

Revenues Generated for School Districts by School Social Work Services

For more information from the School Social Work Practice Guide visit:
<https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/pupil-services/school-social-work/contents>

School social work services generate a variety of revenues for school districts above and beyond the state-imposed revenue caps, which substantially offset the local financial costs to the school district. These revenues include:

- State categorical aid that reduces the local costs of school social work services,
- Additional funds generated by school social workers ensuring all enrolled students are eligible to be claimed for state aid purposes,
- Medicaid funds for school-based services provided by school social workers to income-eligible students,
- Additional funds generated by school social workers ensuring income-eligible students are accessing free and reduced school meals, and
- Grants written and managed by school social workers to provide supplemental services and programs.

Because of these revenues, the fiscal cost of additional or increased school social work services to a local school district budget is significantly less than the associated salary and fringe costs. Likewise, the fiscal savings of eliminating or decreasing school social work services to a local school district is significantly less than the associated salary and fringe costs.

State Special Education Categorical Aid

School districts complete the Special Education Fiscal Report (PI 1505-SE) twice annually; the budget report is due November 15th for the current year and the claim report is due September 15th for the previous year. The amount of funding for categorical aid available is determined by the Wisconsin Legislature. The percentage of categorical aid a school district receives is dependent upon the total claims received by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) from all school districts for any given school year.

School districts may claim 59 percent of salary and fringe costs for school social work services for special education categorical aid reimbursement. Because the amount of funds for categorical aid appropriated by the Wisconsin Legislature has historically been less than what school districts are eligible for, the actual reimbursement is pro-rated. For example, if categorical aid reimbursement is pro-rated at 30 percent of all eligible costs, and a school district submits a claim for 59 percent of \$70,000 in salary and fringe costs for a school social worker, the school district would receive approximately \$12,390 in additional aid from the state for this position.

General State Aids

General state aids and state-imposed revenue caps are tied directly to the number of students enrolled in a school district. Specifically, a school district is allowed to raise a fixed amount of

revenue (a combination of state aid and local property taxes) for each student enrolled. The more students enrolled in a school district, the more money the school district is allowed to raise and spend. School districts count the number of students in school on or around two dates each year (i.e., third Friday in September and the second Friday in January) to determine how many students are enrolled for the purposes of determining their spending limits.

All school districts have some students whose attendance is poor. Typically, these are some of the students that school social workers target for services. To the extent that a school social worker ensures these students are in school and eligible to be counted for state aid, the school social worker has generated additional revenue for the school district it may not have otherwise received. For example, if a school social worker ensures three poorly attending students can be counted for the third Friday in September and two poorly attending students can be counted for the second Friday in January and the school district receives \$6,000/student annually in state aid, the school social worker has generated \$15,000 in additional revenue for the school district.

Medicaid for School-Based Services

Many school districts now receive additional funds through Medicaid for services, including school social work services, provided to income-eligible students. Generally, services are documented within a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Most school districts taking advantage of this funding source contract with an outside agency to manage the claims. How much money is generated through this avenue is dependent upon the number of income-eligible students receiving services and the level of services provided. Information about the Wisconsin Medicaid School-Based Services Benefit can be found at <https://www.forwardhealth.wi.gov/WIPortal/Default.aspx>. Click on "Provider-specific Resources" under "Providers." Then scroll down to "School Based Services."

School Meals

Some income-eligible families may not be enrolled for free or reduced school meals and may fall behind in their payments to the school. By identifying these families and helping them to enroll in this program, the school social worker has generated additional revenues for the school district that it may not have been able to otherwise recover.

Grants

Some school social workers successfully write and manage grants administered through the Department of Public Instruction and other organizations. These grants fund programs and services that the school district would not otherwise be able to provide.