



## THE CENTER

at Sierra Health Foundation

### **Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act Telehealth Expansion Project Questions and Answers**

#### **ELIGIBILITY – WHO CAN APPLY?**

#### **COUNTY ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS**

**Q: Are counties eligible to apply for the Telehealth Expansion project, or is the funding opportunity limited to providers?**

A: County-run mental health (MH) or substance use disorder (SUD) program sites are eligible to apply, including County Behavioral Health Departments.

**Q: Are county psychiatric clinics eligible to apply?**

A: Yes, if they meet the contract and licensing requirements of this funding opportunity.

**Q: As a county-run facility, our understanding was that we were eligible to apply, but we are not sure how to submit the application county contract requirement.**

A: For county entities, please upload a letter on the organization's letterhead stating who you are as a way to meet the requirement for the contract with the County Department of Behavioral Health.

#### **SITE ELIGIBILITY/ DIVISION QUESTIONS**

**Q: Our agency has both substance use disorder and mental health outpatient programs, and each division has multiple County-funded programs. Does this mean we need a separate request for each County contracted program?**

A: Yes, submit separate applications per program or site. Additionally, submit separate applications for each funding opportunity, MH Telehealth and SUD Telehealth.

**Q: We are interested in applying for telehealth infrastructure for our behavioral health providers who work with SUD and MH clients. Since many of our patients have a dual diagnosis of MH and SUD, can we just apply under the MH funding stream? It would be very difficult to proportionally parse out the provider FTE between the two programs.**

A: Yes, if you meet the eligibility under MH, then you may apply for this site just under mental health and allocate purchased equipment to direct service providers.

**Q: Our location provides Mental Health services as well as SUD services in the same building but are separate programs. Are these considered the same site, or could we apply for both?**

A: If these programs are administered through the same entity, this would be considered the same site location. Each individual site may apply to both the Mental Health and SUD opportunity if eligible for each through licensing and certification.

**Q: If one site has both an SUD contract and a separate MH contract with the county, can it apply for both?**

A: Yes, they may apply for both opportunities if they meet the licensing requirements but must submit a separate application for each funding opportunity.

**Q: If our organization has multiple sites, do we have to submit multiple applications?**

A: Applicants must submit an individual application for each site they wish to fund through this opportunity. If you only wish to apply for one site, then please only submit one application.

**Q: If we have separate SUD and MH sites in different counties can we apply for both in each county?**

A: Yes, if each of the sites meets the eligibility of each opportunity you are able to apply for both, but must submit a separate application for each funding opportunity.

**Q: We have three sites with their own certification numbers. Before COVID, our staff traveled to the client's location, but with telehealth services we are no longer bound to a service area. Can we apply as one entity, or should we apply by site and try to figure out the percentage of time each clinical staff member might spend in a service area?**

A: If the individual sites are eligible (have licenses/certifications), we welcome applications from each of the individual sites and yes, would request you allocate percentage as best as you can per site.

**Q: If our organization has two county Mental Health contracts at one site can we submit two applications?**

A: No, each site may only apply to the MH and SUD funding opportunities once.

**Q: If one entity has several sites that qualify and may not need \$100,000 worth of telehealth equipment, can they use one application for all sites?**

A: If an entity is requesting telehealth equipment for the individual sites, we request that they submit a separate application per site.

**Q: Are sites that have previously received funding under the last round of grants eligible to apply?**

A: Previous Telehealth Expansion RFA grantees are eligible to apply. However, new and highly qualified applicants will be prioritized for this funding opportunity.

**Q: Can one entity apply for both opportunities?**

A: Yes, if the entity qualifies for both opportunities, it can apply for both MH activities and SUD telehealth activities. Please submit a separate application for each opportunity.

#### **LICENSE/ COUNTY CONTRACT QUESTIONS**

**Q: Would a facility license from the California Department of Public Health meet the licensing requirement?**

A: Yes, per the RFA, entities with a certification from the State of California are eligible.

**Q: Are regular Medi-Cal certifications eligible? (Not DMC).**

A: Yes, this is acceptable.

**Q: We are a non-profit legal entity contract provider for the County Department of Mental Health. Our sites are Medi-Cal certified by the LMHP to provide Mental Health services. Are we eligible?**

A: Yes, your organization status and stated Medi-Cal certification through the Los Angeles County Mental Health Plan (LMHP) makes you eligible to apply.

