



Wisconsin Improvement Program

Handbook



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
Public Instruction

Wisconsin Improvement Program (WIP) Handbook



Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
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Wisconsin Improvement Program (WIP) Handbook

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1

WIP Program Overview

The Wisconsin Improvement Program (WIP) has long been part of Wisconsin's education landscape. WIP was founded in the late 1950s by John Guy Fowlkes, then Dean of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The Wisconsin legislature formalized WIP in the 1987-89 budget bill. Since inception, WIP has played an important role in helping build Wisconsin's educator workforce.

As partners in the WIP Program, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), Wisconsin college and university WIP members, and local school districts collaborate to pair promising student interns with experienced cooperating teachers in a semester-long clinical experience. WIP offers an excellent alternative to student teaching for eligible individuals. WIP interns take on limited instructional duties in their role and are eligible to receive a stipend from the employing school/district board of education.

Relevant state statute and administrative code:

- [Wisconsin Statute 115.41 Teacher improvement program](#)
The state superintendent shall operate a program to provide prospective teachers with one-semester internships under the supervision of licensed teachers. The program may also fund in-service activities and professional development research projects. The state superintendent shall charge school districts fees for participation in the program. Program costs shall be paid from the appropriation under s.20.255(1)(hg).

WIP offers an excellent alternative to student teaching for eligible individuals.

- [Wisconsin Administrative Code PI 34.028\(2\)\(b\) Intern Licenses](#)
The applicant is assigned to a school by an educator preparation program and all of the following occur: the educator preparation program recommends the applicant for licensure, the applicant is enrolled as a senior at a baccalaureate program or is enrolled in a post-baccalaureate program, and the applicant will be supervised by an individual who is fully licensed in the specific license area of the internship or residency program.

WIP is comprised of two major initiatives: the teacher intern program, and professional development funding for interns and cooperating teachers. The internship program offers pre-service teachers throughout Wisconsin a chance to enter the profession with a specialized intern license. WIP professional development funds allow for reimbursements to WIP interns and their respective colleges/universities. Licensed interns are assigned to limited instructional duties in the school/district where they are placed. Interns are not allowed to substitute teach.

The WIP program is implemented and administered through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). DPI provides oversight and technical assistance to Wisconsin educator preparation programs, schools, and districts. The DPI WIP administrator oversees development of internship programs, provide support for hiring, and facilitate the use of WIP funds for professional development. The program administrator also reviews and approves internship requests and addresses concerns that may arise regarding specific intern placement.



Internship Structure

WIP interns are pre-service teachers enrolled in one of Wisconsin's approved educator preparation programs. Through the WIP program, interns complete an internship in lieu of student teaching. The internships are full-time, one-semester positions in Wisconsin public schools.

Intern Workload

Intern placement is full time and one semester in length. Interns are to be onsite in their schools for full days, five days per week. They must work the same hours as full-time teachers, as defined in the district's policy manual or teacher association contract.

Interns may teach no more than 50 percent of the time over the course of their semester. As internships are designed to be learning experiences, interns spend the remainder of their time planning, observing, and conferring with colleagues. Actual workloads vary by internship. Some internships, for example, include co-teaching or team-teaching responsibilities. In these cases, one-half of the co- or team-teaching time counts toward the 50 percent teaching duties.

Examples of the "50 percent rule" in action:

- *Example 1:* A full-time educator teaches six periods per day out of an eight-period middle school schedule. The educator's intern teaches three periods per day. When not teaching, the intern prepares for instruction and observes the cooperating teacher or other teachers in the building or district.

- *Example 2:* A full-time educator teaches three blocks per day out of a four-block, high school schedule. The educator's intern teaches one block per day for the first six weeks. The intern takes on more responsibility during the next six weeks, teaching two blocks per day. For the final six weeks, the intern teaches three blocks per day. When not teaching, the intern prepares for instruction and observes the cooperating teacher or other teachers in the building or district.
- *Example 3:* A full-time educator teaches five hours per day out of a six-hour per day elementary school schedule. The full-time educator's intern co-teaches the reading and math blocks in a primary classroom for three hours per day. This counts as 1.5 hours of teaching per day for purposes of the 50% rule. In addition, the intern teaches a science block for one hour in the afternoon. When not teaching, the intern prepares for instruction and observes the cooperating teacher or other teachers in the building or district.

