



**Department of Health Care
Access and Information**

**Behavioral Health Workforce in
Community-Based Organizations Grant Program**

Resource Guide

September 2022

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Introduction

This Community-Based Organization (CBO) Behavioral Health Workforce Resource Guide provides an overview of the workforce strategies. Staff recruitment and retention strategies are also discussed.

This Guide is designed to assist an agency to:

- Determine what workforce strategy/ies best meet agency needs.
- Design scholarships, stipends, and loan repayments models that foster individual employee opportunities leading to behavioral health career development.
- Recruit and retain essential behavioral health staff involved in delivering care to clients.

Purpose

The CBO Behavioral Health Workforce Grant Program offers six program options:

1. Undergraduate Educational Scholarships
2. Clinical Master and Doctoral Graduate Education Stipends
3. Loan Repayment Programs
4. Recruitment Bonuses
5. Recruitment Activities
6. Retention Bonuses

CBOs can choose to implement two or more of these programs. This CBO Behavioral Health Workforce Resource Guide provides descriptions of best practices and additional considerations when designing these programs.

The CBO Grant program is designed to assist organizations--especially those in rural and frontier areas—to “grow your own” behavioral health workforce by attracting individuals interested in pursuing behavioral health careers and supporting them along each step in their educational and training pathway as a behavioral health provider..

Individual-Level Programs

When designing the individual-level programs (scholarship, stipend, and loan repayment), consider these three main areas:

- Applicant eligibility
- Terms of the agreement
- Non-completion of the agreement

CBOs need to have each staff member who is a candidate for a scholarship, stipend, or loan repayment award use HCAI’s Central Application. HCAI will collect the data from the Application and forward it to the CBO for their decision-making and monitoring

purposes. Additional information about the HCAI Central Application will be provided to all grantees shortly after the CBO Behavioral Health Workforce Program grant agreements are executed.

Undergraduate Educational Scholarships

This program provides scholarships to undergraduate students in exchange for service obligation met in the behavioral health agency. Scholarships can be used for educational and related expenses (for example, housing, transportation, childcare, and books and supplies). The funding level may depend on the student's academic aspirations (including certificate, associate degree, bachelor's degree, and career development), pre-placement training and education received, lived experience, and/or other possible factors. This component is especially valuable to expanding the knowledge and skills of non-licensed personnel through training and education opportunities.

Considerations: Establishing Applicant Eligibility Criteria

Factors to consider when determining the merits of a prospective applicant and the success of the funding award include:

- Academic enrollment status
 - Those enrolled but have not begun their program may be eligible
- Major/concentration
- Degree sought
- Year in educational program
- Career goals
- Full-time/part-time status
- GPA
- Cultural diversity
- Current behavioral health employment
- Lived/raised in a rural area (determined through high school location)
- Language(s) spoken
- Lived experience (including Peer Support Specialist Certification training requirements)
- Veteran status
- Geographic area where applicant plans to work
- County where the applicant lives/attends school

Eligibility

This grant opportunity will result in agreement(s) with CBOs to recruit, train, and retain behavioral health workforce that include the following professions and students:

- Bachelor level social work student

- Certificate, associate, or bachelor level student in human services or a related major leading to preparing for a behavioral health profession

Establishing Agreement Terms

- Award amounts of up to \$25,000.
- Should it be uniform (i.e., everyone gets the same amount) or variable based on the list of factors above)?
- Should applicants agree to complete their coursework/degree or certificate before receiving the scholarship?
- What will scholarship recipients agree to do to meet their service obligation?
 - If they agree to work in behavioral health in exchange for a scholarship, for how long/how many hours per week? (HCAI practice is one year per annual awarded.)
- How will you assure awardees complete the annual HCAI survey?
- Do you want to use this agreement to promote other programs the applicant could apply to (e.g., stipends, loan repayment)?
- When should CBOs disburse the award (e.g., up-front, in installments, after completion of terms of the agreement)?

Non-Completion of Agreement

- If awardees initially fail to complete the terms of the agreement, could they get an extension?
- Are there any circumstances in which they could fail to complete the terms of the agreement but retain the award (e.g., death or disability)?

Clinical Master and Doctoral Graduate Education Stipends

Similar to the previous WET Stipend program, this program provides funding for post-graduate clinical master and doctoral education service. CBOs select students in advance of their final year of education and provide funds in exchange for a 12-month service commitment.

Considerations

Applicant Eligibility and Evaluation

- Consider awarding applicants in the final year of their education.
- Factors to consider in determining who gets an award.
 - Enrollment status: consider only awarding current students
 - Full/part-time status
 - Discipline/concentration
 - Degree sought
 - Year(s) in program

- Career goals
- Veteran status
- Geographic area applicant plans to work in
- Previous participation in a pipeline program and/or scholarship
- County applicant lives in/attends school in
- GPA
- Cultural diversity
- Lived/raised in a rural area (determined through high school)
- Language(s) spoken
- Lived experience

Establishing Agreement Terms

- Award amounts of up to \$25,000.
- Amount to award
 - Consider if you want to offer different amounts for different disciplines.
 - Should the award amount be uniform (i.e., everyone gets the same amount) or variable based on the list of factors above?
- What will stipend recipients agree to do (e.g., work with children with or at risk of serious emotional conditions)
 - HCAI practice is to require stipend awardees perform one-year full-time service obligation.
- What other commitments do you want them to make?
 - Consider having the applicant agree to complete their degree/program.
 - Require the applicant to commit to completing HCAI's stipend annual evaluation/follow-up survey as a condition of receiving funds.
- Do you want to use this CBO behavioral health workforce program to promote other programs the applicant could apply to (e.g., loan repayment)?
- How should CBOs disburse awards (up-front, in installments, after completion of terms of agreement)?

