California Commission *for* Behavioral Health

Innovation Partnership Fund

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An Invitation to Brave Space

By Micky ScottBey Jones



Together we will create *brave space*. Because there is no such thing as a "safe space" — We exist in the real world. We all carry scars and we have all caused wounds.

In this space

We seek to turn down the volume of the outside world, We amplify voices that fight to be heard elsewhere, We call each other to more truth and love. We have the right to start somewhere and continue to grow. We have the responsibility to examine what we think we know.

We will not be perfect. This space will not be perfect. It will not always be what we wish it to be. But It will be *our brave space together, and We will work on it side by side.*



CONTEXT

This conversation builds on a thoughtful and evolving dialogue the Commission has engaged over the past several meetings regarding the Innovation Partnership Fund.

Those discussions and the *Call for Concepts* have surfaced key ideas, themes, and questions to help guide and spark the next phase of deliberation

Themes raised by Commissioners and the public.....

Data-driven Language access Outcomes Scale Sustainability Access to treatments **Community Centered** Integrate systems Define innovation Built by and not for Transparency Peers Urgency





Goals for our discussion today

Ground the work in shared goals and values that reflect the Commission's commitment to equity, community partnership, and system transformation;



Explore the impact the Innovation Partnership Fund will have at the individual, community, and system levels;



Discuss the potential structure and approach of the Fund, including how it can support innovation, scale, and sustainability; and



Identify the critical questions the Commission must answer together throughout the design process to ensure the Fund is inclusive, effective, and transformative.



Innovation Partnership Fund

Developing the framework

10-minute sprint discussions on framework components to solicit initial input and feedback to further refine the Innovation Partnership Fund.





Areas of discussion and consideration

- Clarify the vision and goals
- Define investment pillars
- Fund structure and types of support
- Governance and decision-making
- Capacity-building and technical assistance
- Data, metrics, and outcomes
- Financial sustainability and policy change
- Communications and storytelling

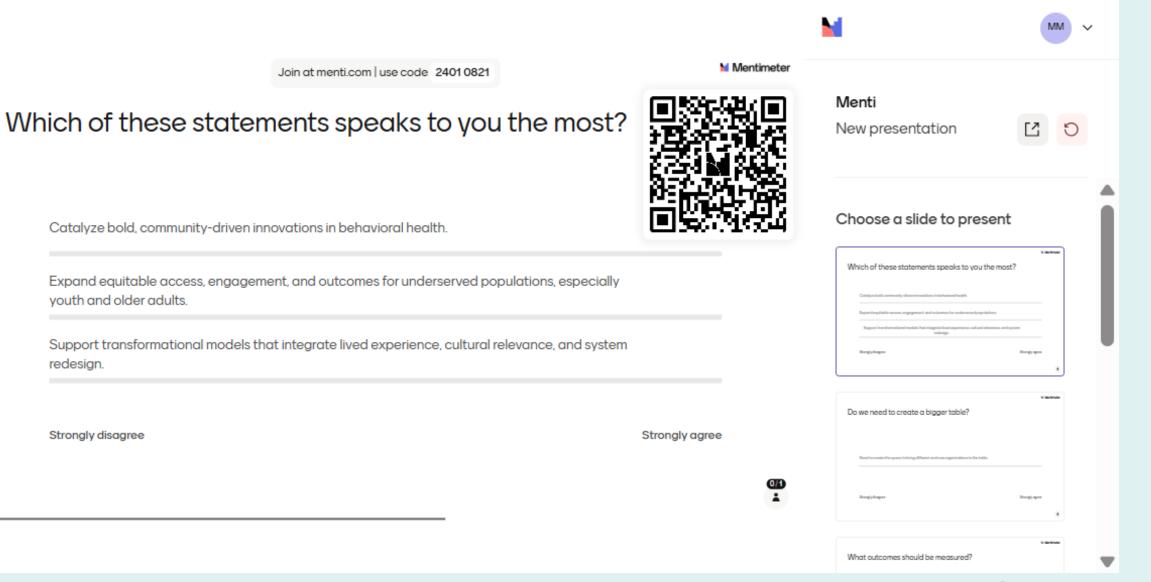


Clarify the Vision and Goals

Ground the Innovation Partnership Fund in a shared "north star"—what do we hope to achieve at the system, community, and individual level?

- Catalyze bold, community-driven innovations in behavioral health.
- Expand equitable access, engagement, and outcomes for underserved populations, especially youth and older adults.
- Support transformational models that integrate lived experience, cultural relevance, and system redesign.





redesign.

Strongly disagree



What overarching outcome should this Fund aim to achieve?

What gaps or inequities are we trying to close?

How do we want to describe success 5 years from now?



Define Investment Pillars

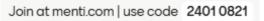
Establish funding priorities or "pillars" to guide selection and ensure balance across innovation types and communities.