Should a work stoppage occur in an intern's school or district, interns shall be declared nonparticipants to all parties involved in the dispute. Interns will remain on a stand-by basis during the period of time that a school is closed. They will also remain on stand-by basis if the school is open but issues remain unresolved. Interns are not to be considered employees or members of the local teacher association.

Interns are placed in their schools for full days but may teach no more than 50% of the time during their placement.

Intern Licensing, Stipends, and Fees

Interns must hold intern licenses issued by the DPI. As per PI 34.028(2)(b)(1), the approved educator preparation program recommends the intern applicant for licensure. Interns may apply for their intern license after they have received an internship offer from a school or district, and after their educator preparation program has approved them.

Stipends and fees:

- Interns are paid a minimum stipend of \$4,500 per semester by the employing school or district.
- The employing school or district also pays a professional development fee of \$500 per intern per semester to DPI.
- Educator preparation programs pay DPI \$200 per intern per semester. When an educator preparation program has no interns in a particular academic year, it pays a baseline membership fee of \$200.

Key Points to Remember

- Interns may not serve as substitute teachers.
- Interns are not eligible for unemployment compensation.
- Problems related to WIP internships should be addressed immediately. A serious problem should be brought to the attention of all stakeholders, including: the intern, the cooperating teacher, school or district administrators, the supervisor from the educator preparation program, and the campus coordinator at the educator preparation program. All participants should commit to resolving issues in a collaborative, professional manner.
- In cases where a problem situation is irreparable, the school or district administrator is responsible for making a final decision about the status of the intern and for informing all parties, including the DPI WIP administrator, if the intern will be removed from the position.



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Roles and Responsibilities

Intern positions offer opportunity and experience within an approved educator preparation program. For optimal success, the WIP internship guidance team must strive to create and maintain a supportive learning environment for the intern. The guidance team includes the cooperating teacher(s), select staff at the school/district, and the educator preparation program supervisor.

Cooperating Teachers

The cooperating teacher serves as a key role in ensuring that the internship is successful. Cooperating teachers must meet all requirements specified by [PI 34.023\(4\)](#):

- Hold a valid Wisconsin license
- Serve as cooperating teacher on a volunteer basis
- Have at least 3 years of teaching experience, including at least one year of experience at the current place of employment
- Have completed training in both the supervision of clinical students and the applicable Wisconsin teaching standards

Cooperating teachers provide ongoing feedback to interns throughout the internship. They are expected to follow educator preparation program procedures to evaluate interns. They also hold meetings with the intern and the educator preparation program supervisor to discuss the intern's progress.

Cooperating teacher support of the intern includes:

- Planning for instruction
- Assessing students for purposes of instructional planning
- Accessing instructional resources
- Creating a positive learning environment in the classroom
- Evaluating lessons and making modifications for future instruction
- Developing new instructional strategies
- Collaborating with student family members, school faculty/staff
- Getting to know the school or district
- Preparing for the edTPA or approved alternative measure(s)
- Ensuring success in meeting all Wisconsin teaching standards

The cooperating teacher plays a key role in every internship experience.

School or District

WIP contact(s). The online WIP internship request portal requires the name and contact information of one primary contact. An additional contact may be added if desired.

Principals. School principals are responsible for the oversight of internships. They must ensure that the internship is successful for all involved. Principals must ensure that cooperating teachers meet all requirements as outlined in PI 34. They must also ensure the intern is assigned appropriate schedules and provided with adequate resources. Principals must make sure the cooperating teacher has adequate time to conference with the intern on a regular basis.

Superintendent/District Administrator. The superintendent/district administrator is the statutory authority responsible for WIP internships in the school/district. Superintendent/district administrator or their designees must ensure that internships are aligned with all WIP rules and policies. They must ensure resources are provided to make the internship a success. Under superintendent/district administrator's leadership, school districts must confirm the intern has applied for an intern license from the DPI prior to starting their internship. The superintendent/district administrator or designee must provide a contract or other agreement specifying intern duties. They must provide payment of intern salaries and related professional development fees.

Teacher Association. Leaders of the local teacher association, when there is one, are expected to learn about internship requests and provide their signatures (when required) to indicate support for the internship.

Wisconsin Educator Preparation Program WIP Coordinators

WIP coordinators work with the DPI, school districts, and intern candidates.

