



# **SPECIAL EDUCATION** RESOURCES

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## **Leveraging IDEA Funds to Attract/Prepare/Retain Special Educators & Related Services Providers: Allowable Costs**

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**DPI's mission is to ensure that every child, regardless of zip code, has access to quality public education programs, enrichment opportunities, and special education opportunities, so that all our kids can be successful.**

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Wisconsin is one of forty-eight states currently reporting special education teacher shortages (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Tomas, 2016). Ensuring that students have access to the educators and other critical staff they need to support their success by hiring additional educators and school staff and improving compensation to recruit and retain educators and school staff are allowable uses of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) formula funds. The US Department of Education released [additional resources](#) to help LEAs understand allowable uses of federal funds in relation to staffing challenges.

If using federal funds to implement any of the following recruitment and retention suggestions, the subrecipient must ensure the cost is reasonable and necessary and consistent with [2 CFR § 200.430](#) (compensation) and [§ 200.463](#) (recruiting costs). Any compensation or benefit provided must be pursuant to an established compensation plan, as well as consistent with applicable collective bargaining agreements and other relevant policies and requirements.

The costs associated with the following attract, prepare, retain activities are allowable uses of IDEA formula funds:

### **Attract Solutions: Costs Associated with**

- Recruiting special educators and related services providers: participating in job fairs; utilizing teacher Websites and national publications (e.g., CEC); using technology (e.g., social media sites, virtual job fairs, electronic bulletin boards); hiring an external recruiter or advertising in local newspapers, radio, and television.
- Accepting student placements for practicum, clinical, student teaching, and internships requirements: incentives, such as stipends, for experienced educators to accept student placements for practicum, clinical, student teaching, and interns.
- Hiring interns in special education through the [Wisconsin Improvement Program \(WIP\)](#).
- Offering paid release time to those licensed with stipulations to pursue certification or other professional development (e.g., attend classes, meet with a mentor or coach, attend just-in-time professional learning opportunities).
- Providing financial incentives by reviewing and strengthening compensation scale; offering signing bonuses; granting salary advancements to cover tuition costs accrued prior to initial pay period.

- Providing financial incentives by offering scholarships and loan forgiveness; paying for tuition for coursework or degree completion; paying for expenses related to pathway to licensure (e.g., CCCs for speech/language pathologists).
- Offering relocation reimbursement and housing assistance.
- Reducing class sizes, caseloads, and workload for new special educators.
- Establishing middle and high school student opportunities or programs to work with students with IEPs; (e.g., youth programs, Special Olympics, Best Buddies, etc.)
- Partnering with IHEs and community organizations to develop a Grow Your Own (GYO) program.
- Establishing a tuition free agreement for those pursuing a teaching degree or adding certification.
- Salaries and benefits for LEA employees or costs for contracted substitute special education teacher services.
- Costs associated with student special educators working in the school district.
- Creating a special education teacher residency program

### **Prepare Solutions: Costs Associated with**

- Offering paid release time for new and Tier 1 licensed educators to further coursework or other professional development (e.g., attend classes, meet with a mentor or coach, attend just-in-time professional learning opportunities).
- Offering paid release time for new and Tier 1 licensed educators of color (BIPOC) to network and collaborate with other educators or mentors of color through virtual opportunities as needed.
- Using virtual supports, such as e-mentoring, video-based coaching and/or PLCs, to deliver job-embedded professional development.
- Providing release time for new and Tier 1 licensed educators to observe and collaborate with veteran special educators experienced with diverse learners.
- Paying or reimbursing [Wisconsin's pathways](#) to gain full licensure.

### **Retain Solutions: Costs Associated with**

- Reducing a new special educator's or related services provider's workload when determining caseloads or providing release time during the day to complete coursework or professional development.
- Improving appropriate teaching conditions by providing the necessary materials, technology, etc. to meet the needs of students with IEPs.

- Providing release time for new special educators and related services providers to observe and collaborate with other educators experienced with diverse learners.
- Providing teacher induction to assist new and Tier 1 licensed educators.
  - [Mentor Handbook: Supporting Beginning Special Education educators](#)
  - [District Induction Manual: Supporting Beginning Special Education educators](#)
- Creating a “Just in Time Learning Plan” with opportunities differentiated based on the needs of the special educator. Resources include:
  - [DPI Comprehensive Evaluation](#)
  - [DPI College and Career Ready IEPs](#)
  - [DPI Monitoring Progress of IEP Goals](#)
  - [IRIS Center Resources and Modules](#)
  - [High-Leverage Practices in Special Education](#)
  - [Introducing High-Leverage Practices in Special Education: A Professional Development Guide for School Leaders](#)
  - [Explicit Instruction Modules 5-8](#)
- Providing opportunities for building and district level leader and administrator candidates to gain experience in special education and in supporting students with IEPs.
- Providing professional learning and support to leaders on how to provide high-quality instructional coaching in High Leverage Practices (HLPs) and Evidence Based Practices (EBPs): [Introducing High-Leverage Practices in Special Education: A Professional Development Guide for School Leaders](#)

For more information: [Attract Strategies Role Guide](#) and [Strategies Funding Guide](#)

*\*Preparing and Retaining Effective Special Education Teachers: Short-Term Strategies for Long-Term Solutions: A Policy Brief.* Prepared by: The CEEDAR Center & The Center on Great educators and Leaders

*\*\*The IRIS Center. (2013). Teacher retention: Reducing the attrition of special educators.* Retrieved from <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/tchr-ret/>



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August 2022

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