



School-Based Mental Health Services Grant

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the School-based Mental Health Services Grant?

A: The SBMH services grant is a state funded competitive grant program designed to support comprehensive school-based mental health system development in collaboration with community mental health providers.

Q: Can private and/or choice schools apply?

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

Q: Is collaboration with community mental health providers required?

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

Q: What is the grant project period?

A: School-based Mental Health Services grants are funded in two year cycles, aligned with the biennial budget. The next grant cycle is *July 1, 2021-June 30, 2023*.

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

A: 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 Form. This is not a competitive process, rather this will allow grantees to adjust their plan if necessary and submit the budget for the second year of the grant.

Q: If funding is included in future budgets, can we re-apply?

A: 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.

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

A: 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.

Q: How is a consortia defined for this grant?

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

Q: Why can't we use grant funds to pay for treatment services?

A: There are a number of reasons for this. First and foremost, using grant funds for treatment service is not sustainable. When grant funds are no longer available, presumably the child or youth will be cut off from services. This raises an ethical issue. Secondly, using grant funds for services that have a funding source (third party insurers) is not an efficient use of funds.

Q: If we can't use grant funds to pay for treatment, what can we use if for?

A: Funds can be used to pay for:

- Indirect service by a community mental health provider such as staff or parent training, co-facilitation of group activities and consultation with school staff.
- Student or staff training in mental health and wellness activities.
- Personnel costs for staff training and coaching of evidence based practice when held outside of employer paid time.
- Evidence based curriculum and programs for suicide prevention, mental health literacy, bullying prevention and social and emotional development, stigma reduction and substance abuse.
- Youth led mental health and wellness activities.
- Paid personnel/position to the work of the grant such as coordination or mental health navigation. (All positions must follow all statutes regarding licensing)
- Costs associated with collaboration among multiple agencies to create a seamless referral system and cover costs of technology to do so.
- Behavioral health screening resources and services
- 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.**

For more information about allowable and unallowable expenses for the School-Based Mental Health Services Grant, please see the [SBMH Grant: Expense 101 Quick Guide](#)

Q: Explain the supplement not supplant requirement.

A: 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.

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

A: 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.

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

A: 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 provide treatment services for students with an MOU or agreement with the school district. Their licensing can be completed through the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS).

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

[118.19\(1\)](#) Except as provided in subs. [\(1b\)](#) and [\(1c\)](#) and s. [118.40 \(8\) \(b\) 1.](#) and [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\(1\)\(a\)](#)

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\(2\)\(a\)](#) *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.

For more information about the SBMH grant and licensing, please see the [DPI Licensing Requirements Guide](#)

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

A: 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.

Q: Can individual schools within districts apply?

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

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

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

Q: Can funding be used for out of state conference or trainings?

A: Funds can be used for in-state conference but not out-of-state conferences due the expense and the limited impact attending conferences has at the student level. Grantees looking for training for a specific program are encouraged to find training opportunities in Wisconsin. When that is not possible, pre-approval for the use of grant funds to cover out of state training costs is required.

Q: Can you pay staff stipends or salary for training?

A: 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 during their normal time.

Q: Can non-violent crisis intervention be included?

A: 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.

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

A: Yes

Q: Can mindfulness activities be funded through this grant?

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

Q: Can funding be used for Trauma Sensitive Schools training?

A: Yes, if it connects to your needs and plan.

Q: When will we know if we received the grant?

A: 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.

Q: Who will be notified of the grant awards?

A: District administrators and the identified program contact will receive an email-notification of award. Subawards are issued manually (not part of the WISEgrants system) 30 days following notification of award.

Q: We applied for a grant before. Why didn't we get it?

A: This grant is very competitive with a funding appropriation that is less than the amount requested by applicants. There were many applicants that did not receive funding. You do have the option to receive your scoring rubrics once the grantees have been announced. You can do this by submitting an email to schoolmentalhealthservicesgrant@dpi.wi.gov with a request for your school based mental health grant rubrics.

Q: Can you use funds for food?

A: Grant funds can purchase food that is being provided during a grant activity. Food expenditures are limited to no more than 10% of the total award.

Q: Can you use grant funds for incentives for staff, students or parents?

A: Grant funds cannot be used for incentives to encourage attendance at events or to reward students. Grantees can supply gas cards for parent meetings and appointments if this is necessary for parents to be an active participant in treatment or services for their child.

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

A: 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. The DPI staff will assist grantees in completing the necessary request forms when changes are being requested.

Q: How are the grantee determined?

A: Each application is scored by 3 reviewers using the uniform grant rubric. The scores are averaged to obtain a total score for the application. Once all grant applications are scored and ranked, they will be reviewed by an internal team at DPI. The team will review the ranked list of applications and their funding requests. The internal team will then determine how many grants can be funded based upon the legislative appropriation (funding threshold). The ranked applications above the funding threshold will be reviewed by the team to determine if they meet all the grant application requirements.