SPEP™ Implementation 2026-2027
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Fiscal Year 2025/26 Solicitation

Please Note: Applications are _only_ accepted through PCCD's Egrants system. Applicants must register in Egrants prior to submitting an application. Applicants are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Egrants system and allow adequate time to prepare and submit an application.

Prior to starting an application in Egrants, your agency must be registered in Egrants, and at least two individuals from your agency must register as Egrants users and have Egrants user roles for your agency.

Every agency must also have at least one person with the e-signature role in Egrants.

Please refer to the [Getting Started in Egrants](#) page on our website for Egrants registration information and guides.

Release Date:
9/18/2025

Egrants Application Deadline:
10/14/2025

This funding guideline contains information not appearing in the Egrants application. Applicants are advised to review this document and refer to it while completing your Egrants application.

PCCD staff may only respond to questions to clarify the funding announcement. Questions must be sent via email to: RA-PCCD-OJJDP@pa.gov with **SPEP Implementation 2026-2027** in the subject line. All questions regarding this funding announcement must be received by close of business on October 9, 2025. PCCD staff will post responses to questions, as they are received, on [PCCD's website](#). Select the appropriate funding announcement to view questions and answers.

For any technical or system questions, contact and ask for the Egrants Help Desk at (717) 787-5887 or (800) 692-7292, or by emailing [RA-eGrantsSupport@pa.gov](#).

PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY
Office of Justice Programs – Unit of Juvenile Justice Services

Funding Stream: Violence and Delinquency Prevention Programs Funds

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Funding Announcement Title: SPEP™ Implementation 2026-2027

Funding Stream: Violence and Delinquency Prevention Programs

Submission Requirements for Applications:

- **Scoring** – All applications received will be competitively reviewed and scored based on the applicant's adherence to the funding announcement guidelines and timely submission in the PCCD Egrants system.

- **Due Date** – Applications must be submitted electronically through PCCD's Egrants system no later than 11:59 PM on **Tuesday, October 14,2025**.

- **Technical Assistance** – Grant application and administrative guides can be accessed on PCCD's website under the Funding section. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the application and administrative guides before calling the Egrants Help Desk for assistance. The Egrants Help Desk is available to assist with technical or system questions Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, and may be reached by calling (717) 787-5887 or (800) 692-7292, or by emailing RA-eGrantsSupport@pa.gov.

- **Egrants Submission** – An application submitted in Egrants by the deadline is not considered complete until the application has been electronically signed in Egrants, and PCCD has received any required documents. Successful applications will be presented for consideration at the December 10, 2025, Commission meeting.

- **Administrative Rejection** – An application that does not meet all the listed requirements in this funding announcement may be administratively rejected.

- **Corrections** – If PCCD returns an application for corrections, the final application (including all corrections and required documents) must be returned to and approved by PCCD for the requested funding to be awarded.

- **Non–supplantation** – Funding must not be used to supplant/replace state, federal, or local funds that would otherwise be available to provide for program–related services. PCCD funding is to be used in addition to other funds that are made available for services.

- **Keywords** – Applicants are required to select "Keywords" from the dropdown menu located on the Main Summary screen in Egrants. The required keywords are below. Applicants may also select other keywords that apply specifically to their application.

  Keywords: Juvenile Justice

PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY
Office of Justice Programs – Unit of Juvenile Justice Services

1. Overview:

The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) is now accepting applications to support the continued implementation of the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™). Developed by Dr. Mark Lipsey at Vanderbilt University, SPEP™ is designed to assess the quality of services provided to system-involved youth, support providers in creating and implementing quality improvement plans, and measure progress through follow-up evaluations.

Since 2012, Pennsylvania has used the SPEP™ to enhance the quality of services for system-involved youth. In collaboration with the Department of Human Services, the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, and the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers, PCCD has used SPEP™ to evaluate the effectiveness of youth programs. This data-driven approach helps inform decisions about which services are most appropriate, based on each youth's Youth Level of Service (YLS) and other information gathered by juvenile probation.

