



Spotlight on EPI Plus - Sonoma

County Name:

Sonoma County

Budget Allocation:

\$4,203,263 Million Dollars

County Program Information & Summary:

Prior to establishing the ASPIRe program, Sonoma County MHSO Capacity Assessment, 2016-2019 reported a gap in community knowledge in how to access the mental health system of care, potentially creating delays for those in need. Some family members reported feeling "lost" at the initial stage of their loved one's mental illness. They were often leading the process and were unsure if they should seek services and did not know who to ask for support with such a major decision. Sometimes this resulted in waiting to seek help until their loved one experienced a crisis, which they felt could be prevented by having more education about mental illness and information on the resources available. For those that knew they wanted to access services, many reported not knowing where to go to learn about Sonoma County's behavioral health system generally, or specific services and providers. Some stakeholders reported taking a long time to figure out what steps to take to help their loved one and noted the adverse emotional impact of not being able to provide immediate support.

The service delays described above may have led to an increased use of crisis services in the county. There exists a high level of need among consumers in Sonoma compared to other California counties. Many residents used crisis services through the Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU), inpatient hospitals, and emergency departments.

The ASPIRe program's operations plan is modeled after the highly successful Supportive Outreach and Access to Resources (SOAR) program in Solano County. This EPI Plus funding will primarily be used to expand FTE's, secure necessary and additional technical assistance through training and fidelity consulting, modify the staffing structure to ensure adequate and ongoing coverage for staff absences or turnover, modify the service model to include substance use/abuse disorder treatment (previously an elimination criteria for admittance to the program), and create systems so that the clinic can provide IM medications.