

FUNDING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS



thrive
Alliance Group



ABOUT THRIVE ALLIANCE GROUP

Thrive Alliance Group is a nationally-recognized expert in fostering K–12 mental wellness. Thrive provides a continuum of services to support schools, students, and staff throughout the journey toward mental wellness and school success, including:

- **Professional Development** courses to educate your staff to recognize common mental health issues
- **Coaching, Training and Certification** for staff members to build confidence and competence in mental health support and become Certified School Mental Wellness Specialists™
- **On-Site Services** that bring mental health experts into schools for triage, counseling, work with families, and support for staff
- **Mental Wellness Accreditation™** to track, measure and validate a district or school's sustained commitment to prioritizing mental wellness



[LEARN MORE ABOUT
THRIVE'S MENTAL WELLNESS
SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS](#)



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THE GROWING NEED... AND THE GROWING COST

If your school district has been experiencing a spike in cases of anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues among students, you're not alone. Not only has this problem spread across every community, but it's affecting children at younger ages — as early as kindergarten.

The outcomes include rising rates of school refusal and disciplinary action along with lower academic achievement and graduation rates. In the worst cases, mental illness can lead to suicide and violent acts that put the entire school population at risk.



Disrupted learning due to the pandemic has caused another spike in mental health issues for students and even for school staff.

Chances are, you are painfully aware of the impact mental health issues have on student achievement, your school's performance, and your district budget. Students struggling with emotional and behavioral problems simply cannot access the full benefit of their education without help. Without the necessary support in place, you're forced to send students out-of-district, which comes with a big hit to your budget: averaging upwards of \$100,000 per student plus the cost of transportation.





The Decision You Face

Here's what we are seeing: district leaders are increasingly concerned about what's happening, and they are eager to provide school-based solutions that help students to succeed. This strategy serves another critical need: helping to reduce the cost of out-of-district placements.

The problem is, educators (even social workers and school psychologists) may not have the training and experience to effectively support students with mental illness. Yet bringing in expert resources costs money. And, funding is tight. You might assume you'll have to cut other programs to free up funding for a mental health support program. But that might not be a popular decision.

The Good News

1. School-based mental health support programs allow schools to keep some students in-district.

Keeping students in-district who would otherwise be placed in therapeutic schools reduces the cost of out-of-district tuition and transportation. In most cases, that savings can easily pay for the cost of the mental health support program, which serves many more children and elevates the performance of the entire school.

2. Funding is available for mental health support programs if you know where to look.

You don't have to sacrifice other programs to provide support for student mental health.

For many years, Thrive has been helping school districts explore funding options for student mental health programs. In our experience, schools can usually find money that's not fully utilized and/or funding sources that you can reallocate for different purposes. The best way to start is by researching each of the sources listed here to learn how much you have available, how much has been obligated, and how much has been spent.

In this guide, we'll show you how you can take advantage of some funding sources you're already familiar with to pay for student mental health programs. And we'll share some funding sources you may not know about, including new government funding for education.

State and Federal Funding Sources

Chances are, your district is already receiving funding under some of the following sources. The question is, are you fully utilizing every aspect of each funding source? Many districts overlook ways to qualify for additional funds for special education programs (including mental health support services).





IDEA PART B

IDEA funds are used to help meet the needs of students with disabilities. Schools often use IDEA funding to cover the cost of placing students with emotional and behavioral problems in out-of-district therapeutic schools.

Adding in-district mental health support resources can reduce the need for these out-of-district placements. With clinical experts counseling students as well as working with their parents and teachers, students are able to stay in their public school and be successful. Returning students to the district can free up quite a bit of your IDEA funding.

Here's what you might not know: you can use the same IDEA funds to pay for an in-district support program. Even if your IDEA funding has already been approved for the school year, you can file an Amendment to reallocate your funds.

THRIVE PROGRAMS THAT QUALIFY FOR THESE FUNDS:

- On-Site Services For Students and Families

SEMI

The Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) program provides funding to reimburse public school districts for a portion of the costs of school-based special education services.

