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**School-based Mental Health Services Grant**

**Frequently Asked questions**

**Can private and/or choice schools apply?**

*No. The statute authorizing the grant program identifies eligible applicants as: School Boards (districts), Charter schools and Consortia.*

**Is collaboration with community mental health providers required?**

*Yes. Your plan must include collaborating with community mental health providers to improve access to mental health treatment for your students.*

**What is the grant project period?**

*School-based Mental Health Services grants are funded in two year cycles, aligned with the biennial budget.*

**If the grant is for two years, do we submit an application with a budget for each year?**

*No. Your grant application will be for a plan and budget for the first year of the project. Near the end of the first year, grantees will be required to complete a Grant Renewal Application. This will allow them to adjust their plan if necessary and submit the budget for the second year of the grant.*

**If funding is included in future budgets can we re-apply?**

*Yes. All eligible applicants are invited to apply. Having received a grant in the prior budget cycle does not disqualify you from applying in subsequent grant cycles.*

**How is “charter school” being defined for this grant?**

*Charter schools not authorized by public school boards are eligible to apply. This would include charter schools authorized by the City of Milwaukee, UW-Parkside or the UW System. For those charters authorized by school-boards, the school board (District) would have to apply for the grant.*

**How is a consortia defined for this grant?**

*Eligible applicants as indicated above, can apply individually or as a group, or consortium. The statute allows CESAs to be a consortium but only if it is a group of “school boards”. Consortia cannot include private schools. Applicants cannot apply under both, meaning if they apply under a consortium they cannot also apply individually.*

**Why can’t we use grant funds to pay for treatment services?**

*There are a number of reasons for this. First and foremost, using grant funds for treatment service is not sustainable. Secondly, when grant funds are not available, presumably the child or youth will be cut off from services. This raises an ethical issue. Thirdly, using grant funding for services that have a funding source (third party insurers) is not a good use of funds.*

**If we can’t use grant funds to pay for treatment, what can we use if for?**

*Funds can be used to pay for: community provider delivery of an indirect service such as staff or parent training or co-facilitation of group activities. It could be used to fund student or staff training in mental health and wellness activities. It could be used to support staff coaching of evidence based practice. It could be used to support evidence based programming around suicide prevention, mental health literacy, bullying prevention and social and emotional development, stigma reduction and substance abuse. It can support youth generated mental health and wellness activities. It can provide resources that may be necessary to team across agencies to support families, it can be used to support personnel to assist parents and guardians to access treatment services and assist them through the challenges of doing so. It can be used to work with multiple agencies to create a seamless referral system and cover costs of technology to do so. It can support updating or creating treatment spaces in schools that are comfortable and confidential (only 10% of funds can be used for this purpose). Funds can be used for Tele-therapy technology* ***without a 10% non-capital funds limit.*** *Applicants can also fund positions that are responsible for grant activities but must follow all statutes regarding licensing.*

**Explain the supplement not supplant requirement.**

*This means that, in general, districts may not use School-based Mental Health Services Grant program funds for the cost of activities if the cost of those activities would have otherwise been paid with state or local funds in the absence of the grant program funds.*

**Can we hire a State licensed therapist to provide mental health treatment to children, youth and families?**

*The school cannot employ a therapist directly unless licensed by the DPI as a counselor, social worker or psychologist. Districts may contract with providers to pay for services which are then billed to third-party insurers.*

**Is the licensing requirement just DPI Policy?**

*No, the licensing requirements are statutory:*

Wis. Stat. §§ 118.19(1), 121.02(1)(a); PI 8.01(2)(a)

[118.19(1)](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/statutes/118.19(1))Except as provided in subs. [(1b)](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/statutes/118.19(1b)) and [(1c)](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/statutes/118.19(1c)) and s. [118.40 (8) (b) 1.](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/statutes/118.40(8)(b)1.) and [2.](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/statutes/118.40(8)(b)2.), any person seeking to teach in a public school, including a charter school, or in a school or institution operated by a county or the state shall first procure a license or permit from the department.

[121.02(1)(a)](http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/statutes/121.02(1)(a))

**1.** Ensure that every teacher, supervisor, administrator and professional staff member holds a certificate, license or permit to teach issued by the department before entering on duties for such position.