Their responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Monitoring the WIP database. Coordinators use a link provided by DPI to view the approved internships requests and identify potential pairings of interns with positions. They review summary information about internships to search for those that could provide a good fit for students in their program.
- Notifying students of available internships and providing support to candidates as they apply directly to the district/school for available internship positions.
- Providing the internship request number. Candidates who receive an internship offer must apply to DPI for their intern license prior to starting work in the district/school. WIP coordinators provide the intern with the unique intern request number associated with the particular internship position. *Candidates must have the number available when they apply to DPI for their intern license. Intern request numbers should never be released until after a candidate has applied for, interviewed, and been offered an intern position.*

Educator Preparation Program Intern Supervisors

Educator preparation program intern supervisors work closely with interns, as they would with a student teacher. They also work with the cooperating teacher and others on the internship team throughout the intern's placement. Supervisors must have experience and expertise in the subject areas and levels of the intern's placement in order to provide optimal direction and support.

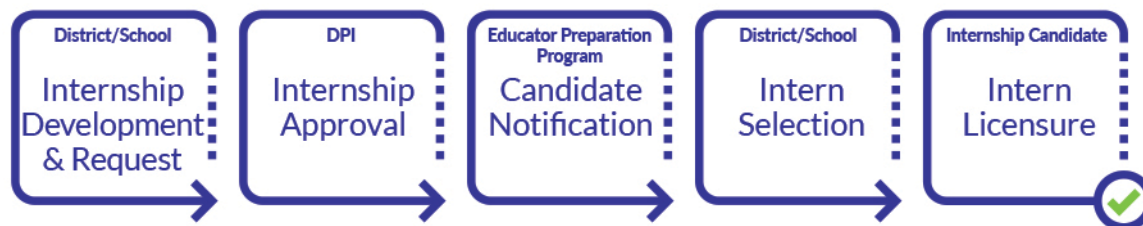
The supervisor's responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Performing classroom observations
- Evaluating the intern
- Conferencing with the intern and cooperating teacher(s)



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Intern Hiring Process



Hiring an intern is a five-step process. Districts/schools, DPI, the educator preparation program, and prospective interns all have responsibilities. Schools or districts develop an internship position and submit it to DPI through an online portal or online application process. DPI reviews the request. Once approved, schools, districts, and educator preparation programs have access to the online portal for purposes of pairing candidates with positions. Once paired, the candidates are notified. They may then contact the district/school to interview for an internship position. Selected candidates must apply to DPI for an intern license before beginning their internship.

Discussion between districts and nearby WI educator preparation programs can be helpful for establishing collaborative relationships. Internship candidates should never be interviewed before DPI has approved the internship position. Each of the steps is discussed in detail on the following pages.

1. Internship Development and Request



The first step in hiring an intern is the responsibility of the district/school. They must consider WIP internship requirements to 1a) develop the internship, 1b) submit the internship request to DPI, and 1c) print out the required summary pages, acquire signatures, and then send to DPI.

1a) Develop the Internship: Design the internship position in accordance with PI 34.028 and the WIP rules outlined in this handbook, including:

- The intern may teach no more than 50 percent of the time over the course of their internship semester. See [Intern Workload](#) in this handbook for details.
- An internship may not be used to fill positions that have been previously held by a licensed teacher or will be in the future.
- Interns must be supervised by a cooperating teacher who meets all PI 34 requirements. See [Cooperating Teachers](#) in this handbook, for details.
- The internship must provide opportunity for interns to demonstrate proficiency in the [Wisconsin teaching standards](#).

Additional considerations:

- How will the school/district pay the intern stipend? Will taxes be withheld?
- What professional development activities will be put in place to support the intern and cooperating teacher? Which of the proposed activities are eligible for reimbursement?
- What procedures should the intern follow when absent due to sickness or emergency?
- What information about the school, district, an internship placement should be provided to the intern? Who will provide this information?
- What can the educational community do to be supportive of the internship and/or intern?

1b) Submit the request: The school/district must designate a contact person to serve as the first point of contact for all inquiries related to the internship. The primary contact and all other required information are entered into the online WIP internship request portal. Only one intern may be requested per intern request submitted. The request may include more than one subject area for dual certification interns. Up to two cooperating teachers are allowed per intern request. Upon completion, users review a summary of their internship request, make edits as needed, and submit the form to DPI.