This approach is grounded in research from quantitative meta-analyses of studies on juvenile justice programs and their impact on recidivism (Lipsey, 2009; Lipsey and Howell, 2012). These analyses involved coding data from many reports on programs designed to reduce re-offending among justice-involved youth. The resulting data were then analyzed to identify key characteristics of programs that showed the greatest impact on reducing criminal behavior after program completion.

These identified characteristics—such as the quality-of-service delivery—form the basis of a standardized rating system that can be consistently applied across a wide range of programs. The underlying assumption is that programs incorporating more of these evidence-based features will have a greater impact on reducing recidivism.

When a program is assessed using the SPEP™, an action plan is created to address areas with lower ratings. Over time, as a program improves its performance on these key factors, it is expected to see corresponding improvements in youth outcomes, including lower rates of re-offending. SPEP™ provides service providers with a research-based profile of their program, comparing it to similar interventions across key dimensions linked to recidivism reduction. For juvenile justice system administrators, SPEP™ offers a system-wide view of the services in use, a "best practice" benchmark for evaluating program effectiveness, and a clear roadmap for improving outcomes at the system level—particularly in reducing recidivism among youth.

This solicitation seeks an entity to continue the statewide implementation of the SPEP™. Responsibilities will include hiring and training regionally-based staff to conduct SPEP™ assessments of both residential and community-based service providers; ensuring scoring consistency across all reviewers; developing quality improvement plans and supporting their implementation in collaboration with providers; and recruiting additional county juvenile probation departments to participate in the SPEP™ process.

The selected entity will also be expected to provide training for county-level staff to become SPEP™-informed—and, in some cases, certified to conduct SPEP™s themselves. Ongoing coordination with state-level stakeholders and Vanderbilt University will be essential to ensure the accurate and appropriate use of the SPEP™ instrument.

Additional activities may be identified by the SPEP™ Advisory Group (AG). Applicants should be prepared to adjust the scope of work in response to AG recommendations.

For more information about SPEP™ and the history of its use in Pennsylvania, applicants are encouraged to visit:

Vanderbilt University's Peabody Research Institute (the Program Developer) https://my.vanderbilt.edu/SPEP™/SPEP™-information/; and

PCCD's SPEP™ Page (including a link to the evaluation of SPEP™ in Pennsylvania) https://www.pa.gov/agencies/pccd/programs-and-services/juvenile-justice-and-delinquency-prevention/spep.

2. **Funding Availability:**

A total of $1,400,000 in state Violence and Delinquency Prevention Programs funds is being announced to support this initiative. PCCD expects to fund one grant with a budget not to exceed $1,400,000 over the 18-month project period.

PCCD is not liable for costs incurred prior to the official start date of the award.

3. **Project Dates:**

Contingent upon availability of funds, the application presented at the December 10, 2025, Commission meeting will be for an 18-month period with a start date of January 1, 2026, and an end date of June 30, 2027.

The successful applicant will be eligible for up to three, one-year (12 months) continuation awards based on the successful completion of activities and deliverables during the initial project period. The amount of each continuation award will be determined based on PCCD's assessment of the project's ongoing needs and the availability of funding.

4. **Eligible Applicants:**

Eligibility for these funds is open to non-profit entities and institutions of higher education. Applicants must be in good standing with PCCD to be eligible for these funds.[1] The applicant and recipient agencies' historical success in implementing PCCD-funded programs/initiatives that met their intended goals will be considered in the review process. Applicants are not required to have a prior funding history with PCCD to be eligible.

5. **Eligible Program Activities and Expenses:**

Funds for the proposed program may be used to support any of the following:

a. Staff salary and benefits for activities related to SPEP™-processes. (It is highly recommended that staff conducting the SPEP™ assessments and quality improvement plans be 100% assigned to the SPEP™ project.)
b. Travel throughout the Commonwealth, as well as equipment such as computers and webinar capabilities to allow for the remote delivery of SPEP™ services.
c. Office space rental/supplies/utilities.
d. Materials and training supplies.

