

Regional Partnership Activities Description Block

Please describe Stakeholder Engagement Activities you used to develop your budget, proposed program activities, and projected number of program participants (500 word maximum).

Butte County distributed a survey to the Superior Region Partnership (SRP) to solicit their feedback on WET program components and projected number of participants. The survey asked respondents to rate their preferred program components by highest need in their area. The survey also collected information on stakeholder activities that took place in each county to justify their responses. Thirteen of the 16 Counties responded to the survey.

Some responses that the Counties provided surrounding stakeholder activities included:

- MHSA Stakeholder Forums held every other month indicates the need for clinicians with advanced degrees in their communities, in particular the Latin-x population.
- We have a training committee that discusses these issues continuously. Recruiting and retaining staff is always identified as a significant need. In the problem-solving portion of the exercise, ideas such as the [program component] activities come up.
- Past stakeholder feedback within the community, through MHSA focus groups, discussing how to utilize WET funds. This was already part of our MHSA plan and we have utilized scholarship programs and loan repayment programs in the past with our WET funding and yearly stakeholder input

Two virtual meetings took place to discuss the results of the survey and to deliberate the effective use of administrative funding. During this meeting, the Counties reviewed the local match suggestions and collaborated on strategies to accomplish the match requirement. The group was able to establish a consensus on program components that they would like to implement as a Region. The group agreed to utilize the administrative funds to contract with a third party (CIBHS) for technical assistance in developing the programs and fiscal administration.

The SRP then met with CIBHS to discuss program planning and the role that CIBHS will have in facilitating the WET programs. Twelve Counties attended this meeting. Topics covered included program percentage allocations, award allocations, work commitment, and eligibility. Discussion mostly revolved around programmatic details relating to the stipend program, loan repayment program, and retention activities. Many Counties expressed interest and ideas around specific training and support to boost retention, acknowledging that financial incentive is a small part of retaining a mental health workforce. Mental health workforce was defined as care providers, administrative support, and executive leadership.

Butte County then met with faculty from the California State University School of Social Work Programs and one Marriage and Family Therapy Program (Chico and Humboldt State), to gather input on program details that should be included in the application. Butte County shared the SRP survey results with the educators prior to the meeting. The education stakeholders expressed their view that there should be a blend of all program components. The group

expressed that due to the rural nature of the Superior Region, that a “grow-your-own” philosophy be imbedded in the WET programming. There was also an emphasis placed on providing financial support while obtaining a degree (i.e., educational stipend), when students need it the most. (480 words)

*Please describe the **Undergraduate College & University Scholarships** activities that you plan to implement (250 word maximum).*

During the two virtual meetings, verbal feedback given by the SRP indicated a strong need to incentivize Peer support in the workforce. Peer Specialists are individuals that self-identify with lived experience in behavioral health or substance abuse issues and utilize this experience in their job. Peer Specialists communicate, represent, and promote the peer perspective within the behavioral health system, including community outreach and educating other agencies and community members regarding the needs of clients and family members who are living with mental illness and working towards recovery.

The SRP would like to dedicate \$1,000 scholarships to individuals who identify as Peers, to use for career development activities. Career development activities can include travel costs, registration to conferences, or specialized training costs. The SRP supports efforts to implement a statewide peer certification, which has yet to be established. The scholarship may be applied to costs related to statewide peer certification once it has been established. The scholarship may also be applied to areas related to pursuing a higher education degree.

In exchange for the Peer Specialist scholarships individuals would agree to work in a PMHS setting for the equivalent of one year of half time service, in an approved position.

(199)

Please describe the **Clinical Master & Doctoral Graduate Education Stipends** activities that you plan to implement (250 word maximum).

Stakeholder input from the Counties and University faculty relayed that it is critical to support identified candidates who will become part the PMHS workforce. Students who participate in traditional, full-time face-to-face programs and those enrolled in part-time distributed learning programs will be eligible for educational stipends. Eligible individuals include those who have obtained masters level or doctorate level degrees, or, mental health professionals and administrative staff selected by individual counties as working in hard-to-fill or hard-to-retain positions.

Each student will receive \$8000 per academic year, in installments throughout the year. In exchange for this stipend, individuals would agree to work in a PMHS setting in the Superior Region for the equivalent of one year of full time service in an approved position, regardless of number of years of stipend participation. This can be completed through full-time or part-time employment or, if approved by the agency and the school, through volunteer work.

For all stipends, if the employment requirement is not fulfilled within a four-year period, then monetary payback will be required. The budget reflects 150 Educational Stipends.

(177 words)

Please describe the **Loan Repayment Program** activities that you plan to implement (250 word maximum).