[PI 8.01(2)(a)](http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/administrativecode/PI%208.01(2)(a)) *Licensure.*

**1.** Each school district board shall certify annually that every teacher, supervisor, administrator, and other professional staff member has been issued a valid certificate, license or permit by the department for the position for which he/she is employed before entering on duties for such position and that a copy of the valid certificate, license, or permit is on file in the district.

**What if we have multiple projects or sites we want to fund? Do we submit multiple applications?**

*Eligible applicants can only submit one application. (One per school district, charter or consortium). If you have multiple projects you want to fund, you need to include them in your one plan.*

**What if there are duplicate applications; one from a district and another where a district is included in a CESA consortium application?**

*Make sure that this doesn’t happen before sending the applications. Consortium applicants must ensure that the school board (district) supports the project.*

**Can individual schools within districts apply?**

*No. Eligible applicants are school boards (districts). The exception is eligible charter schools.*

**Can the School Mental Health Coordinator be an existing pupil services person?**

*Yes. Funding can be used to pay for this additional grant related time.*

**Can you clarify what the required data to be collected is?**

*You will be collecting* ***two*** *numbers. The number of students who receive a mental health contact by school mental health providers (school social worker, school psychologist, school counselor and school nurse when the nurse sees a student for a mental health related issue,)* ***and*** *the number of students who receive a mental health contact by a community mental health provider, even if the community provider is located in the school. Students served in both entities can be counted in both. The school based mental health staff can define “mental health contact” for the purposes of this data collection.*

**Can funding be used for off-site training for staff related to mental health?**

*Yes, if that activity is in your plan and connected to your identified needs. Use sound judgement regarding travel expenses such as limiting out of state travel.*

**Can funding be used to cover costs and expenses for staff to attend conferences?**

*Funds can be used to cover registration costs and expenses for staff to attend in-state conferences within reason. Funds cannot be used for out-of-state conferences.*

**Can you pay staff stipends or salary for training?**

*Yes, if the training occurs outside of their normally paid time. Grant money cannot pay salary or stipend for time also being paid by the district or school.*

**If we agree to less, can we amend our plan?**

*Yes.*

**Can non-violent crisis intervention be included?**

*NVCI is a violence prevention/safety approach which may be fundable if you are able to show how it will improve the mental health of your students. All activities have to be connected to improving student mental health supports and connected to your identified needs.*

**Can we use funds to pay community members such as therapists, to attend district leadership team meetings?**

*Yes*

**Can mindfulness activities be funded through this grant?**

*Yes, if it connects to your needs and plan and is evidence based.*

**Can funding be used for Trauma Sensitive Schools training?**

*Yes, if it connects to your needs and plan.*

**What are the licensing requirements to hire staff to provide mental health services?**

*Staff hired by a school district to provide mental health related services/direct contact with students, must have a DPI license. Community Mental Health staff may work with students with an MOU or agreement with the school district. Their licensing is done through the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS). These licenses require different training, and supervision than DPI licensing. See the relevant statutes above.*

**When will we know if we received the grant?**

*Every effort will be made to determine grant awards and notify district administrators as close to July 1 of the upcoming Fiscal Year as possible.*

**Who will be notified of the grant awards?**

*District administrators will received email notification followed by a hard copy letter of their grant application status. Administrators will be responsible for notifying the grant coordinator.*

**We applied for a grant last year. Why didn’t we get it?**

*This grant is very competitive with funding that is less than the amount requested by applicants. There were many applicants that did not receive funding. You do have the option through an open records request, to receive your scoring rubrics.*

**Can you use funds for food? Incentives? Books for staff?**

*All of these are allowable within reason. Please ask yourself if you would be able to justify those expenses to a legislator asking why you chose to use the funding in that manner. We are accountable for good stewardship of this funding. Will your expenses increase student’s access to meaningful wellness and treatment resources?*

**If we are awarded the grant, can we make changes in the plan or budget?**

*Yes. We understand that things don’t always go according to plan. There are a few steps you will need to complete to make changes but they are not complex.*

**How are the grantee determined?**

*Using the SMHS grant rubric, two reviewers score your application. Each applicant receives an average score. These scores are ranked and the grants are awarded as far down the list as the funding allows. If more funding is appropriated, we can go further down the list of applicants.*