

Federal Programs and Support for School Counselors

School districts and schools may leverage a number of programs to provide support for school counselors. Below is a listing of the major federal programs through the U.S. Department of Education with available funds. You will find links to the relevant program websites and a brief description of how you might use funds under each program.

Please be aware that the use of funds to support school counselors must meet the applicable requirements of each program. For example, the use of funds must be consistent with allowable costs. In addition, a number of programs contain a requirement that federal funds be used only to supplement, and not supplant, funds from non-federal sources that would, in the absence of the federal funds, be available for particular activities.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS

	http://www2.ed.gov/programs/elseccounseling/index.html
Description	The Elementary and Secondary School Counseling program provides competitive grants to enable school districts and schools to establish or expand school counseling programs. It permits districts and schools to use grant funds for the counseling of elementary and secondary students on postsecondary topics. This includes the high school courses students need to take in order to prepare for college, as well as on academic and career planning. Professional development for school counselors is generally an allowable use of program funds.

FAFSA COMPLETION INITIATIVE

Link	http://www.ed.gov/blog/2014/03/president-obama-announces-new-fafsa-completion-initiative/
Description	March 2014 was the launch of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Completion Initiative. The goal is to increase the number of students who complete their applications with the result of more students who are able to fulfill their college and career aspirations. Student aid is a critical gatekeeper on the road to college and other postsecondary opportunities. School counselors are critical to the success of this initiative. To contribute to the initiative's success, the U.S. Dept. of Education has released a suite of resources to support school counselors in their work of driving FAFSA completion. Additionally, the Financial Aid Toolkit (available at: http://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/tk/) offers help to counselors in understanding the basics of federal student aid. It also provides tips on hosting events (along with sample PowerPoint presentations), suggested messages for social media and e-mail outreach, and help in finding other training opportunities.

IMPROVING BASIC PROGRAMS OPERATED BY LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES (TITLE I, PART A)

Link	http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/index.html
Description	<p>The Title I, Part A program focuses on improving the academic achievement of low-achieving students in schools with a high percentage of children in low-income families. There are two types of Title I programs: schoolwide programs and targeted assistance programs. How Title I, Part A funds may be used depends on the type of program.</p> <p><i>Title I Schoolwide Programs:</i> A schoolwide program must include schoolwide reform strategies that, among other requirements, address the needs of all children in the school, but particularly the needs of low-achieving children. The school's comprehensive needs assessment and schoolwide plan define these needs. The schoolwide plan may outline when schools need college and career awareness and preparation, college and career guidance or professional development for school counselors. This means that the plan may use Title I funds to support such activities.</p> <p><i>Title I Targeted Assistance Programs:</i> A Title I school operating a targeted assistance program may use its Title I funds for professional development for staff that relates to the needs of participating Title I students. Therefore, a school using Title I, Part A funds to operate a targeted assistance program may use part of its funding to support professional development for school counselors. The professional development must focus on improving the college and career readiness of Title I participating students. Otherwise, these services are not available for all students.</p> <p>Please refer to the non-regulatory guidance on the use of Title I, Part A funds (available at: http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/titlei-reform.pdf) for additional information on the particular allowable use of Title I, Part A funds.</p>

IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY STATE GRANTS PROGRAM (ESEA TITLE II, PART A)

Link	http://www2.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/index.html
Description	<p>The purpose of the Title II, Part A program is to increase academic achievement by improving teacher and principal quality. The funds also may support pupil services personnel (<i>including</i> school counselors) in very specific circumstances.</p> <p><i>Provisions related to school districts and schools:</i> May use Title II, Part A funds to develop and implement “mechanisms to assist schools in effectively recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers, principals, and pupil services personnel.”</p>

This provision includes activities designed to recruit and retain school counselors. Title II, Part A funds provide professional development activities as a recruitment and retention strategy for highly qualified teachers and principals. School counselors also may participate. These activities must focus on “effective instructional strategies, methods and skills, and use of challenging state academic content standards and student academic achievement standards and state assessments.”

However, there are two requirements for a district or school to use these funds for pupil services personnel. First, 100 percent of the teachers of core academic subject classes are highly qualified. Second, the mechanisms to recruit and retain pupil services personnel are consistent with those to help schools effectively recruit and retain highly qualified teachers and principals. Title II, Part A funds may go for recruitment efforts (for example, job fairs) that focus on pupil services personnel, but may not go to provide financial or other personal incentives to these personnel to accept a position.

- Districts and schools may use Title II, Part A funds to carry out programs and activities designed to improve the quality of the teacher force and the quality of principals and superintendents. Therefore, they may use Title II, Part A funds to fund school counselor-led professional development activities for teachers, principals and superintendents. These activities must have a focus, for example, on helping the audience make sure that all students achieve academically and are college- and career-ready.
- Districts and schools may use Title II, Part A funds to provide training in how to teach and address the needs of students with different learning styles. In particular, the needs of students with disabilities, students with special learning needs and English learners. This also includes training in methods to improve student behavior in the classroom and to identify early interventions to help students. Capable school counselors could provide such training.