**Q: We have a subcontract through another agency that holds the master contract with the county to provide mental health services to Ryan White clients (low-income and living with HIV). Is this type of contract considered eligible?**

A: Yes, organizations with a subcontract that are working on behalf of the county behavioral health department would be eligible. Please upload both contracts (front/signature pages as a single PDF and state such in your narrative).

**Q: Does a contract with Partnership HealthPlan of California to provide SUD treatment services qualify? PHC has the contract with the County and the applicant organization has a contract with PHC – does this meet the county contract requirement?**

A: Yes, as PHP is acting on behalf of the counties for administration of the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System, and the provider would get a contract for PHP. The applying provider must submit their County-issued or DHCS-issued Medi-Cal certification.

**Q: My organization provides mental health services under agreement with MyHealthLA on behalf of the LA County Department of Health Services. Is this agreement sufficient to ensure our eligibility for the award?**

A: Yes, organizations with a subcontract that are working on behalf of the county behavioral health department would be eligible. Please upload both contracts (front/signature pages as a single PDF and state such in your narrative)

**Q: We have one contract that goes through the County BH Department, but it's an AOD Regional Prevention contract – not a contract to provide BH services.**

A: Only entities that provide treatment for SUD or MH disorders are eligible.

**Q: Does each site need to have an individual contract with the County and an individual DHCS license? Or does a contract/license that applies to all physical locations offering mental health services make each of those sites eligible, even though it is technically one organization-wide/umbrella contract/license?**

A: Each individual site applying for this opportunity must hold an eligible SUD/MH license/certification. Each organization/site must demonstrate that they are able to provide services at that location under a County contract (either at the site level or legal entity level as contracted).

**Q: Must applicants submit their entire County Behavioral Health Contract?**

A: Each applicant must provide proof of a current County contract to provide services. Please do not upload the entire contract. Instead, you may upload only the organizational identifying page(s), those that demonstrate contract dates, and signature page(s) that demonstrate such a contract is in place.

## **MISC. ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS**

**Q: Are federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) eligible for this grant as long as they meet the requirements?**

A: Eligible entities must be a nonprofit SUD and/or MH treatment provider licensed and/or certified by the State of California as of July 1, 2021, AND must have a current contract with the county Behavioral Health Department and currently serve 'safety net' clients. If you are a federally qualified nonprofit SUD/MH health provider, then you qualify to apply.

**Q: To confirm, is eligibility restricted to nonprofit organizations? Are there any plans to allow smaller for-profit facilities to participate?**

A: This opportunity is only for public or private nonprofit SUD and/or MH providers, per federal funding requirements.

**Q: Can individual contractors apply, or is this intended for counties to apply?**

A: Per the RFA, eligible entities must be a public or private nonprofit SUD and/or MH provider licensed and/or certified by the State of California as of July 1, 2021, and must have a current contract with the County Behavioral Health Department, and must currently serve 'safety net' clients. If your organization has met these requirements, you are eligible to apply for this funding opportunity.

**Q: Are licensed or non-licensed recovery programs eligible to apply?**

A: No. Only treatment programs are eligible for this funding opportunity.

**Q: Are hospitals eligible for this funding opportunity?**

A: Yes, as long as they meet the eligibility requirements.

**Q: Are non-county government agencies (i.e. city departments) eligible?**

A: Yes, if they are certified or licensed by the State of California, have a current contract with the County Behavioral Health Department, and currently serve 'safety net' clients.

**Q: Are we limited to using the funds only for the mental health treatment programs described that make us eligible to access these funds, or can we use the funds to equip prevention and early intervention programs?**

A: No, funding can only be used for telehealth development, enhancement and/or expansion for SUD or MH treatment providers.

**Q: Why are a state license and County contract required?**

A: Based funding restrictions, this opportunity is only available for licensed SUD/MH treatment providers. A license/certification from the State of California (whether DHCS, CDPH etc.) is required. A County contract for SUD/MH services must be in place to demonstrate that awarded organizations provide services that are consistent with the requirements and need within each county and local government.