Non-Completion of Agreement

- What happens if an awardee fails to complete the terms of the agreement (e.g., don't complete their degree, don't work in PMHS) after the award disbursement?
 - How will CBOs collect the repayment if the awardee is required to pay back the money (e.g., one-time payment, payment plan, lien on awardee's income)?
- If an awardee initially fails to complete the terms of the agreement, will you offer them an extension?
- Are there any circumstances in which an awardee could fail to complete the terms of the agreement but retain the award (e.g., death, disability, unemployment)?

Loan Repayments

Provides educational loan repayment assistance to behavioral health professionals. The amount awarded could be based on educational attainment, the level of unmet need in the community served, and years of service in a local behavioral health agency.

Considerations

Eligible degrees

This grant opportunity will result in agreement(s) with CBOs to recruit, train, and retain behavioral health workforce that include the following professions:

- Associate or licensed clinical or health service psychologist
- Associate or licensed clinical social worker
- Associate or licensed marriage and family therapist
- Associate or licensed professional clinical counselor
- Case worker seeking training or education for a promotional opportunity
- Occupational therapist
- Peer personnel seeking training or education for a promotional opportunity
- Psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner
- Psychiatric nurse specialist
- Psychiatric registered nurse
- Psychiatrist (general, child and adolescent, and addiction)
- Substance use disorder counselor (aka addiction, alcohol, and other drug (AOD) counselors)
- Other agency-determined behavioral health professional

Applicant Eligibility and Evaluation

- Who is eligible for an award?
 - Only current behavioral health employees (paid and unpaid)
- How many years should an applicant be eligible to receive funds?
- Factors to consider in determining who gets an award.
 - Profession
 - Career goals
 - Full/part-time employment
 - Cultural diversity
 - Lived/raised in a rural area (determined through high school)
 - Language(s) spoken
 - Lived experience
 - Veteran status

- Geographic area applicant works in
- Previous participation in a pipeline program, scholarship, and/or stipend
- County applicant lives in/attends school in

Establishing Agreement Terms

- Award amounts of up to \$25,000.
- Consider making award level dependent on profession and geographic need.
- Consider if awards should be uniform (i.e., everyone gets the same amount) or be variable (based on years of continued service and/or the list of factors above)?
- What will loan repayment recipients agree to do?
 - If they agree to start or continue to work in the behavioral health setting in exchange for loan repayment, for how long and at what time-base?
- Preclude applicants from receiving an award if they are currently receiving funds from another program.
- Consider disbursing award funds each year of after service completion

Recruitment and Retention Strategies

The aim of retention strategies is for counties to promote developing and instituting systemic changes and opportunities that increase the likelihood that staff will remain in the behavioral health workforce. The following are examples of different approaches that CBOs can consider when developing retention programs.

- 1. Award \$2,000 Recruitment Bonuses per person**
- 2. Undertake Recruitment Activities with \$1,250 per year**
- 3. Award Retention Bonus of up to \$10,000 per person**
- 4. Enhance Workers' Day-to-Day Experiences**
 - a. Provide fair and adequate compensation and benefits.
 - b. Offer financial incentives for retention.
 - c. Institute variable and flexible work schedules and formats.
 - d. Institute personnel policies that explicitly support/promote employee work-life balance by addressing schedules, commuting, travel and other work requirements.
 - e. Streamline bureaucratic requirements to minimize worker burden (i.e., reduce paperwork).
 - f. Alleviate burdensome caseloads (i.e., reduce caseload size, modify structure of case work).
 - g. Create staff wellness programs like workplace fitness programs.

5. Other Strategies

a. Enhance and Support Staff Development

- Engage with staff at all levels to develop personalized career growth pathways.
- Ensure worker opportunities to pursue licensure, higher education, and career advancement.
- Fund and/or provide paid time for both on and off-site continued professional development.
- Provide specialized trainings relevant to the specific consumers and communities served.
- Provide ongoing trainings on issues such as trauma-informed therapy and various trauma.
- Create peer learning cohorts/communities that facilitate staff connections and networking, and enable workers to identify and pursue specific professional development goals.

b. Strengthen Management and Supervision of Workers

- Recruit, hire and retain directors and supervisors with direct service experience "in the trenches".
- Train and guide supervisors to ensure they offer high quality supervision that includes mentorship, reflective coaching, professional guidance, and debriefing opportunities.
- Provide reflective coaching on the effects of vicarious trauma and work-related stressors.
- Provide professional guidance that complements and supports worker training.
- Provide structured opportunities for workers to debrief after stressful events.
- Institute ongoing employee recognition practices (colleague-nominated employee of the month celebrations, awards for outstanding service to consumers, etc.).

c. Enhance Organizational Climate and Culture

- Develop policies and practices that identify and emphasize shared mission/meaning of work.
- Develop policies and practices that align with workers' training in the recovery model.
- Enable workers to engage in prevention/early intervention, rather than only crisis management.
- Offer regular opportunities for workers to provide input on workplace policies and practices.

- Offer regular opportunities for workers to share stories, victories, challenges, and strategies.
- Institute regular staff social activities/gatherings/retreats to build/support collegial relationships.

Questions

Please email your questions to HCAI at BHPrograms@hcai.ca.gov .