

State of Arkansas
95th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2025

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1709

By: Representative Steele

By: Senator J. Scott

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND THE HUMAN SERVICES WORKERS IN THE SCHOOLS PROGRAM; TO INCLUDE MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS IN THE HUMAN SERVICES WORKERS IN THE SCHOOLS PROGRAM; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO AMEND THE HUMAN SERVICES WORKERS IN THE SCHOOLS PROGRAM; AND TO INCLUDE MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS IN THE HUMAN SERVICES WORKERS IN THE SCHOOLS PROGRAM.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 20-76-112 is amended to read as follows:

20-76-112. Human Services Workers and Mental Health Counselors in the Schools Program.

(a)(1) The Human Services Workers and Mental Health Counselors in the Schools Program is established as a collaborative effort among the Division of Children and Family Services, the Arkansas Workforce Development Board, the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, and local school districts.

(2) The Human Services Workers and Mental Health Counselors in the Schools Program is designed to help children and families by:

~~(1)~~(A) Promoting safety of children and strengthening of families;

~~(2)~~(B) Supporting the community's capacity to produce children who are healthy, children who are in supportive, nurturing, and healthy



families, and children who succeed in school; and

~~(3)(C)~~ Promoting the Division of Children and Family Services' family preservation philosophy and family-centered practice.

(b) Upon approval of the board, the Division of Children and Family Services shall enter into contracts with local school districts to provide funding for the maximum number of human services workers and mental health counselors.

(c)(1) A human services worker shall have a bachelor's degree or a master's degree in social work or a related field.

(2) A mental health counselor shall have a bachelor's degree or a master's degree in the mental health or counseling field.

(3) A human services worker or mental health counselor ~~and~~ shall provide the following services according to skills and training:

- ~~(1)(A)~~ Crisis intervention;
- ~~(2)(B)~~ School conferences and in-service training;
- ~~(3)(C)~~ Home visits;
- ~~(4)(D)~~ Transportation for family and student group counseling;
- ~~(5)(E)~~ Parent training and activities;
- ~~(6)(F)~~ Supportive service referrals;
- ~~(7)(G)~~ Individualized coping and conflict management skills; and
- ~~(8)(H)~~ Assessment of family and student needs.

(d)(1) Funding for human services workers and mental health counselors shall be targeted to schools with eighty percent (80%) or more of their children eligible for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program under the National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1751 et seq.

(2) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Division of Children and Family Services shall develop criteria to prioritize eligibility for the Human Services Workers and Mental Health Counselors in the Schools Program.

(e) The Coordinated Health Services Section of the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall evaluate the Human Services Workers and Mental Health Counselors in the Schools Program annually in coordination with the Division of Children and Family Services, the board, and the local school districts that hold contracts.

(f) A parent or a student has the option to refuse any services recommended under the Human Services Workers and Mental Health Counselors in

the Schools Program.