



## MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE STUDENT SUPPORT NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY [NON-COMPETITIVE]

### **Description:**

The Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board (WCCMHB) seeks enrollment from public and non-profit higher educational institutions for the Mental Health Workforce Student Support program. The Mental Health Workforce Student Support program intends to provide financial assistance to students, wishing to enter into the mental health or substance use workforce, who are enrolled in eligible programs, through their respective qualified educational institution.

Workforce has been a longstanding, persistent issue nationwide, particularly in the behavioral health field. WCCMHB recognizes that Winnebago County, IL, is not an exception. Strategic Plan 2.0 (SP2.0) identified 'Workforce Development' within Sub-Goal 2: Systems Coordination, as "develop and retain an informed and robust mental health workforce." Strategy A for this Objective is "develop a career pathway for entrance into the social work field." Strategy C is "develop a career pathway for entrance into medication prescribing licensures." Strategy D is "Support retention of mental health workforce in Winnebago County." As such, the Mental Health Workforce Student Support program is developed with the intention of reducing barriers to higher education, ensuring local students have the financial resources needed to pursue pathways into the mental health and substance use field.

### **Funding Availability:**

Up to \$500,000 is available for total funding, to be disbursed over the course of the 2026-2027 Academic Year. Organization-specific spending limits will be addressed in funding agreements based on the total number of participating organizations. Eligible organizations may request funds based on the following scale, not to exceed the total amount of funding available:

- Bachelors of Social Work (BSW): up to \$5,000.00 per semester for tuition
- Masters of Social Work (MSW): up to \$10,000.00 per semester for tuition
- Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP): up to \$10,000.00 per semester for tuition

For each semester requested, an additional \$1,000.00 may be requested to be allocated to wraparound supports, not to exceed the total amount of funding available. Wraparound supports are inclusive of the following types of costs:

- Licensure exams
- Required textbooks
- Transportation assistance



[rplanning.org/community-impact/wccmhb](http://rplanning.org/community-impact/wccmhb) | [infoementalhealth.wincoil.gov](http://infoementalhealth.wincoil.gov) | [bit.ly/m/WCCMHB](https://bit.ly/m/WCCMHB)



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- Program recommended equipment (e.g. laptop computer)

### **General Funding Information:**

The WCCMHB will allocate funding based on eligible student enrollees in the programs requesting money. All students must be Winnebago County residents, as confirmed by enrolled educational institutions through their enrollment process, with demonstrated intent to stay and practice in Winnebago County for three years after graduation. Students must agree to completing an annual follow-up survey administered by WCCMHB and distributed by participating education institutions, regarding their employment status and location for a period of three years post-graduation.

Educational institutions should accept all other available non-loan based financial aid and awarded scholarships for eligible students prior to awarding WCCMHB funds. Students are only eligible for WCCMHB funds up to the cost of their attendance per each semester, less revenue received from other funding sources (e.g. financial aid, scholarships). Students should not be granted more than \$40,000 or granted money for more than four years, whichever comes first.

Funding for Fall Semester 2026 will be distributed based on enrollment on or before: August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Funding for Spring Semester 2027 will be distributed based on enrollment on or before: December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026

Funding for Summer Semester 2027 will be distributed based on enrollment on or before: May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2027

### **Who May Apply:**

- Public and non-profit educational institutions providing higher education degrees

In order to be eligible for Mental Health Workforce Student Support funding, organizations are required to:

1. Adhere to all requirements as listed in the WCCMHB Funding Policy;
2. Offer a higher education program that results in a degree in one of the following areas:
  - Social Work (Bachelor of Social Work or Master of Social Work)
  - Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)
3. Meet the following criteria:
  - Educational institution must have a physical campus located in Winnebago County (degree programs may be offered in-person in Winnebago County, online, or hybrid)
  - Educational institution must enroll current Winnebago County, IL residents

All organizations must submit a recent financial audit or provide rationale if no audit was completed.

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Through the review process, all organizations must demonstrate financial sustainability, accountability, reliability, stability, and appropriate service of value to the persons to be served, all as determined by the WCCMHB.

### **Submission and Timeline Details:**

The WCCMHB is accepting student support enrollment requests via emailing [info@mentalhealth.wincoil.gov](mailto:info@mentalhealth.wincoil.gov). Requests will be accepted beginning May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026 and will remain open until May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026. All requests are due at 5pm CT the day of the deadline.

Requests received via email must have the following attachments:

- Evidence of public or non-profit status
- Recent financial audit
- Proof of physical campus location in Winnebago County, IL
- Proof of academic calendar year course offering for eligible degree program

### **Process and Criteria:**

Eligible programs who meet the criteria will be enrolled contingent upon execution of funding agreements. Ineligible programs will be notified by email and will be provided a one-week period to provide additional evidence regarding eligibility requirements. Failure to provide sufficient evidence of eligibility following the one-week period will result in non-enrollment for the current program year.