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[1] This may include, but is not limited to, compliance with PCCD program and fiscal reporting requirements, State and Federal funding guidelines, and acceptable risk rating as determined by PCCD.

e. Other line items considered by the applicant to be essential to conduct SPEP™ activities.

All expenses must be described in the Justification box located in the Egrants Budget Detail section. PCCD has approval of all final budgets and may require budget adjustments.

6. **Ineligible Program Activities and Expenses:**

The following activities are not eligible for funding and may be administratively rejected:

a. Conducting scientific research activities not related to the analysis and utilization of SPEP™ scores.

7. **Required Egrants Sections/Documents:**

a. <u>Required Egrants Sections</u> – All sections identified in Egrants are required. Applicants will not be able to submit their grant application in Egrants until all sections are marked as complete.

8. **Scoring:**

Applicants must submit the requested information for each section specified below within the defined response fields provided in Egrants. Responses should not be duplicated in multiple sections.

The following application sections in Egrants have a point value associated with them and will be scored as described below:

a. **Executive Summary – Not scored**

All applicants should fill out the following script and paste into the executive summary section:

The ____*name of applicant*____ is requesting $_____ to [*provide a single sentence or two of what you are seeking to implement with your grant funding*].

These funds will be used for the following: [*provide bullet points of what the funds will be used for*].

The anticipated deliverables are as follows: *[provide summary bullet points for what anticipated outcomes will come as a result of this funding.]*

b. **Budget Detail - Maximum of 20 points**

Applicants should thoroughly describe all budget items necessary to successfully implement the tasks included in the Proposed Approach section. A detailed justification for all line items is required and must be provided in the "Justification" box of each budget category field.

c. **Agency History with the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™) Instrument - Maximum of 30 points**

For an applicant to succeed in carrying on the SPEP™ work that has been implemented in Pennsylvania over the last 10 years, there should be a level of familiarity with the SPEP™ process. Ideally, an applicant will have staff and leadership experience with the

concepts of SPEP™ and propose to involve staff with experience implementing the protocol and using the instruments. To provide background for the reviewers, please provide the following information:

- Details about your agency's experience with the concepts and materials used in the SPEP™ process.
- Description of any relationship you may have established with the program developer and staff at Vanderbilt University.
- Description of the experience of the staff you propose to fund to conduct this work have in implementing SPEP™ with juvenile justice providers.
- Description of your agency's relationships with Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice Probation Departments and Pennsylvania Service Providers.

d. **Proposed Approach - Maximum of 50 points**

This section details the specific technical assistance plan for conducting the SPEP™ in Pennsylvania. This includes hiring and training regionally-based staff to conduct SPEP™ assessments of both residential and community-based service providers; ensuring scoring consistency across all reviewers; developing quality improvement plans and supporting their implementation in collaboration with providers; recruiting additional county juvenile probation departments to participate in the SPEP™ process, and providing training for county-level staff to become SPEP™-informed—and, in some cases, certified to conduct SPEP™s themselves. Ongoing coordination with state-level stakeholders and Vanderbilt University will be essential to ensure the accurate and appropriate use of the SPEP™ instrument.

1. Describe your proposed project design for the initial eighteen-month award and subsequent two years of the project period, including how you will meet the technical assistance details outlined in the funding announcement. Include how your proposed project will:
    a. Provide both individualized and group-based training and technical assistance to community and residential providers?
    b. Incorporate findings from previous SPEP™ validation studies into future project enhancements? NOTE: A PDF report titled "A Validation of SPEP™ in Pennsylvania" report prepared by the University of Pittsburgh and subsequent "SPEP™ Re-validation Studies" is available on the PCCD website.
    c. Communicate the results and impact of the SPEP™ process to key Juvenile Justice Stakeholders?

