

Get Kids Ahead Initiative: FAQs

What is the Get Kids Ahead Initiative?

In light of the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student mental health, the *Get Kids Ahead Initiative* provides one-time funding to all public and independent charter schools in Wisconsin to help build Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems (CSMHS) in their schools and districts.

What is a Comprehensive School Mental Health System?

A CSMHS provides a continuum of services and supports to promote student and staff mental health and wellbeing. A CSMHS is not limited to treating mental illness or substance use disorders. Rather, it includes services and supports that promote social and emotional wellbeing, foster positive mental health and school culture and eliminate systemic barriers to wellbeing and success for all students. A CSMHS increases health equity by ensuring all students and staff have access to the prevention, early intervention, and treatment supports that they need, when they need them, free of stigma.

How do I opt in to receive the funding?

To access the funding, public school districts and independent charter schools will need to sign a form to opt into the program and to attest that the funds will be used for allowable purposes. School personnel may access the program attestation portal here:

<https://wi.accessgov.com/doa-wi/Forms/Page/doa-wi/gka-app/>

Please email any questions to getmhs@dpi.wi.gov.

How much funding will I receive?

Each public school district or independent charter school will receive a per-pupil allocation ranging from the minimum award of \$10,000 to much higher awards for districts with large student populations. View the [breakdown of funding allocations by district](#) for more information.

What is the timeline for using the funding?

Public school districts and independent charter schools will receive a one-time allocation of funding that will be made available upon opting in via WISEgrants web portal. The deadline to opt in is April 1, 2022. The funding is to be spent for costs incurred during the period that begins on March 3, 2021, and ends on December 31, 2024.

What are the reporting requirements for this funding?

At the end of each school year, school districts and independent charter schools are required to provide a brief narrative description of how they used their Grant Award to improve or expand mental health-related educational programming, training, staff support, or assistance for students and their families at their schools. Reports will be due on or before July 31 of each year through 2024. DPI will provide additional information regarding the reporting format at least 30 days prior to the deadline.

How can we use the funds?

Funds must be used for allowable activities aimed at building, improving, and sustaining Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems. The program is designed to address systemic challenges that schools encounter in supporting student and staff wellbeing by providing funds to build a proactive system that serves all students. These funds include many allowable mental health related activities, such as but not limited to the following:

- training for staff in mental health-related programs and initiatives including Youth Mental Health First Aid, Compassion Resilience, Social and Emotional Learning, and Trauma Sensitive Schools;
- mental Health Evidence-Based Improvement Strategies (EBIS);
- mental health literacy and stigma reduction programs for students and adults;
- contracting with community mental health providers, consultants, organizations, CESAs, and other experts to provide consultation, training, mentoring, and coaching;
- parent training and informational events;
- Student and Family Assistance Programs (SFAP);
- school-employed mental health professionals accessible to all students;
- mental health navigators; and
- mental health system planning.

Unallowable activities include:

- payments for direct treatment services or insurance deductibles;
- non-mental health-related training;
- staff salaries for non-mental health-related positions; and
- indirect costs of regular school operations (e.g., existing overhead expenses).

How should the funds be coded?

Recipients of Get Kids Ahead (GKA) dollars (districts and independent charter schools) should code the funds as source 780 revenue. In addition, school districts must track and record all expenditures made using GKA award dollars, using the method that works best for your local systems. Possible methods include: (a) manual recording of the revenues and expenditures with documentation available to support the eligible expenditures; or (b) assigning local project/program tags within your financial software with documentation available to support the eligible expenditures. The current WISEdata Finance system is set up to allow local project codes to be assigned by LEAs to non-DPI grants. Per federal regulations, recipients of federal grants may be audited to ensure compliance with grant terms and conditions.

Where can I find additional information about building a CSMHS?

[DPI's CSMHS Webpage](#) provides links to the WI School Mental Health Framework, along with a webinar and accompanying resources.