Note: Title II, Part A permits districts and schools to provide financial and other incentives to hire highly qualified teachers. This provision does not extend to pupil services personnel.

MCKINNEY-VENTO EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM

Links	http://www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless/index.html
Description	<p>Title VII, Subtitle B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act authorizes the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program. This program addresses the challenges that homeless children and youth face in enrolling, attending and succeeding in school. A district or school receiving a subgrant may use the funds to support counseling services for homeless students. These services expand or improve services that are part of the regular educational program.</p> <p>For example, the McKinney-Vento Act specifically authorizes the use of program funds for pupil services. This may include counseling for homeless students related to their academic, social-emotional, and college- and career-readiness needs. In addition, it allows the use of funds for professional development and other activities for educators and pupil services personnel, including counselors. The goal is to increase understanding about the needs and rights of homeless children and youth. Additional information regarding the homeless student program is here.</p> <p>http://www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless/legislation.html</p>

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTHS WHO ARE NEGLECTED, DELINQUENT OR AT RISK

Links	http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleipartd/index.html
Description	<p>The Prevention and Intervention Programs for the Education of Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent or At-Risk are under Title I, Part D of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. There are two programs: the state agency program (Subpart 1) and the district or school program (Subpart 2). The programs have three goals. The first goal is to improve educational services for neglected or delinquent children and youth so that they have the opportunity to meet the same challenging state academic content and achievement standards that all children in the state are expected to meet. The second goal is to provide services needed to make a successful transition from institutionalization to further schooling or employment. And the third goal is to prevent at-risk youth from dropping out of school.</p> <p>A state agency receiving a subgrant must reserve 15 to 30 percent of grant funds for transition services to help children and youth who are neglected re-enter school successfully or find employment after they leave a state-operated institution. These transition services may include counseling services as well as college program placement services. In addition, services can include information and assistance in obtaining available student financial aid and job placement services. More generally, the state may use Subgrant I funds to hire additional educational staff, including counselors.</p> <p>The Subpart 2 authorizes the state to make subgrants to districts and schools with locally operated residential institutions for neglected or delinquent children or youth within their boundaries. A district or school receiving a Subpart 2 subgrant may use grant funds for counseling, including mental health counseling, drug and alcohol counseling and career counseling. Additionally, counseling includes assisting eligible at-risk children and youth in securing student loans or grants for postsecondary education.</p> <p>Additional information regarding Title I, Part D is here.</p> <p>http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleipartd/legislation.html</p>

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

Link	http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html
Description	<p>School Improvement Grants provide support to turn around the lowest-achieving schools in Ohio. States must award their School Improvement Grant funds directly to districts and schools with the greatest needs for the funds. They also must show a strong commitment to substantially improving students' achievement. This is accomplished by implementing rigorous intervention models in their persistently lowest achieving Title I schools, as well as secondary schools that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds.</p> <p>The requirement for participating schools is to implement one of four school intervention models: (1) the "turnaround" model; (2) the "restart" model; (3) school closure; and (4) the "transformation" model. A school implementing the transformation or turnaround model must provide ongoing high-quality, job-embedded professional development that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program. The school staff must help design the program to ensure that they are able to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies. Under the restart model, professional development is an allowable activity. Thus, schools may use school improvement funds for professional development of school counselors if the school is implementing one of these three school intervention models.</p> <p>School improvement funds can support a myriad of activities as part of a comprehensive approach to turning around a school. It is possible that those activities could include hiring school counselors or expanding school counseling resources. Any activity must directly relate to the full and effective implementation of the selected model consistent with the district's or school's approved school improvement grant application. Additionally, the activity must address the needs identified in the needs assessment required by the final requirements of the school improvement grant and advance the overall goal of improving student academic achievement in the school.</p> <p>For more information, see questions 1-30 in the School Improvement Grant guidance at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/sigguidance03012012.doc. The final requirements, as published in the <i>Federal Register</i> at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/2010-27313.pdf, provide additional information regarding a particular use of school improvement grant funds.</p>

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS PROGRAM (TITLE IV, PART B)

Link	http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html
Description	<p>This program supports the creation of 21st Century Community Learning Centers for the academic enrichment of children who attend low-performing schools in high poverty communities. In Ohio, the program is focused on improving reading and activities that occur during, before and after the school day, as well as in summer. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers funds may support a variety of counseling programs, including school counseling staff in their roles of after-school college and career prep advisors or other roles supporting academic or enrichment activities.</p>