**USE OF FUNDS – WHAT IS ALLOWABLE?**

**CLIENT, PERSONNEL AND ADMIN FUNDING QUESTIONS**

**Q: As part of our overall funding request, can we ask for part of the funding to be used to purchase tablet computers for use by our clients? (The clients wouldn't own them, but we would make them available for use by clients so that they can access telehealth services)**

A: No. Per federal requirements, telehealth equipment is only for use by providers and not clients (under any circumstances). Refer to the RFA for allowable activities and expenses.

**Q: We would like to convert a classroom to a telehealth room where individuals will be able to have Zoom meetings with Mental Health and SUD providers. Are these types of expenses allowed?**

A: Telehealth equipment under this funding opportunity should only be for direct service providers, and it seems from this description that the classroom would be for client use. Telehealth equipment for use by clients is not eligible under this funding opportunity.

**Q: Would direct service providers include case managers, other unlicensed providers, or trainees who are doing direct service?**

A: Yes, if they are providing direct services, they would be eligible as long as the organization is licensed and qualifies.

**Q: One of our locations hosts interns who are completing their MA-level program and who provide direct clinical services to clients, but are not considered employees. Would we be able to request equipment for them?**

A: Yes, these individuals would be considered direct service providers and this request is allowable.

**Q: Is it expected that clinicians who receive telehealth equipment through this funding opportunity solely provide telehealth services? Many of our clinicians offer a hybrid of telehealth/in-person services depending on client needs and access.**

A: No, it is understood that many direct service providers offer a hybrid of telehealth/in-person services. While these funds are specifically to support providers in offering telehealth services, it is not required that providers offer 100% telehealth services.

**Q: If our organization has a direct service provider seeing MH clients as a trainee pro-bono and therapy is NOT billed to DHS due to not being registered with BBS yet, can we use funds for telehealth equipment for them?**

A: Yes, if they are providing direct services and your organization possesses the required licensing and contract, this provider would not need to be registered with the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) or bill treatment to DHS.

**Q: For provider-focused telehealth trainings, is staff time for staff providing the trainings an allowable expense?**

A: Unfortunately, we are not able to fund personnel costs through this project. However, we are allowing organizations to apply funds towards telehealth training to support the set-up and running of telehealth services. Staff time for staff providing training would be an allowable expense. Please include significant details in the budget justification and break down all costs associated with each line item.

**Q: Can this funding be used to cover additional front office support to assist in the increased administrative workload in coordinating telehealth appointments?**

A: The funding may only be allocated for telehealth infrastructure.

**Q: Can funding be used towards admin or support staff to perform the support of telehealth but not actually do the telehealth? Ex., scheduling a client or a client intake administrator.**

A: No, these costs would not be covered under this funding opportunity as they would not be considered direct treatment service providers. However, EHR software that would be used across the organization would be acceptable because it is directly supporting telehealth services

**Q: How are we able to pay for internet services that are for all staff in one site that includes administrative staff as well as clinical staff if it is not allowed for administrative support?**

A: These expenses would be cost-shared so you wouldn't necessarily cover the entire amount of internet services for all staff in one site.

**Q: Will the grant pay for a small portion of IT programmer salaried staff time?**

A: While funding is meant only for telehealth infrastructure/equipment, we are allowing organizations to apply those funds to IT support, installation and fees to support the set-up of the telehealth system. Please include significant details in the budget justification and break down all costs associated with each line item.

**Q: We have a need to hire a position for IT staff person to create a data management system for client assessments and evaluations. Would this be an eligible expense?**

A: We are not able to fund personnel costs through this project. While you would not be able to hire a person through this funding, you would be able to allocate costs to support the creating of a data management system. Please include significant details in the budget justification and break down all costs associated with each line item.

**Q: Can we add Administration for the grant in the budget and for what %? It is usually 10-15%.**

A: No, funding can only be used for provider telehealth development, enhancement and/or expansion for SUD or MH telehealth activities, depending on the funding opportunity applied for. This opportunity is solely for telehealth infrastructure.

### **TECHNOLOGY FUNDING QUESTIONS**

**Q: Are IT costs and installation fees an allowable cost?**

A: Costs to get telehealth services up and running are allowable. Please include significant details in the budget justification and break down all costs associated with each line item.