2. Describe your plan for developing training and technical assistance capacity for agency SPEP™ staff as well as county probation officers certified as SPEP™ Specialists.
    a. Discuss how you will coordinate the SPEP™ work in Pennsylvania with that of the Program Developer at Vanderbilt University, as well as any potential partnerships with other states who are conducting the SPEP™ process with their providers. Include in this description plans for any "training of trainers" certification that will allow for in-state training capacity, avoiding the need to pay for the developer to conduct subsequent SPEP™ trainings.
    b. Provide information about the roles that all staff who are funded under this project will fill and how staff will be supervised.

c. Describe how staff will be trained and monitored to develop quality improvement plans and provide tailored technical assistance to providers. NOTE: SPEP™ assessments are based on service type, quality of service delivery, amount of service, and youth level of risk to determine the service's predictive impact on recidivism reduction. Each service assessed receives a feedback report, with recommendations to better align the service to the research findings. A performance improvement plan is developed based on the recommendations and progress is reviewed quarterly until the goals are achieved. Upon completion of the goals, the service is re-assessed, and the process repeated.
   d. Describe the plan to ensure "inter-rater reliability" so that the information gathered and reported by training and technical assistance staff utilizing the SPEP™ tool is consistent across Pennsylvania.

3. Describe your plans for increasing the number of county juvenile probation departments and providers participating in SPEP™ over the course of the project period. NOTE: More than 570 assessments or reassessments were conducted with providers in a residential or community-based setting across Pennsylvania from 2013 to 2024. On average 50 assessments are completed per year.
   a. What strategies will you implement to engage and retain existing community and residential providers in the SPEP™ process?
   b. How will you recruit additional county juvenile probation departments and providers to participate in the SPEP™ process.
   c. How many additional county probation departments and providers do you anticipate recruiting annually? Provide a timeline that illustrates this planning.

4. Identify the project's expected outcomes and impact over the project period, including providing benchmarks for key performance measures and a logic model of their proposed approach. NOTE: Applicants should use the 'Required Attachments' section of the Egrants application to supply their logic model.

9. Performance Measures:

Under this funding announcement, successful applicants are required to comply with all reporting, performance measures, data collection, and evaluation requirements as prescribed by PCCD and federal or state guidelines. As part of the application process, applicants will be required to describe their proposed strategies for achieving the following objectives/key deliverables and report on requisite performance measures.

NOTE: In addition to these required performance measures, applicants are encouraged to develop additional performance metrics that are specifically related to the activities outlined in their application and may track and report all measures on a quarterly basis through PCCD's Egrants System.

SPEP™ TA Objectives	Required Performance Measures
Organizational Capacity Building & Training Supports	• Number of existing and new Train the Trainer SPEP™ Specialists • Number of existing and new Juvenile Probation Officers trained as SPEP™ Implementation Specialists • Number of existing and new counties trained to interpret SPEP™ research & findings • Number of existing and new provider agencies actively engaged in the SPEP™ process • Number of SPEP™ Baseline Assessments • Number of SPEP™ Reassessments • Number of SPEP™ trainings provided • Number of individuals participating in trainings • Number of workshops or convenings conducted
Data Collection, Performance Management	• Number of SPEP™ service implementation interviews conducted in a residential setting • Number of SPEP™ service implementation interviews conducted in a community setting • Number of SPEP™ Assessments by Quality of Service Delivery • Number of SPEP™ Assessments by Basic Score • Number of SPEP™ Assessments by POP Score • Number of SPEP™ Assessments with an increase in basic score between baseline and reassessment • Number of SPEP™ Assessments with an increase in POP score between baseline and reassessment • Number of SPEP™ Assessments with an increase in quality of service delivery score between baseline and reassessment

10. Competitive Bidding/Sole Source Procurement:

All procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner that provides open and free competition. Grant recipients must follow the Procurement Standards section in PCCD's Applicant's Manual.

