



County of Fresno

DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
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Fresno County's Request Of Mental Health Services Oversight & Accountability Commission Approval For Use of Innovation Funds For Community Planning Process And Stakeholder Input.

Introduction

Fresno County Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) is fully invested in having a robust community planning process. Input from the people we serve and our community is vital to effective planning and program development. Over the years Fresno County has conducted extensive community planning, but for a county as large and diverse as Fresno, we have been challenged with reaching all of the diverse populations we serve, including reaching individuals in both urban and rural areas, as well as those from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. We are committed to developing an improved approach to ensure meaningful input from all those who are served.

What Has Been Done

For many years Fresno County DBH has engaged in wide-scale community planning processes, to ensure our culturally, economically, geographically, and generationally diverse communities' needs are factored into and addressed in our Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Three year Plans and Annual Updates. Efforts have included conducting community forums in different parts of our county, providing paper and online surveys, seeking feedback at regular meetings where stakeholders are present, requests for providers to conduct feedback forums at their locations and inclusion of peers in planning processes (including, for a time, having a standing peer input committee). However, consistently, we have struggled to get good attendance at our public forums and/or high volumes of input into surveys and online input opportunities. We have modified our approaches, including adding new approaches, each year. We still, though, get feedback about the following:

- Lack of knowledge of how to give input or the posted plans being too big to review
- The locations or times of meetings not being convenient
- The wrong audiences are being targeted or certain target populations are being left out
- Not enough ways or opportunities to give feedback or provide input
- Not enough 'advertising' of how to give feedback or provide input
- Not enough people gave input

We would like to restructure our community planning process to, methodically, address these concerns. Additionally, while we have conducted a variety of activities around robust community planning, historically, we have not calculated or tracked the cost of these efforts.

Why The Need

In the coming year Fresno County DBH has five innovation plans it intends to present to the Commission for approval. Two are currently in the local process, one is set to begin the development process with stakeholders in the next month, and two more (part of the current MHSAs Three Year Plan/AB 114 Plan) need to be developed. All of these plans/projects will need to include thorough and thoughtful stakeholder input to develop and implement. Additionally, Fresno County intends to join two statewide innovation plan projects. By their nature, multi-county innovation projects are complex and may require a higher level of stakeholder involvement to be successful.

Fresno County DBH will also begin community planning for its new MHSAs Three Year plan and subsequent new Innovation Plans that will evolve out of that Plan. Over time, we have learned that Innovation Planning requires significantly more time and effort, as well as stakeholder input, to develop and implement the projects funded out of other MHSAs components. Innovation projects tend to arise out of ideas generated through the community planning process. To turn these ideas into plans and, then, projects, requires ongoing input from stakeholders in the target populations, as well as other community members. Thus, the innovation plans require much more robust efforts than other components of MHSAs planning.

The original roll-out of the Innovation component in 2008-09 recognized a particularly high need for robust community planning associated with Innovation. The Department of Mental Health's Information Notice 09-02 specified that counties could dedicate up to 25 percent of their combined 2008-09 and 2009-10 Innovation component allocation (1.25 percent of the overall MHSAs allocation) to community program planning for Innovation. This high initial level reflected the need to educate stakeholders about the new component, but also reflected the anticipated higher planning burden for creating innovative projects as compared to implementing or continuing programs already demonstrated to be effective. We know that our stakeholders want us to include them and ensure that their input is used to create worthwhile innovations projects. Fresno County would like to develop a more robust stakeholder process to be able to demonstrate the meaningful community planning that has occurred and ensures that it is representative of all of our community's needs.

The Plan

Fresno County is requesting Commission approval to dedicate use of Innovation funds for a specific annual allocation for a wide range of community planning activities, having an emphasis on the planning involved in support of the Innovation Plans. Currently, counties may use up to a total of up to 5% of their total MHSAs budgets to fund community program planning efforts, and are required to designate staff positions or units responsible for overseeing and supporting the community program planning process.

