdoor cameras to monitor parking lots, playgrounds, and entrances. This equipment helps schools discourage unwanted activity and respond more quickly when something happens outside. Equipment includes exterior video surveillance cameras, any necessary specific mounting hardware, cabling infrastructure, and licensing to add a camera to the existing VMS (system-dependent).

Catalog category	Description
Fire alarm test and inspect	One-time inspection of fire alarm system at a single location to ensure compliance with safety codes and regulations for annual fire inspection. Convergent technicians will test the fire alarm control panel and associated devices, document performance, and report any deficiencies to the school district. This service helps schools maintain code compliance, ensure system reliability, and support a safer environment for students and staff.
Interior cameras	Indoor cameras to help staff keep students safe throughout the day. This equipment improves visibility, helps resolve incidents, and promotes a secure learning environment. Equipment includes interior video surveillance cameras, any necessary specific mounting hardware, cabling infrastructure, and licensing to add a camera to the existing VMS (system-dependent).
Security system preventative maintenance	Professional maintenance services to help ensure a school's existing security systems remain reliable and effective. Convergent technicians will conduct a site assessment to determine the appropriate scope of work, which typically includes preventative maintenance of physical hardware and software on cameras, card readers, and intrusion systems. This proactive approach helps schools extend the life of their security technology, reduce system downtime, and maintain a safer learning environment for students and staff.