Procurements by noncompetitive proposal are strongly discouraged and must demonstrate an economic benefit or lack of alternate resources to be justified. If a request is made, the prospective applicant must identify the request as a procurement by noncompetitive proposal and provide a substantial justification for the request within their funding request (See PCCD's Applicant's Manual for Procurement by Noncompetitive Proposal Approval Procedure).

11. Administrative Requirements:

a. Egrants Agency and User Registration:
Prior to submitting a grant application, both the applicant agency and at least two users from the applicant agency must be registered in Egrants. Applicants are strongly advised to allow adequate time to work on application documents in Egrants prior to the

submission deadline. Please go to the [Registering in Egrants](#) page on PCCD's website for further information.

b. Fiscal Accountability:
See the [Fiscal Accountability](#) page on PCCD's website for further information.

c. Time and Effort Reporting:
See the [Time and Effort Reports](#) page on PCCD's website for further information.

d. Grant Payments:
- Payments will not be released until all applicable special conditions on the grant award have been satisfied.
- All grantees are required, at a minimum, to submit quarterly fiscal reports. PCCD will only make payments to reimburse actual expenditures reported on the fiscal reports. An agency experiencing cash flow problems may submit fiscal reports monthly and PCCD will reimburse reported expenditures. Non-submission or late submission of the required reports will result in payment delays.
- ACH Payments:
  ° All payments to grant recipients will be made through ACH.
  ° Either before or at the time an application is submitted to PCCD, the applicant agency must [register as a Non-Procurement Vendor](#) with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

e. Federal Transparency Act Certification:
This section is required for both state and federal funding streams. See the [Federal Application Requirements](#) page on PCCD's website for further information.

f. Reporting Requirements:
- Programmatic reports are due quarterly.
- Fiscal reports are due quarterly.
- Late submission of programmatic and fiscal reports may delay payments.
- All reports must be submitted through the Egrants system.

12. PCCD Contact Information and Resources:

a. Staff Contacts:
Staff are only able to clarify the funding announcement and are not able to answer any questions about how a potential applicant should respond to any particular section.

Questions regarding this funding announcement should be directed as follows:
- E-mail your funding announcement questions to RA-PCCD-OJJDP@pa.gov with **SPEP™ Implementation 2026-2027** in the subject line.
- Questions must be received by close of business on **October 9, 2025**.
- All questions and answers will be posted under this funding announcement title on the [Funding Announcement Q&A](#) page of the PCCD website.

b. Egrants Funding Announcement:
Log into the Egrants system and search under the "Funding Announcement" tab for SPEP™ Implementation 2025-2026.

c. PCCD Guidelines and Documents:
Applicants should be familiar with the [Applicant's Manual](#), grant application and administrative guides, and other documents common to PCCD's grant application process, all of which are available on the [Funding and Grants Process](#) page of the PCCD website.

d. Egrants Technical Questions:
   For any technical or system questions, contact and ask for the Egrants Help Desk at (717) 787-5887 or (800) 692-7292, or by emailing RA-eGrantsSupport@pa.gov.

e. PCCD Webmaster:
   Please address any technical problems you may have with the website or online forms to the PCCD Web Master.

f. Reporting Potential Fraud, Waste and Abuse:
   Information about waste, fraud, abuse, conflict of interest, bribery, gratuity, or other similar misconduct, or whistleblower reprisal relating to a PCCD employee, program, contract or grant, may be reported to the PCCD Fraud Hotline at (717) 525-5031. For more information, visit the Reporting Fraud, Waste and Abuse page on PCCD's website.

13. Submission Information:

The application must be entered into Egrants **no later than Tuesday, October 14, 2025, by 11:59 PM.**

The grant application must be electronically signed within Egrants. To electronically sign the application, at least one person from your organization must have the E-signature role in Egrants. Please use the link below to access instructions which explain how to request the E-signature role.

E-signature Access Request Instructions

E-signature Access Request Form (This must be attached to your access request in Egrants)

Please note that you cannot request the e-signature role on behalf of someone else.