**Q: Would these funds be able to be used for the fees our county IT Department charges our organization for help desk support and similar services for direct service providers?**

A: This funding can only be used towards these costs insofar as those costs directly contribute to or support the delivery of behavioral health telehealth services.

**Q: Would My Outcomes, software that supports using evidenced practice (Feedback Informed Treatment) digitally for use of telehealth be an allowable cost?**

A: Yes, this would be an allowable cost.

**Q: Can funds be used to pay for development, creation, and recording of online video lessons for a recovery-oriented phone app/website for youth? The cost would be paid to a subcontractor/developer of the video online lesson.**

A: This does not qualify as telehealth, and therefore does not qualify for this funding opportunity.

**Q: Can funds be used towards paying for our website (part or in-full)?**

A: This funding can only be used towards these costs insofar as those costs contribute to the delivery or marketing of behavioral health telehealth services.

**Q: Can funds be used towards additional encryption and malware protection software for laptops issued to staff?**

A: This funding can only be used towards these costs insofar as those costs contribute to the delivery or marketing of behavioral health telehealth services.

**Q: Can grant funds be used for computer network systems security (firewalls) equipment or cyber insurance?**

A: Yes, computer network systems security would be an allowable expense under telehealth infrastructure/equipment, but cyber insurance is not allowable. In the budget justification, please be sure to provide details about what systems will be purchased and for what purpose.

**Q: Will the grant pay for a signal booster (to increase the Internet/WiFi signal at the rear of our clinic which has cement walls)?**

A: Yes, items to get telehealth up and running are an allowable cost. In the budget justification, please be sure to provide details about what items/equipment will be purchased and for what purpose.

**Q: Could an organization use these funds for centralized equipment (such as servers) that supports satellite sites located in multiple counties? Would the organization need a BH Contract in each single county, or only in the county where the centralized equipment is located?**

A: Yes, this would be an acceptable use of funds. Your organization would need to provide a contract in the county where the centralized equipment is located.

**Q: Each of our sites has just one pair of internet connections that support all network and web traffic. If this is eligible, at the sites that we share with other programs, can we request the full billed amount and then request a percentage be reimbursed?**

A: Yes, this would be an eligible expense. For shared programs, you may request a percentage reimbursed.

### **ELECTRONIC HEALTH/MEDICAL RECORD FUNDING QUESTIONS**

**Q: We are hoping to transition to a new EHR this year, which will mean paying for at least several months of licenses for direct service providers for two EHRs. Would this be allowable under the grant?**

A: Yes, please provide details and explain in the budget narrative so application reviewers can clearly see why both EHRs are listed.

**Q: If funds are used for EHR costs, how would you suggest that be split across multiple sites? For example, our county pays for the use of Avatar at all locations through a single contract, and we don't pay for sites separately.**

A: Each site should apply for their cost-shared proportion of the EHR costs.

**Q: For EMRs is the ask amount in proportion to the number of mental health providers at a site?**

A: Since EMRs (and EHR systems in general) support telehealth services more broadly, you can demonstrate cost-sharing by the number of programs (not individuals) using the software. If you only have SUD and MH services, then the full amount may be allocated in the request.

**Q: Can any of the funds be used towards services related to an EHR transition, for example hiring a consultant to help our organization transition?**

A: Costs of EHR transition are allowable in certain instances, but personnel costs relating to the transition are unallowable. Grantees may use funds for training and technical assistance related to the implementation and utilization of EHR.

**Q: As we are a county, we will have to go through the county process to select an EHR provider. When we submit our application, we will not know who the provider will be. Can we just state that the provider will be determined later?**

A: Yes, you may. Please note this in your budget justification.

## MISC. FUNDING QUESTIONS

**Q: Regarding Provider focused telehealth training, 1) Do we need to have a chosen training vendor at the time of application or is an estimated dollar amount of the training sufficient, and 2) Do you need any information at the time of application about the training program, or can this be provided at reporting time?**

A: You may estimate the dollar amount anticipated for provider telehealth training and finalize if the contract is awarded. Please provide details in the budget justification that will explain this, but also the type of training that will be provided.