Mental health support services, such as assessments and psychological counseling, are reimbursable expenses under SEMI. So, when you have a licensed school-based clinician counseling a typical caseload of students every week, a portion of that expense can be recovered through SEMI funding. That alone can add up to over \$5,000 in qualifying reimbursable costs, not including reimbursement for other services the clinician provides (such as participation in IEP assessments).

How to Apply: Most schools are already getting SEMI funds for IEP assessments, but there are additional claims you can make for mental health related services. You'll need to work with your district's SEMI coordinator to submit the documentation needed to claim reimbursement for these services.



THRIVE PROGRAMS THAT QUALIFY FOR THESE FUNDS:

- On-Site Services For Students and Families





EXTRAORDINARY AID

Extraordinary Aid helps school districts cover the costs of supporting individual students who need a more intensive level of services from the district. That can include students with behavioral and emotional problems who need individual and small-setting support.

When the cost of that support exceeds a given threshold (currently, about \$40,000 per year), the district can receive compensation through this fund. The thresholds are published by the state and may change each year.

You can include mental health services when calculating the costs of supporting individual students. Doing so can bring the total costs for one or more students above the threshold and allow your school to receive Extraordinary Aid funds for those students.

THRIVE PROGRAMS
THAT QUALIFY FOR
THESE FUNDS:

- **On-Site Services For Students and Families**

Extraordinary Aid helps school districts cover the costs of supporting individual students who need a more intensive level of services from the district.





TITLE I

Title I federal funds are intended to support schools with high concentrations of students from low-income families. For qualifying districts, these funds help to provide a high-quality education that will enable all children to meet the state academic performance standards.

Did you know that Title I funds can be used to pay for mental health support services?

Here's why:

Research has shown that the trauma associated with financial adversity has an impact on student academic achievement. By implementing a consistent mental health support program, school districts can help students overcome the effects of trauma and improve their school performance. In fact, when schools implement mental health support programs, overall student achievement can increase dramatically.



Mental health services eligible for Title I funding include:

- Counseling, school-based mental health programs, mentoring services, and other strategies to improve students' nonacademic skills
- Positive behavior interventions and supports
- Parent Involvement programs requirements are completed through the family counseling component of services

Consultants must be selected based on demonstrated competence, qualifications, and experience beyond those that may be rendered by school employees.

THRIVE PROGRAMS THAT QUALIFY FOR THESE FUNDS:

- **On-Site Services For Students and Families**



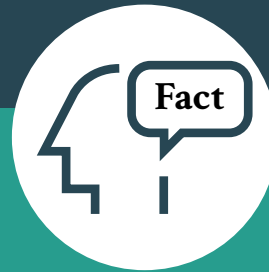


Myths vs. Facts

About Title and IDEA Funds



Myth:
Title I funds may be used only for instruction.

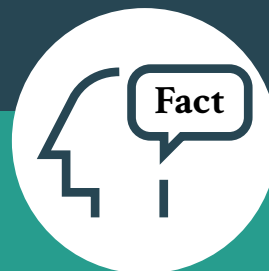


Title I funds may be used for activities and strategies designed to raise achievement by:

- Improving attendance
- Improving school climate
- Counteracting bullying
- Providing counseling, mentoring school based mental health programs



Myth:
IDEA and Title I funds are manually exclusive, and you can't consolidate funds from both sources in a school-wide program.



A school-wide program may consolidate funds received under Title I and Part B of the IDEA.

To ensure IDEA Part B, the program must comply with all other requirements of IDEA Part B.