Historically, Fresno County has not specifically separated out community program planning planned or actual expenditures from our administrative costs. Nor did the Department of Health Care Services' annual Revenue and Expenditure Report form provide a means for reporting those actual expenditures prior to October 2017, a continuation of DMH practice that had begun with

DMH Information Notice 11-16, which retroactively eliminated the CPPP reporting requirements from the RERs for 2008-09 and 2009-10.

Fresno County is seeking approval from the MHSOAC to utilize a total of \$750,000 (\$150,000 per year) over the next five years to conduct innovation-related community planning.

Having funds dedicated to a designing a new, more informed, community planning process will allow us to develop a process which ensures that the community meaningfully supports the Department in developing ideas and projects which can be transformational to the behavioral health system. Dedicated funds will also show our community that we are committed to inclusion of their input.

To begin, Fresno County will use a contracted marketing/communications firm to conduct focus groups with the following populations:

- African American adults and youth
- Spanish speaking adults
- Hmong speaking adults
- Older adults (55+)
- LGBTQ transitional age youth and adults
- Family/loved ones of persons served

The goals of the focus group activities will be the following:

- Ascertain their awareness/comfort with mental health as a topic
- Ascertain their awareness of the department's work
- Determine how they want to be communicated with
 - How do they currently access information/resources?
 - What methods are they interested in seeing us provide information/resources?
 - How do they want to provide us with input/feedback?

Once the focus groups are completed, the community planning process will be designed to ensure that strategies/models/methods suggested by the community are utilized to specifically ensure outreach occurs to these target groups for inclusion in the process. Pre and post data will be collected to determine if the new model is more successful in getting individual community members/stakeholders engaged in the innovations planning process. As more is learned about how to best engage these targeted groups, we can apply those learnings to our broader community planning process.

Additionally, in the coming years Fresno County DBH is seeking to have increased outreach to other targeted populations/communities based on geographic locations as well as youth in rural communities, persons served, Veterans, individuals involved in the criminal justice system, non-citizens, college/university students, along with providers of mental health, substance use and physical health services. Future focus groups will be conducted to determine if the planning process models are successful with these additional target populations. Finally, Fresno County DBH aspires to engage faith communities, advocates and first responders who all work and serve

our communities. These groups will also be studied to understand how best to ensure their inclusion in the planning process.

Fresno County DBH is seeking to strategize ways it can increase community engagement in the planning process through use of social media (as a way to engage those who may not be mobile, or do not want to be seen, but do want to be heard). This will be explored in the focus groups, along with other strategies to increase community awareness and presence at events in the future, including hosting events in the community at different times/on different days, using an array of targeted advertising/marketing (including radio, on-line and social media ads, ads to youth and TAY via streaming services, etc.) to garner greater community input. Lastly, Fresno County is also exploring use of digital/on-line surveys in languages beyond the threshold languages.

Budget

Fresno County DBH is requesting for the Commission's approval and authorization to use \$750,000 of Innovation funds for Innovation-related community planning over the next five years for an annual amount of \$150,000.

Outcomes

Fresno County DBH is committed to its efforts and stakeholders. Fresno County is also committed to adhering to all regulations, with transparency and transformation. The Department will be able to report out its efforts each year in community planning, by demonstrating the types of advertising it utilized, the number of community members who participated in the planning process, the number of community planning events, the target populations for those events, what projects were supported through those community planning activities and how those efforts yield Innovation Plans that are submitted to the Commission for approval.

Conclusion

If this request by Fresno County of the Commission is approved, Fresno County will immediately add an amendment to its Annual Update and include the Amendment to the plan which will be finalized by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors in late June.

Additionally, with approval by the Commission for the use of the identified funds, Fresno County will amend its annual revenue and expenditures report to reflect the changes. Finally, Fresno County DBH will include the community planning funding and this plan in its new three year plan to ensure the identified effort for community planning and related budgets.