

Supporting Grants Managers with Financial Access and Training Increases Competency



This case study describes how the Office of Early Learning for Baltimore City Public Schools prepared grants managers for financial management success.

"This training was helpful, especially the budget planning activity. The discussion and collaboration provided a great way to guide the planning process."

Judy Center Program Coordinator,
Baltimore City Public Schools

The Problem

Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) operates 12 early childhood learning centers, known as Judy Centers. Each Judy Center offers pre-kindergarten to several hundred students, mostly in low-income neighborhoods. Each center has 1 full-time coordinator to manage the program and its budget. Each Judy Center is funded by a combination of local, state, and federal grant funds. The following challenges were present:

- Judy Centers were not fully expending their grant funds by grant deadlines.
- Any unspent grant funds could cause BCPS to receive less grant funding in the future, putting the entire program at risk.
- Most coordinators had minimal prior experience with managing budgets.

The Solution

Rapid expansion nearly doubled the total number of Judy Centers in one year, resulting in a staff that included many novice coordinators. To support the coordinators, we implemented:

- [Allovue Savvy Survey](#)
- [Listening Sessions](#)
- [Core Financial Training](#)

The Results

The benefits realized by Judy Center Coordinators through the partnership with Allovue included:



Customized Training Uncovered Program Insights

Customizing training to meet the coordinators' specific needs and context, building trust through candid feedback, and leveraging the school district experience of its trainers, Allovue successfully engaged and educated Judy Center coordinators. The training provided:

- a foundation of financial terms
- strategies which helped coordinators write better grant proposals, set clearer goals with regard to spending deadlines
- custom budget templates from which financial data could be more easily incorporated into their process

In a post-training survey, **80%** of participants called the training "effective" or "very effective." The training program ultimately mitigated the risk that the school district would lose grant funding in future years.

Timeline