1c) Check your email for the DocuSign request:

- All required signers will be sent a DocuSign request via email to collect their electronic signatures.
- Each internship request is assigned a unique identifying number. The primary contact designated in the intern request can review and monitor the status of their internship request and review signatures utilizing their intern request number.

Schools/districts may view the status of their internship request at any time via the online WIP portal. Find additional information in the [How to Access the WIP Portal](#) and the WIP [QuickStart](#) guide.

Reminder: District/schools must never create internships directly with a student or interview an intern candidate before receiving DPI approval for the internship position. Districts/schools may partner with an educator preparation program and work directly with their WIP Coordinator.

Due Dates for Internship Requests:

- For fall semester: **August 1.**
- For spring semester: **December 15.**

If a due date lands on a weekend or holiday, the deadline will be extended to the first business date following the due date.

Districts must always wait until the internship position is approved before interviewing candidates.

2. Internship Approval by DPI



The DPI WIP administrator reviews incoming internship requests to ensure compliance with WIP rules and guidelines as provided in this handbook and with Wis. Stat. §118.19 and Wis. Admin. Codes § PI 34.023(4), and § PI 34.028(2)(b). To be considered, all internship requests must include all required DocuSign signatures. Internship requests that meet all criteria outlined in this handbook, Wisconsin state statutes, and administrative codes are approved. Requests that do not meet the criteria are returned to the primary contact for modifications and resubmission if applicable or the request is denied.

School districts may log in to the online WIP portal at any time to view the status of their internship request. Once a request is approved, schools/districts and EPPs may log into the portal for purposes of pairing intern candidates with available positions. *In cases where an internship request is approved very close to the deadline for hiring, schools/districts may proactively reach out to nearby educator preparation programs to expedite pairing.*

3. Candidate Notification



WIP coordinators at educator preparation programs monitor the WIP intern requests database to identify potential pairings for students in their program. Upon identifying a good fit, the coordinator informs students about available internships. Candidates must contact the school/district directly to apply for an available internship position. The WIP coordinator then stands by until a candidate has successfully interviewed and received an offer from the district.

The WIP coordinator then provides the prospective intern with the unique internship request number associated with the position. Candidates need the intern request number in order to apply for their DPI intern license.

4. Intern Selection



Schools/districts review internship applications. They interview candidates using a process similar to that used to hire licensed educators. Upon identifying a candidate they would like to hire, they make the individual an offer. They also communicate with the candidate’s educator preparation program WIP coordinator regarding the offer.

Schools/districts hiring an intern are entering into a bona fide agreement with both the educator preparation program and the intern. DPI strongly encourages a written contract. The contract should outline all details of the internship, including how the intern should be paid by the school/district, and the responsibilities of all parties involved in the internship.

A district/school administrator or human resources representative is responsible for ensuring the intern has applied for their DPI license before beginning work as an intern. The DPI [License Lookup](#) tool offers quick reference for double-checking licensing status.

Interns must apply for their DPI intern license before they begin working in the school or district.

5. Intern Licensure



Interns must apply to DPI for their intern license before they start work in a school/district. Prospective interns will apply using DPI’s [Educator Licensing Portal Online](#) (ELO).*

The candidate must have the following available when applying:

1. **Intern Request Number:** Each approved intern request is assigned a unique number. This number, available from the educator preparation program WIP coordinator, will be requested during the online license application process.

2. **Fingerprints, if needed:** Some candidates may be required to submit fingerprints when they apply for their license. Applicants may use the DPI [Fingerprint Flowchart](#) to quickly identify whether they will need fingerprints. Further information about obtaining fingerprints is available on the DPI website: [Electronic Fingerprint Submission](#).
3. **Additional Documentation, if needed:** Some candidates may need to upload documentation related to alleged misconduct. The [Conduct & Competency](#) resource helps applicants quickly identify whether documentation will be required with their application.

DPI accepts files in pdf, MS Word (doc or docx), jpg/jpeg, or txt file format. File names must be limited to letters and numbers, no special characters, and be less than 36 characters in length. Individual files must not exceed 2 MB in size.

IMPORTANT!

The intern application is not complete until the *Conduct and Competency* questions have been answered and payment has been made.



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Professional Development

Support and guidance are key ingredients for a successful intern experience. Accordingly, professional development is an integral expectation of the WIP program. Schools/districts must provide professional development opportunities for interns and cooperating teachers. Educator preparation programs must do the same to support interns enrolled in their program.