TITLE II

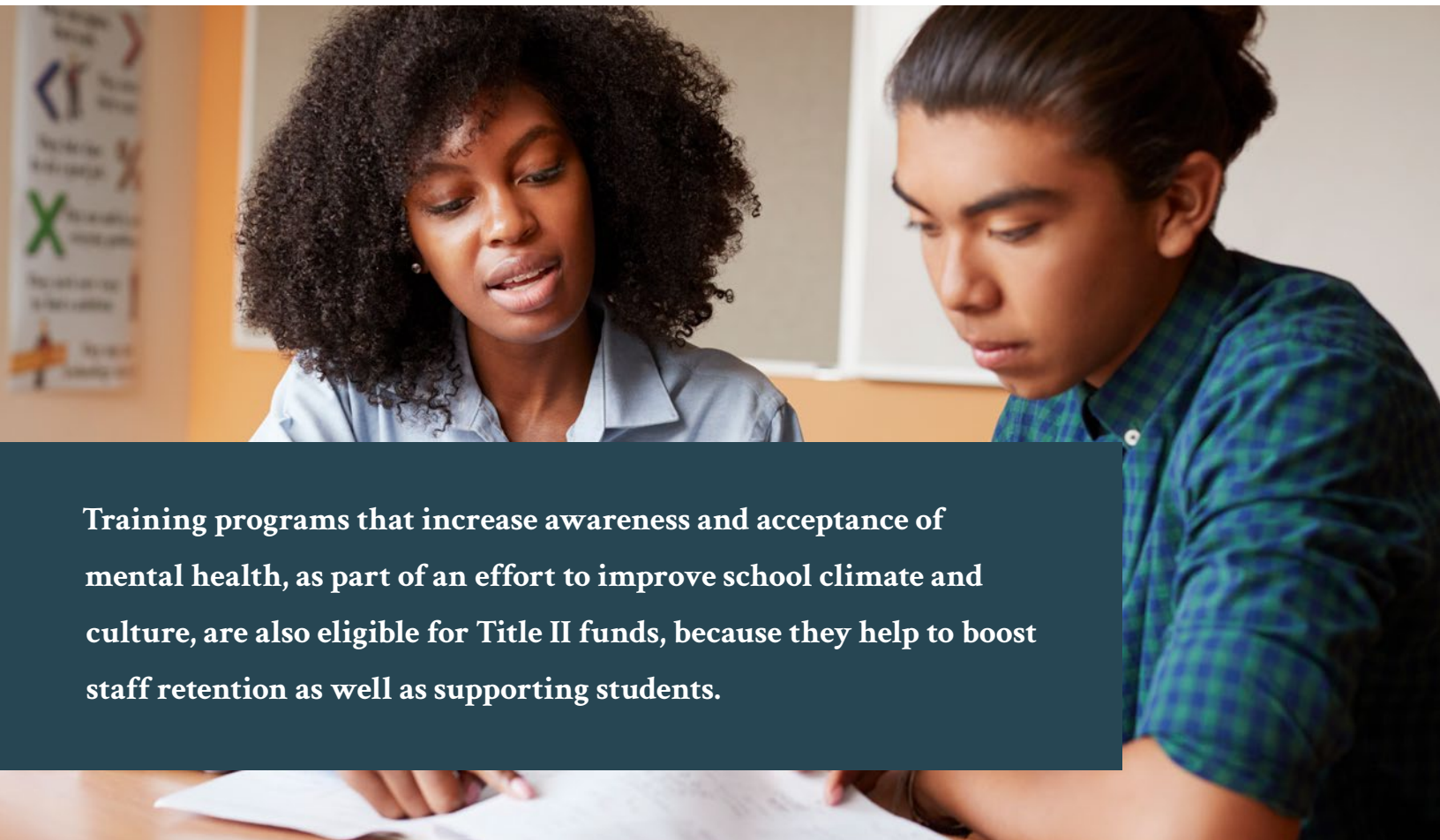
Title II funding supports learning for educators and school leaders at all levels. The program is intended to increase student achievement by elevating the quality of school staff through training, recruitment, and retention strategies.

Title II funds Professional Development for principals, teachers, support staff, paraprofessionals, and even parents and caregivers. School programs that provide training about mental health topics (such as behavior management, school refusal and early intervention strategies) can qualify for these funds because this expertise helps educators better support student needs and improve outcomes.