The loan repayment program ranked as the highest need in the SRP WET survey. Many Counties reported that implementing this kind of program is their highest priority to bring more diverse and qualifying workforce to rural areas. A potential strategy would be to use Loan Repayment as a recruitment activity and then utilize the Retention Activities component to keep staff on board after they have completed their time commitment. The MHLAP was a very successful recruitment and retention program for the SRP and counties articulated a strong interest in bringing this program back.

The Superior Regional Partnership plans to utilize roughly 45% of the total funding in this line item, which equates to 200 loan repayments at \$11,000 after completing a 12-month service obligation in the PMHS. Eligible individuals include those who have obtained masters level or doctorate level degrees, or, mental health professionals and administrative staff selected by individual counties as working in hard-to-fill or hard-to-retain positions. The definition of hard-to-fill or hard-to-retain positions will be identified by each individual county. Recipients would receive the funds after they completed the 12-month service obligation. Recipients will be able to apply for the award more than once.

The SRP will utilize CIBHS to implement the loan repayment program (i.e., establish applicant eligibility criteria, fiscal oversight).

(214)

*Please describe the **Retention activities** that you plan to implement using evidence-based and community-identified practices, including but not limited to: retaining personnel and training personnel about MHSA values (250 word maximum).*

Preparation, effective supervision and career development is an essential component to retention in the PMHS. Due to the uniqueness and the severity of the population the PMHS serves, there can be a steep learning curve for newly graduated students to address complex cases. Counties communicated that they would like to implement career development opportunities to boost workforce climate and culture. Career development opportunities should be flexible for each County as each there are vastly different needs depending on County size and location.

The SRP will work with CIBHS to develop and enhance evidence-based and community-identified practices. CIBHS and the SRP identified the following topics:

Addressing burnout of staff by offering training on effective self-care strategies and trauma-informed care.

Addressing issues for employees that are specific to the Superior Region culture.

Provide additional clinical training for staff for specific populations, including:

- Individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders
- Individuals with co-occurring mental health, substance use, and physical health disorders
- Individuals from criminal justice system. For example, those who are on parole with mental health and substance use disorders
- Individuals in crisis and being seen in the ER.

Additionally, the SRP has a strong need to enhance and strengthen the supervision of interns and staff requiring hours towards licensure. The SRP would like to develop strategies to enhance internship coordination and supervision, including developing a virtual strategy for supervision.

(229)

Please describe the **Administrative Costs** associated with the activities that you plan to implement, including but not limited to: mentoring, worksite placement, monitoring paid or volunteer work requirements (500 word maximum).

Administrative costs are allocated between the lead county, Butte County, and CIBHS. The SRP chose to allocate 25% of the state funds, excluding the local match, to administrative costs.

CIBHS will provide technical assistance in development of WET programming, provide oversight of implementation of the programs, and act as the fiduciary agent for the transmission of the funds.

CIBHS has a long history of supporting California counties in the area of behavioral health workforce development. CIBHS's Workforce Development Team has supported a range of statewide, regional and local county efforts focused on public mental health workforce development. This includes strategies to develop the future workforce, as well as support the ongoing professional development of current staff working in public mental/behavioral health and integrated settings.

CIBHS Proposed **Stipend** Program Deliverables:

- Assist counties in developing terms of agreements with awardees and what happens if an awardee fails to complete the terms of the agreement
- Disbursement of stipends directly to awardees.
- Provide fiscal administration of the stipend programs.
- Leverage existing relationships with the Universities to develop agreements with participants.
- Coordinate with the Chico State and Humboldt State to implement the Superior Region Mental Health Pilot Education Stipend Program

CIBHS Proposed **Loan Repayment** Program Deliverables:

- Program support for Regional Partnerships in developing eligibility requirements.
- Disbursement of loan repayment directly to awardees and provide the required loan verification statement.
- Provide support and follow up with awardees
- Provide fiscal administration of the loan repayment program.
- Pay academic institutions, financial institutions and foundations.

CIBHS Proposed **Retention Activities** Deliverables:

- Work with Regional Partnerships to develop retention programs, policies and practices.
- Develop and enhance evidence-based and community-identified practices.
- Identification and coordination of trainings, policy implementation and advocacy to increase retention in the PMHS.
- Research effective strategies and EBP's for retention and share with the Regional Partnerships, supporting implementation.

- Develop strategies to enhance internship coordination and supervision, including developing a virtual strategy for supervision.

Butte County will be responsible for administrative tasks surrounding coordination of programs and act as the go-between between the SRP and CIBHS.

It is the intention of the SRP to reevaluate the budget allocations at the end of each fiscal year to understand if the programs are on target for spending. If it is determined that there is a greater need for a program than anticipated, budgeted funds may shift to support the increased need.

(389)