Options for Professional Development

Professional development activities can range from interns and cooperating teachers attending conferences, workshops, or seminars—together whenever possible—to the purchase of books and other materials. Professional development materials purchased during the internship remain with the school/district after the internship has ended.

Professional development options include but are not limited to:

- Participation in conferences, workshops, or seminars offered by the intern's educator preparation program
- Participation in new teacher orientation
- Participation in school/district-sponsored professional development activities
- Purchase of materials used to support the intern's work in the classroom, including books, instructional software and manipulatives, DVDs, and games for students.

District Contribution

Participating schools/districts are billed by DPI at the rate of \$500 per intern for each semester they host an intern. These funds are distributed to support professional development:

- \$225 per intern may be reimbursed to the intern, cooperating teacher, or school/ district for eligible professional development activities or items.
- \$225 per intern may be reimbursed to the intern's educator preparation program district for eligible professional development activities or items.
- \$50 is retained by DPI to fund statewide professional development and program coordination.

Reimbursable Expenses

Professional development funds must be used to benefit interns and/or their cooperating teachers during an internship. The funds must be used during the semester in which they are accrued. Eligible expenses may be submitted to the DPI WIP administrator for reimbursement of up to \$225 per intern.

Common reimbursements include:

- Instructional materials and books, and professional literature;
- Workshops and seminars registration, mileage to/from, and refreshments or meals provided during workshops or seminars;
- Presenter stipends for professional development events sponsored by the school/district or educator preparation program;
- Cost of copying handouts for professional development activities. Activities may be sponsored by the school/district or the educator preparation program.

Note: Additional, more uncommon items may be eligible for reimbursement. Consult the DPI WIP administrator prior to incurring any expense not listed above.

Other school/district employees or candidates in an educator preparation program may participate in the same professional development activities for which the funds are used. For example, a district might use professional development funds for a new teacher meeting including four WIP interns as well as six teachers newly employed by the district. A college might use professional development funds for a Saturday seminar that includes ten WIP interns and ten student teachers.

District contributions to the WIP program support professional development for interns and cooperating teachers.

State Reimbursement Rates

Professional development activities funded by WIP must conform to State of Wisconsin regulations regarding travel and reimbursement as outlined below:

- Mileage (up to 100 miles): \$.51 per mile; \$.352 (100 miles or more).
- Lodging: \$98/night maximum for all counties except Milwaukee, Waukesha, and Racine Counties, which have a \$103/night maximum.
- Meals:
 - Breakfast: \$10 maximum
 - Lunch: \$12 maximum
 - Box Lunch: \$5 maximum
 - Dinner: \$23 maximum

Reimbursement requests for out-of-state travel are not typically approved. Requests for exceptions will, however, be considered. Send your inquiry to the [DPI WIP administrator](#) *before* initiating the out-of-state travel.

Reimbursement Procedure

Applications for reimbursements must be downloaded from the DPI website, filled out, and submitted to DPI via postal mail, by the dates indicated below, including all required documentation and original receipts.

- School districts and interns:
 - Expenditures related to fall semester interns must be postmarked no later than **January 31**. Use [Form PI 1692-A](#).
 - Expenditures related to Spring semester interns must be postmarked no later than **June 1**. Use [Form PI 1692-A](#).
- Educator preparation programs:
 - Expenditures related to fall semester interns must be postmarked no later than **January 31**. Use [Form PI 1692-B](#).
 - Expenditures related to fall semester interns must be postmarked no later than **June 1**. Use [Form PI 1692-B](#).

Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions

Administrators Ask:

We want an intern. How do we get started?

Your first step is to develop an internship position and submit it to DPI for approval. Submit your internship request to DPI online using the WIP Internship Request Form. See page 11 of this document for more information.

I accidentally submitted two online requests for the same internship. What should I do?

Use the [Contact Educator Licensing](#) form to request help. Describe your situation in the description box at the end of the form and request deactivation of the intern request you wish to remove.

Do I need to submit a separate internship request for each internship in my school or can I put them all on one request form?

You must create a new intern request for each intern opportunity you have.

I have interviewed a student from a local university and believe she would do a great job at the school where I am principal. She has signed a contract for an internship with us – we are so happy to have her! Now, is it my next step to complete an internship request?