Training programs that increase awareness and acceptance of mental health, as part of an effort to improve school climate and culture, are also eligible for Title II funds, because they help to boost staff retention as well as supporting students.

THRIVE PROGRAMS THAT QUALIFY FOR THESE FUNDS:

- **Professional Development**
- **School Mental Health Coaching, Training, and Certification**



Training programs that increase awareness and acceptance of mental health, as part of an effort to improve school climate and culture, are also eligible for Title II funds, because they help to boost staff retention as well as supporting students.





TITLE IV

Title IV funding promotes 21st century community learning, authorizing a wide range of programs. One of the programs under Title IV is The Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant (SSAE), designed to improve access to a well-rounded educational experience for all students. Public schools can take advantage of these grants to provide enriched curriculum including technology, arts, physical education, and health.

The SSAE program is also intended to improve conditions for student learning. Student mental health support programs help to achieve this goal, because mental health conditions interfere with learning. When students receive the support they need, they are more likely to succeed academically and less likely to use drugs or engage in other dangerous behavior.

THRIVE PROGRAMS THAT QUALIFY FOR THESE FUNDS:

- **Professional Development**
- **School Mental Health Coaching, Training, and Certification**
- **On-Site Services For Students and Families**

Allocating Title IV Funds

SCHOOL ALLOCATION
> \$30,000

Spend 20% on well-rounded education: STEM, art, music, PE

Spend 20% on safe schools: healthy students, violence prevention, increasing attendance, school counselors, mental health

Spend 60% on technology or any combination of all three categories

SCHOOL ALLOCATION
< \$30,000

Spend funds in at least one of the above categories



TITLE V

Intended for small rural communities that need more support than larger school districts, Title V funding supports innovation and educational improvement while increasing academic achievement and the quality of education for all students. Programs that provide health services and community involvement can qualify for funding under Title V.

Here's how school-based mental health support services qualify for Title V funds:

- It's an innovative program that improves the educational environment.
- It provides health services to students suffering from mental health issues.
- When the program includes training and family intervention, it meets the requirement for community involvement.

THRIVE PROGRAMS
THAT QUALIFY FOR
THESE FUNDS:

- **On-Site Services for Students and Families**





THE PROCESS FOR GETTING TITLE GRANTS

To pay for a school-wide mental health support program using Title I, II, IV, or V funds, you'll need to develop the following:

A Comprehensive Needs Assessment

If your school is currently receiving some Title funds, you already have a needs assessment. If it includes safety or social and emotional learning, then you can use it to apply for funding for mental health support. However, you may find that your assessment addresses only attendance, grades, and discipline. In that case, you may need to work with your administrative team to revise your needs assessment to include mental health needs.

A Comprehensive School-Wide Plan

Develop a plan to provide appropriate individualized mental health supports to students who are struggling due to mental health issues. This will include special education students with learning disabilities, but can also include general education students who have experienced trauma, or are struggling with behavioral and emotional issues such as school refusal.

An Annual Evaluation Plan

Develop a plan to assess the success of your plan in meeting the needs of your students.

Not sure what a school-based mental health support plan should look like, or how to evaluate the outcome?

HERE'S A GUIDE THAT CAN HELP:

Proactive Mental Wellness in School Districts

Which Funds To Use For Thrive Service

THRIVE SERVICES	FUNDING SOURCES
Onsite Student and Family Services	Title I, Title IV, IDEA PART B, SEMI, Extraordinary Aid
Coaching & Certification	Title II, Title IV
Professional Development	Title II, Title IV



MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT FUNDING?

Contact us for a free consultation and to get personalized advice about how to work through your district's specific needs and challenges.

CONTACT US

Thrive's education funding experts work with you to uncover federal, state, and local funding that you can use to pay for our services. We clarify the intents and nuances of various funding sources and show you how to make the best use of all the sources available to you.





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