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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wisconsin Department of Justice Blocks Federal Cuts to School Mental Health Grants

MADISON, Wis. — A U.S. District Court judge granted a [temporary restraining order](#) last week that blocks the U.S. Department of Education from unlawfully terminating congressionally approved school-based mental health grants.

The order in the case joined by the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) and a coalition of 14 state attorneys general came just days before the Department of Education would have begun terminating several grants designed to provide critical mental health services to Wisconsin public school students at the end of July. Terminating the grants would have resulted in the projected loss of \$12.5 million to the University of Wisconsin and Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

“This ruling keeps this important funding in place for now,” said AG Kaul. “We will continue fighting back against the Trump administration’s attack on funding that supports mental health services for students.”

In the wake of devastating school shootings, members of Congress from both parties came together to appropriate \$1 billion to permanently bring 14,000 mental health professionals into U.S. schools most in need, especially in low-income and rural communities. The programs have been an incredible success. In their first year, the programs provided mental and behavioral health services to nearly 775,000 elementary and secondary students nationwide. Sampled projects showed real results: a 50% reduction in suicide risk at high-need schools, decreases in absenteeism and behavioral issues, and increases in positive student-staff engagement.

But over the past 15 months, the Department of Education has interfered with these goals by adding funding uncertainty and roadblocks that make it harder for grantees in Wisconsin and the other coalition states to plan and perform their grant projects. In April 2025, the department notified these grantees that their grants would be discontinued for allegedly conflicting with the Trump administration's new priorities. The department later revealed the grants had been targeted for their perceived support for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Wisconsin has gone to court repeatedly to fight for these mental health grants and has won six favorable rulings against the administration so far. In July 2025, Wisconsin DOJ joined the coalition in [filing a lawsuit](#) in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington against the department over the discontinuation of the grants. Following a [preliminary injunction](#) in October 2025, the coalition secured an order in December declaring the department's discontinuations were unlawful and requiring it to make new continuation decisions. The court also issued a permanent injunction that prohibited the department from implementing the discontinuations "through any means."

The department claimed it planned to review the grants at the six-month mark and then make additional funding determinations. But instead, the department targeted the grants protected by the original injunction and announced they plan to terminate the grants altogether.

The coalition [filed a second lawsuit](#) in July 2026 to obtain a new injunction that prevents these terminations that were scheduled to begin July 31 from taking place.

The temporary restraining order prevents the department from terminating the mental health grants using new priorities or without providing statutory procedural protections such as first working with the grantee to resolve any issues. The order will expire on August 24. In the meantime, the court is expected to schedule a hearing on a preliminary injunction, which would provide longer-term protection for grantees if ordered.

Wisconsin DOJ is joined in this suit by the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Washington.