

Indirect Student Services - Referrals

(Indirect Service - Can support Tiers 1, 2, or 3)

Referrals occur when students' need extend beyond the training and/or responsibilities of the school counseling role (ASCA, 2019, p.82). Therefore, school counselors collaborate with the community to increase student/family access to external services in a wide variety of areas:

- Abuse/neglect and parenting services
- Medicaid and Healthcare (free or low-cost)
- SNAP/Food Stamp Services and local food pantries/meal distribution sites
- Mental health services: counseling, life coaching, residential counseling services
- Crisis assistance: sexual assault, domestic violence, pregnancy services, shelters
- Substance abuse support services
- LGBTQ+ services
- Immigration Services
- Legal assistance (free or low-cost)
- After-school/educational activities and services
- Religious/spiritual institutions

Building a Tier 3 Referral List

The ASCA Ethical Standards (2022) state that school counselors “provide a list of outside agencies and resources in their community, or the closest available, to students and parents/guardians when students need or request additional support. School counselors provide multiple referral options or the district’s -vetted list of referral options and are careful not to indicate an endorsement or preference for one individual or practice” [\(A.6.b\)](#).

In building their own referral list in coordination with the appropriate district offices, school counselors should consider using an online or cloud-based platform, such as Google Sheets, that can be shared widely and updated easily. The referral list is ideally posted to the school's website or some other centralized location, so it can be accessed by students and families without needing to approach the school counselor. This ensures access to resources and services in the event the individual is not comfortable approaching the school counselor. In the referral list, include details such as:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| • Name of agency/service | • Fee structure |
| • Website, address, phone # | • How to access their services |
| • Mission/purpose and targeted clients | • Bilingual services |

When developing the referral list, school counselors should be cognizant about concerns such as cost, access to public transportation, length of wait lists for services, whether it follows school protocol, and cultural sensitivity of the agency. The referral list should also include a disclaimer that you do not endorse one over the other. Example: “*DISCLAIMER NOTICE: This list is intended to provide information on some of the available resources in the community. Reference to specific agencies, hotlines, services or organizations does not constitute a referral nor an endorsement by XYZ School and does not imply discrimination against other similar entities.*” It is also important to note that school counselors “do not refer

or accept a referral to counsel students from their school if they also work in a private counseling practice" [\(A.6.h\)](#).

Did you know?!? You have FREE access to the [Service Provider Identification and Exploration Resource \(SPIDER\)](#) (formerly known as the Statewide Provider Database), which contains information on over 1700+ social service agencies, 4200+ social service programs across the state of Illinois that could potentially assist your students and families!

Examples of searchable services:

- Mental health
- Substance abuse
- Emergency shelters
- Drug testing
- Counseling services
- STD testing and services
- Pregnancy assistance
- Medical/dental care
- Parenting support
- Vocational training
- ...And TONS more!

No username or password needed!

Unlike the former Statewide Provider Database, SPIDER is now open to the public so that anyone can access to find helpful services in their area. Follow [SPIDER.DCF.ILLINOIS.GOV](https://spider.dcf.illinois.gov) to enjoy this resource!

Have questions about SPIDER?

Contact dcfs.spider@illinois.gov.

For more information on SPIDER, please visit: <https://spider.dcf.illinois.gov/Help/Help>