

School-based health centers (SBHCs) represent an age-appropriate, evidence-based way to deliver a variety of health care services to students and sometimes other members of the community. There are almost 300 SBHCs in California because schools have partnered with students, families, and other entities to plan and develop them. But school districts do not need to shoulder these costs alone! Community partnerships can greatly reduce the burden of funding these SBHCs and other school health services.

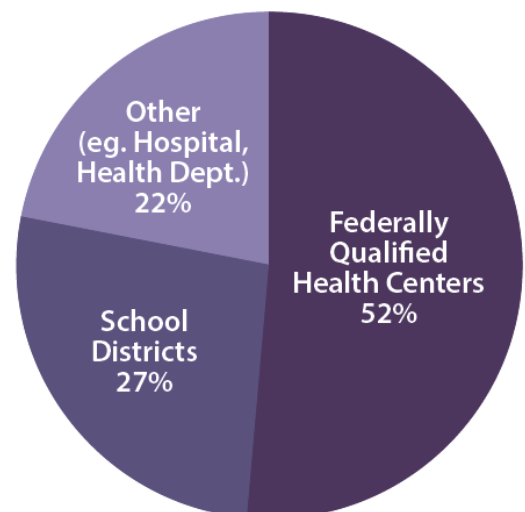
Please see www.schoolhealthcenters.org/vision-to-reality/ for more information about starting effective SBHCs.

Who Operates California's SBHCs?

California SBHCs are operated by a variety of organizations. Although the school district will always play a pivotal role, it is often not the "lead" provider, since most school districts do not have the infrastructure required to offer a full range of primary care services.

In California and nationwide, SBHCs are most commonly operated by Community Health Centers (CHCs), locally-managed non-profit health care organizations with a mission to serve low-income populations with primary care, behavioral health, dental, and other services. CHCs often receive favorable Medi-Cal rates and have ideal arrangements for after-hours and continuity of care. They may be known and trusted by families and community members.

But school districts can and do operate SBHCs themselves, as do Children's Hospitals, Local Health Departments, and other private and non-profit organizations. This depends on the strengths and interests of the local system of care, and SBHCs often bring together two or even more partners to deliver different aspects of the care under one coordinated roof.



Facilities Construction & Renovation

While some facilities require substantial capital investment, others are much more affordable. Services are housed in a variety of spaces, including:

- Converted classrooms, gyms, shop buildings, or other spaces
- On-site converted portables
- Buildings adjacent or near to the school
- Mobile vans

There are various federal, state and local funding options for SBHC facilities including:

- School modernization or construction grants
- Local bond measures with school construction project allocations

- Grants from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for new clinics or expanded services. Sometimes HRSA issues specific opportunities for SBHCs; other times eligible health centers need to compete with other types of primary care clinics. See: www.hrsa.gov/grants/index.html.
- Community benefits grants from local health plans and hospitals
- Joint-use agreements between cities and districts

Building School Health Partnerships

One of the best ways to fund school health programs is to develop or expand partnerships with local health care providers such as community clinics, county health departments, or local hospitals. Sometimes different partners can come together to deliver different services - e.g., a Children's Hospital provides primary medical care, a mental health non-profit provides counseling, and a private dentist offers periodic dental screening. Ideally these providers will bring services to a school campus at no cost. They can cover many of their costs through reimbursement from Medi-Cal and other health insurance programs and by securing grants. The school can help support this partnership by informing students and families about the services, supporting enrollment processes, underwriting space costs, making referrals, and supporting coordination whenever possible.

At the most successful SBHCs, school districts fund a staff position to coordinate SBHC services and manage other school health programs.

Funding Sources for SBHC Services

Flexible funds are provided to school districts to support student health and other services. These sources can be leveraged to directly fund SBHC operations (ex: paying for staff salaries and SBHC equipment). They can also be used to enhance partnerships with community-based providers by providing resources for non-billable services or programs and/or as part of a MOU for SBHC management and services. These funding sources include but are not limited to:

- Every Student Succeeds Act, Title I and IV
- Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)

When districts operate their own school-based health centers they can seek reimbursement for some of the health services they deliver. Reimbursement sources include:

- School-Based Medi-Cal Administrative Activities (SMAA)
- Local Educational Agency (LEA) Medi-Cal Billing
- Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) program.

In addition, some schools are successful in contracting with and receiving reimbursement from Medi-Cal managed care plans and County Mental Health Plans for services provided to eligible Medi-Cal students.

Successful Strategies for Funding School-Based Health Care

Partner With Community Providers

Riverbank Unified School District engaged Golden Valley Health Center, a local community clinic interested in establishing a school health center. Through this collaboration, the school district accessed new sources of state and federal funding to support a state of the art clinic that serves students as well as community members.

Santa Maria Joint Union High School District welcomed the non-profit Community Health Centers of the Central Coast onto Santa Maria High School's campus. This clinic bills Medi-Cal for primary health care services. Students now have a comprehensive health center supporting their success.

Apply for Grants

Oakland and **West Contra Costa Unified School Districts** supplement their school-based health center funding with grants from Kaiser Permanente's Community Benefit Program. This is one example of a funder committed to strengthening the health care safety net by increasing access to health services at school.

Work With County Offices of Education

The Fresno County Office of Education seeks federal reimbursement for school-based Medi-Cal Administrative Activities. The County uses that money to pay for a mobile clinic and a nurse practitioner to staff it. The mobile clinic provides needed medical care and immunizations to eight rural school districts.

Fundraise in the Community

Culver City Unified School District holds an annual gala to raise funds for the Sandy Segal Youth Health Center. The district also works with local businesses to put on smaller fundraising events throughout the school year.

Stay Up-to-Date on School Health Funding Opportunities

Join the California School-Based Health Alliance and receive funding newsletters and other valuable guidance on starting up and providing school health service programs. Learn more on our website: www.schoolhealthcenters.org.

Learn about other grants and sign up alerts here:

- The Center for Health and Health Care - healthinschools.org/category/grant-alerts/
- California Department of Education - www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/af/
- U.S. Department of Education - www2.ed.gov/fund/grants-apply.html