**Q: Since we can apply for agency expenses that may umbrella over multiple programs (e.g. internet, servers, etc.), for an expense that spans across all agency programs (both eligible and not), would we need to calculate what portion of that agency-wide cost applies just for the certified programs? If we were to purchase a server that would impact all programs, would we divvy out the portion only for the eligible programs?**

A: You would need to explain how server expenses are being cost-shared if they would also be used for programs not related to telehealth if it is something like an EHR that is explicitly used for direct services and could be allocated across the organization. For something like internet contracts, it would be useful to demonstrate cost-sharing by estimating the cost for the eligible programs.

**Q: Under the category of telehealth infrastructure, will the grant pay for clear mobile acrylic guards to provide separation and sound barriers for providers providing telehealth care? The guards allow for maximum functionality in our clinic setting while also allowing for emergency egress.**

A: Yes, this would be an allowable expense under telehealth infrastructure/equipment. In the budget justification, please be sure to provide details about what items/equipment will be purchased and for what purpose.

**Q: Can these funds be used to buy office furniture (e.g., computer desk, ergonomic chairs, lumbar support)?**

A: These items would be allowable if used with your telehealth equipment and only for direct service providers.

**Q: Can we use funds towards Paycom (online timecard) monthly costs?**

A: No, online timecards are not allowable costs.

**Q: Is the use of funds towards cell phone expenses just for the phone itself or also towards service plans?**

A: You may use funding towards both, but only for providers. Past funded organizations have provided stipends towards staff providing direct services, or they have issued a cell phone.

**Q: Our organization is still doing some telehealth work via telephone with patients. Are actual desk phones allowable?**

A: Yes, this is an allowable expense as it pertains to your organization's telehealth services.

**Q: If we decide to get a phone app solution (i.e., GoogleVoice, phone.com, etc.) for telehealth, how many years can we use this funding to pay in advance for a contract?**

A: For software and phone apps, you may pay up to 1 year past the contract end date, but you must pay in advance.

**Q: Can you clarify cost-sharing? Our organization has Zoom and monthly subscription costs used by all staff.**

A: In your budget justification, please outline estimates of these costs insofar as they will be used to provide direct patient treatment services, and how they are cost-shared with other programs. Another way to do this is to allocate the Zoom subscriptions that are used by direct service providers in the budget as a way to demonstrate cost sharing.

**Q: Would a contract with a third party to verify Medi-Cal eligibility be an allowable expense?**

A: No, funding can only be used for telehealth development, enhancement and/or expansion for SUD or MH treatment providers.

**Q: Would marketing materials for distribution in remote areas through our healthcare partners located in those areas be an allowable expense?**

A: Marketing materials would not be considered an eligible telehealth infrastructure cost to support direct service providers, as it would fall under a client outreach service.

## **OTHER QUESTIONS**

**Q: Do we need to demonstrate, or would it be advantageous for us to demonstrate, other available funding (match) to be used for the project? In other words, is a match required? And, if so, how much/what %?**

A: There is no match required for this funding opportunity.

**Q: Please provide the definition that you are using for “safety net clients”?**

A: For the purposes of this RFA, we are defining “safety net” as providers serving underinsured and uninsured behavioral health patients.

**Q: If our organization has county behavioral health contracts to serve Medi-Cal eligible adults or children with qualified mental health diagnoses, is this considered “safety net?”**

A: Yes, this would fall within the parameters of the “safety net” definition.

**Q: The County Department of Behavioral Health would like to inform our providers of the grant funds and were wondering if any providers apply and receive grant funds, would DHCS be able to inform us (the County) of which providers received grant funds and how much was awarded?**

A: The Center will notify awardees if they have been selected for this grant, along with the total amount allocated. It is the responsibility of awardees to notify any other organizations, as required or necessary.

**Q: How much total funding is available for the entire RFA?**

A: This funding opportunity is made available through the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant and Community Mental Health Services Block Grants. DHCS anticipates approximately \$39 million to be allocated for this funding opportunity.

**Q: What is the minimum amount of funds our organization can request?**

A: There is not a minimum allowable grant request amount for this funding opportunity.

**Q: If we just purchased equipment for telehealth expansion purposes, can that amount be reimbursable?**

A: Funding can only support items purchased beginning and after the contract start date.

**Q: Do previously funded organizations need to create a new application account in the portal?**

A: You can use your previous account to complete this application. When you click on the application link in the RFA, you can input your previous log-in information (email and password) into the portal and you will be able to access and complete the application.