Oops, you have the process turned around. First, complete an internship request and wait for it to be approved by the DPI. Then you work with EPPs to identify potential interns, interview potential interns, select one, and offer a contract.

Can an intern work in more than one school in my district?

Yes. Especially in small districts, interns sometimes work in more than one building. To receive DPI approval, the internship must provide a reasonable teaching schedule in accordance with the “50% rule.”

Another consideration will be who will serve as cooperating teacher(s). If one individual is going to be the cooperating teacher, they must be qualified to work with the intern in both settings. Alternatively, there can be two cooperating teachers, one in each building. In the case of two cooperating teachers, arrangements must be made for them to work collaboratively to provide support and guidance to the intern.

We had an increase in enrollment over the summer and need to create an additional section of third grade. Can I hire an intern to teach in the new section?

No. You need to hire a licensed teacher.

DPI approved a fall internship for us in May. Now, in June, I have learned that the cooperating teacher for this internship has taken a job in another district. What should we do?

You must find another teacher, in the same grade level and subject area, who is qualified to take the place of the original cooperating teacher. Alternatively, you may cancel the internship. Either way, [contact DPI Educator Licensing](#) to request help modifying or canceling the internship.

If you have already entered into a contractual agreement with a WIP intern, contact their educator preparation program WIP contact also. They must review any modifications made to the internship to ensure it still meets their program requirements and provides a quality experience for the intern.

Our district does not currently have adequate physical education coverage at all levels. We need to increase the amount of physical education offered each week in order to comply with Wisconsin administrative code. The School Board does not want to pay for another teacher. Can we hire WIP interns instead?

No. Internships may not be used for positions that should be, or have previously been, held by a licensed teacher. Additionally, interns may not be used as a substitute teacher.

EPP WIP Campus Coordinators Ask:

We want to have all our interns placed for the fall semester by this May. May we contact local school districts and encourage them to get their internship requests submitted to the DPI?

You may certainly remind districts about deadlines, help them develop appropriate WIP internships, and advocate for your interns. Developing strong relationships with your PK-12 partners supports the overall process. Note: intern candidates must never be interviewed or promised an internship before the internship has received DPI approval.

Cooperating Teachers Ask:

I have served as a cooperating teacher for student teachers in the past. Are the rules for serving as a cooperating teacher for interns any different?

The rules are exactly the same, as outlined in PI 34.

Intern Candidates Ask:

I am a college student in a teacher preparation program and want to get an internship. What should I do?

Talk with your campus WIP contact person regarding available internships. You will need to be paired with a district, interview, and receive an offer. You must also have an intern license *before* you start the internship. Contact your campus field placement office for the passcode unique to your WIP internship. You will need it when you use DPI's online educator licensing portal (ELO) to [apply for your teacher intern license](#).

I am an intern. I am not having a good experience in my internship. What should I do?

Discuss the situation with your supervisor at your educator preparation program. You may also want to talk with the WIP coordinator on your campus. Most situations can be improved with collaborative communication. Take a positive, problem-solving approach to improve your experience.

Questions About Professional Development Funds:

I am an intern. My cooperating teacher and I have selected software for me to use while teaching math in my placement. It costs \$190. The school does not want to order it for me in advance of receiving payment from WIP. Can you send me the check and then I will submit the order?

WIP cannot pay for items outright. Expenses must be incurred first, then submitted for reimbursement. Eligible expenses made by you, your cooperating teacher, your school, or your district to support of your professional development must be submitted to DPI using [Form PI 1692-A](#).

I am the office assistant for the field placement program at an educator preparation program. The WIP campus contact has asked me to submit Form PI 1692-B in request of reimbursement for our intern/student teacher Saturday seminars. Do I understand that you need a list of interns who attended each seminar?

Yes. We actually need a list of *all* attendees at the seminar, as well as the seminar agenda. The interns must be among those who attended.

I am a cooperating teacher. My intern and I drove to a conference in my car. Can we submit a request for reimbursement for the mileage to and from the conference?

Yes, this is an allowable expense. You or your district can be reimbursed for the cost of attending a conference with your intern, including mileage.

Our educator preparation did not use up all of the WIP professional development funds this year. Can we carry those funds over to next year?

You may not carry over WIP professional development funds. The funds are specifically designated to benefit interns placed in schools during the semester and academic year in which the intern was placed.