Potential Pillars (*Examples*)

- Access Expansion: Reaching underserved or unserved populations.
- **Community-Defined Practices:** Centering culturally rooted and non-clinical models.
- **System Innovation:** Reimagining delivery, payment, or workforce structures.
- **Peer-Led Innovation:** Elevating lived expertise in design and delivery, specific to youth and older adults.
- **Cross-Sector Solutions and Partnerships:** Integrating behavioral health with housing, education, justice, etc.







What other pillars are important to consider?

transpiration leader bold creative fast



Which pillars are most urgent or underfunded today that could have an impact with new funding?

Should the Commission reserve portions of funding for specific pillars? How does the Commission ensure innovation reflects both risk-taking and relevance?



Fund Structure and Types of Fiscal Support

Determine how funding will be deployed to support a diverse range of ideas and organizations.

- **Grant tiers:** Planning, piloting, and scaling grants.
- **Size and duration:** E.g., \$250k for pilot, up to \$5M for scale.
- **Eligibility:** CBOs, counties, tribal governments, collaboratives, etc.
- Flexible funding: Support for operations, staffing, outreach, tech, etc.



Example of Fund Structure

Seed Grants (\$100K–\$500K): For earlystage ideas and smaller community-based organizations.

Growth Grants (\$500K–\$1.5M): For proven models looking to expand or replicate.

Challenge Prizes: Open competitions for specific problems (e.g., older adult isolation and youth suicide prevention).

Catalyst Investments: Public-private partnerships to attract philanthropic or corporate co-investment.



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Which categories are most important?

1st Seed Grants (\$100K-\$500K)

- 2nd Growth Grants (\$500K-\$1.5M)
- 3rd Challenge Prizes
- 4th Catalyst Investments

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Should you include different tracks for readiness levels (earlystage vs. scaling)? How do you make funding accessible to smaller, community-led groups? Should fiscal intermediaries or collaboratives be supported to carry out regional efforts?

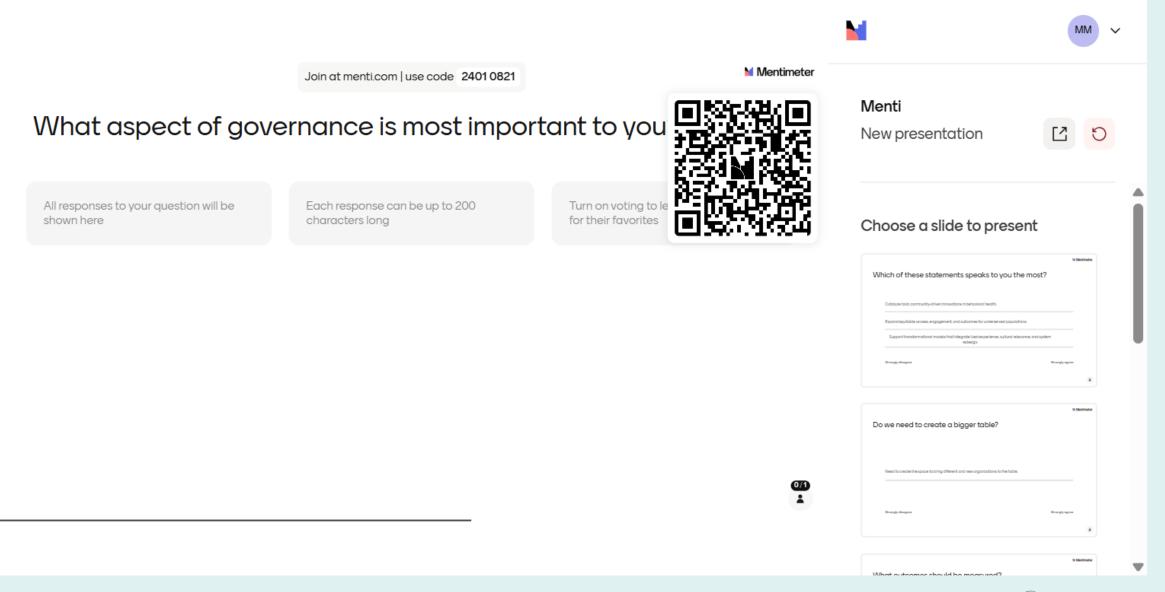


Governance and Decision-Making

Ensure fund decisions are inclusive, transparent, and accountable to the communities served.

- Utilize Program Advisory Committee to iterate and develop framework.
- Transparent scoring criteria co-designed with community.
- Inclusion of equity guardrails in decision-making, this may include prioritizing applications or concepts that focus on the lowest Healthy Places Index quartiles to ensure focus on underserved and low-income populations.
- Create mechanism for feedback from community, including individuals with lived experience, providers, community leaders, and technical experts.







