
Wisconsin Legislative Council

ACT MEMO



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2023 Wisconsin Act 72 [2023 Senate Bill 267]

Grants to Recovery High Schools

2023 Wisconsin Act 72 creates a program to provide grants to recovery high schools. A recovery high school is a public, private, or tribal high school specifically designed for students in recovery from a substance use disorder. A recovery high school must either award high school credits that count towards a high school diploma awarded by the school or high school credits that will transfer and count towards a high school diploma awarded by a school district.

OPERATIONAL GRANTS

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) annually must award an operational grant to eligible recovery high schools that apply for a grant. The act enumerates seven permissible uses for the grant funds: (1) to employ school staff; (2) to rent, or otherwise secure, a physical location for the school; (3) to purchase drug testing supplies; (4) to develop and implement an after-school and weekend sober activity program; (5) to transport students; (6) to fund legal and accounting services; and (7) to fund general administrative costs.

School Eligibility

The act establishes the following eligibility provisions for an operational grant:

- The recovery high school is governed by a governing board.
- The recovery high school employs an individual who is responsible for the daily operations of the recovery high school.
- The recovery high school demonstrates that its model is capable of supporting its anticipated enrollment.
- If the recovery high school is a private school, the private school is a nonprofit organization.
- The recovery high school requires prospective students to apply to the recovery high school and requires for eligibility for enrollment that the student: (1) desires to be sober; (2) commits to attend the recovery high school daily; (3) consents to weekly drug testing; and (4) agrees to a 30-day probationary period and that the student's enrollment may be terminated at the end of the probationary period for certain listed reasons.
- The recovery high school provides evidence that it has at least one other source of funding to support its operations.
- The recovery high school provides evidence-based programming to students. Under the act, evidence-based programming includes evidence-based peer-to-peer suicide prevention programming, smaller class sizes, and self-care planning.

Reporting Requirement

An operational grant recipient must report to DPI in a manner that does not identify a student enrolled in the recovery high school at least all of the following information:

- Independent financial audit of the recovery high school.
- Number of prospective students who applied to attend the recovery high school.
- Number of students enrolled in the recovery high school during the school year.
- Demographic information about students enrolled in the recovery high school, including age, gender, race, ethnicity, and school district of residence.
- As of the first day of each month that the recovery high school is in operation for the attendance of students, number of students enrolled in the recovery high school and the staff-to-student ratio.
- Number of students who graduated from the recovery high school.
- Information about substance use by students enrolled in the recovery high school, including a list of the substances for which enrolled students are in recovery, the relapse rate for students enrolled in the recovery high school, and the number of positive drug tests and the drugs identified by those tests.
- Information about the mental health of students enrolled in the recovery high school, including the number of enrolled students who receive mental health services from the recovery high school for something other than a substance use disorder and a list of mental health disorders for which enrolled students receive services from the recovery high school.
- Information on academic, behavioral, and substance use recovery progress and success among students enrolled in the recovery high school.
- Name of each staff member employed by the recovery high school and any professional credential held by the staff member.
- How operational grant funding was used to support the operations of the recovery high school.

Grant Amounts and Administration

An applicant for an operational grant must include in its application the grant amount requested and a proposed budget for how it will use the grant funds in the following school year. If DPI does not award an applicant the full amount requested in an application, DPI must provide an explanation to the applicant for the reduced grant award.

If a recovery high school closes during a school year for which it receives an operational grant, the school must return any unused grant funds to DPI.

PLANNING GRANTS

Under 2023 Wisconsin Act 72, DPI must award up to four planning grants in each school year to nonprofit organizations and public, private, and tribal schools that intend to establish a recovery high school.¹

¹ In a school year where DPI determines that three or more recovery high schools are operating in Wisconsin, DPI may not award any planning grants.

A recipient of a planning grant may use the grant funds for any of the following:

- Hiring a consultant for planning the recovery high school.
- General program planning for the recovery high school.
- Curriculum and lesson planning for the recovery high school.
- Mental health services planning for the recovery high school.
- Any other costs incurred to develop a final plan for establishing a recovery high school.

A planning grant recipient must submit a report to DPI. The report must include an explanation of how the recipient used the planning grant and the status of the grant recipient's plan to establish a recovery high school. The status information may include a final plan for establishing a recovery high school or an explanation of why the recipient no longer intends to establish a recovery high school.

A planning grant applicant must include as part of its application to DPI the grant amount requested and a proposed budget for how it will use the funds in the following school year. If DPI does not award an applicant the full amount the applicant requested, DPI must provide the applicant with an explanation. Grant recipients must return any unused funds to DPI.

FUNDING OF PROGRAMS

2023 Wisconsin Act 72 requires DPI to request that the Joint Committee on Finance provide \$500,000 in each year of the fiscal biennium in supplemental funding. The act requires DPI to allocate a portion of the supplemental funding appropriation for planning grants depending on how many recovery high schools DPI determines are operating in Wisconsin in a given school year.

Specifically, in any school year that DPI determines there are fewer than three recovery high schools operating in Wisconsin, DPI must allocate \$300,000 for planning grants. In the school year beginning after DPI first determines that at least three recovery schools are operating in Wisconsin and in each school year thereafter, if DPI determines that fewer than three recovery high schools are operating in Wisconsin for that school year, DPI must allocate \$100,000 for planning grants.

Effective date: December 8, 2023

For a full history of the bill, visit the Legislature's [bill history page](#).

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