What governance model builds public trust and legitimacy? How do we ensure meaningful community voice in decisionmaking? How does the Commission engage CalHHS, DHCS, HCAI, and CDPH as part of process?



Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance

Level the playing field so emerging or community-led organizations can compete, grow, and succeed.

- Grant-writing support and office hours.
- Fiscal sponsorship and compliance help.
- Evaluation, storytelling, and communications coaching.
- Peer learning communities and mentorship.



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Do we need to create a bigger table?

Need to create the space to bring different and new organizations to the table.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

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What TA supports should be built into the Fund from the start? Should TA providers be procured as a core part of Fund infrastructure? How do we support capacity without overburdening grantees?

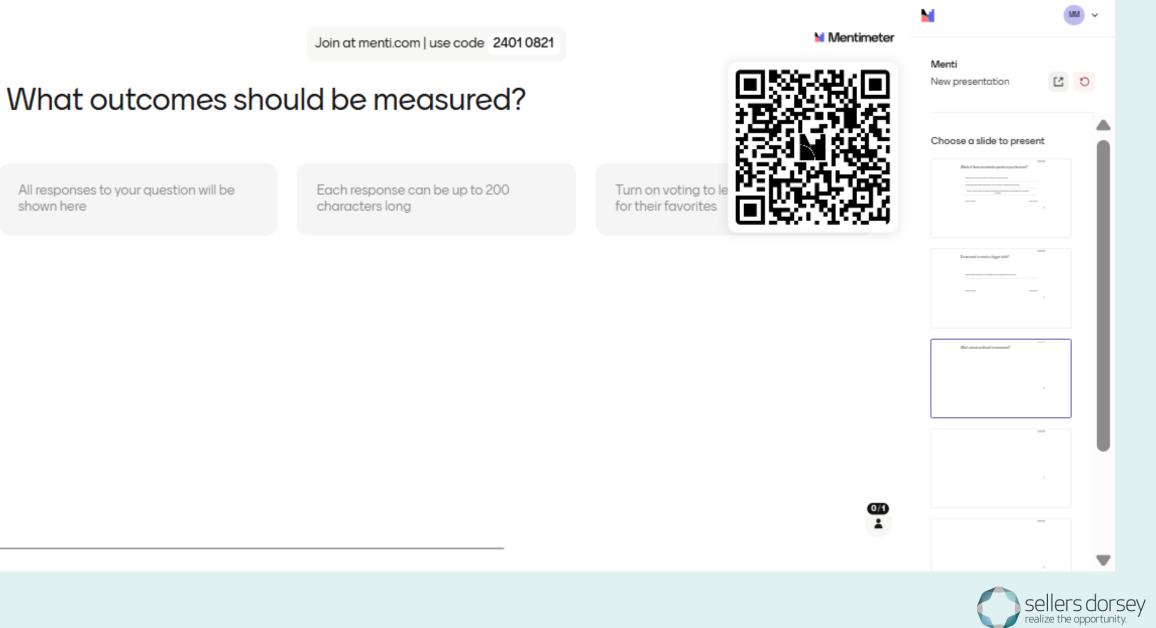


Data, Metrics & Outcomes

Define what success looks like early and how the Fund will learn and improve over time.

- Access metrics: New populations reached, service touchpoints created.
- **Engagement & outcomes:** Retention in care, user-reported improvement.
- **System change:** New policies adopted, practices institutionalized.
- Learning & feedback: Stories of change, qualitative and quantitative insight.





All responses to your question will be shown here

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What's the right balance between rigor and flexibility in evaluation?

Should you co-develop metrics with grantees?

How can you ensure evaluation uplifts community knowledge?



Financial Sustainability and Policy Change

Ensure that impactful innovations live beyond the grant term and influence broader system changes.

- Blend and braid private and philanthropic investments strategically.
- Connect innovations to Medi-Cal reimbursement pathways.
- Align with CalAIM, Prop 1 implementation, BH-CONNECT, etc.
- Create data sandbox to enable quick learning to drive policy change.
- Real-time feedback loop to assess what is working and what is not working.



What would make an innovation "stick" beyond the grant period?

How do you link local innovation to system-wide reform? Should sustainability be a scoring criterion or a TA focus?



Communication and Storytelling

Share what works, lift-up community voices, and build public will for behavioral health transformation.

- Fund grantees to develop storytelling and community media.
- Create an innovation portfolio website or digital hub.
- Host statewide showcases, webinars, and convenings.
- Build narrative power for equity, inclusion, and dignity in care.



How do you elevate the voices of people closest to the work? Should storytelling be a deliverable or supported through TA?

How do you ensure learning is shared with state and local leaders?



Innovation Partnership Fund

Next Steps

- Convene Program Advisory Committee
- Engage community and public
- Consult with state partners
- Develop framework for Commission approval











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Thank you!

