

Advocacy Contracts: Overview

The Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission, as directed by the State Legislature, oversees funding to community-based organizations (CBOs) to support the mental health needs of underserved populations through advocacy, training and education, and outreach and engagement activities. The Commission provides these funds through a competitive application process and awards advocacy contracts to the highest scoring applicants. These contracts are focused on supporting the mental health needs of nine specific populations which have been identified as being historically underserved in California. These nine populations are:

- Clients and Consumers
- Diverse Racial and Ethnic Communities
- Families
- Immigrant and Refugee Populations
- K-12 Students
- LGBTQ Populations
- Parents and Caregivers
- Veteran Populations
- Transition Age Youth (TAY)

Background

In November 2004, California voters passed Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). The passage of the MHSA initiated, at the state and local levels, the concept of transparent and collaborative processes to determine the mental health needs, priorities, and services for California mental health consumers.

The Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC or the Commission) is mandated in W&I Code Section 5846(c) to “ensure that the perspective and participation of diverse community members reflective of California populations and others suffering from severe mental illness and their family members is a significant factor in all of its decisions and recommendations.” The advocacy contracts are one means of ensuring that such perspective and participation occurs.

The advocacy contracts also support the statutory requirement in W&I Code Section 5892(d) that the Mental Health Services administrative fund “include funds to assist consumers and family members to ensure the appropriate state and county agencies give full consideration to concerns about quality, structure of service delivery, or access to services.”

These contracts, originally awarded on a sole source basis, were transferred to the Commission after the dissolution of the Department of Mental Health (DMH) in 2011. The Commission had previously administered small advocacy contracts to these organizations and when the Commission assumed management of the DMH contracts and their associated funds, contracts were then combined and the deliverables rewritten to reflect the goals of both contracts.

As part of the fiscal year 2012/13 State Budget, the Department of Mental Health (DMH) was eliminated and various contracts, services, and budgetary authorities originally granted to DMH were distributed to other state and local entities. Specifically, the funds and authority for advocacy contracts, designed to facilitate inclusion of stakeholders, was transferred to the Commission. As a result, the Commission now manages these advocacy contracts.

Through 2015-2017, the Commission transitioned from sole source awards to a competitive bid process. To prepare for this transition, Commission staff conducted interviews with current contractors and held public meetings to facilitate stakeholder discussions and activities to share lessons learned, highlight successes, and discuss challenges. These discussions provided an opportunity for the stakeholder community to provide feedback on potential opportunities and areas of need.

Starting in May 2016, consistent with the changes in the Budget Act, the Commission initiated a competitive request for proposal (RFP) process for contracts to conduct work focused on the following populations:

- Clients and Consumers
- Diverse Racial and Ethnic Communities
- Families of Clients and Consumers
- LGBTQ+ Communities
- Parents and Caregivers
- Transition Age Youth (ages 16-25 years)
- Veteran Communities

In April 2018 the Commission added funding for Immigrant and Refugee Populations to address increasing disparities in mental health services for immigrants and refugees in California.

In November 2022 the Commission added funding for K-12 Students to meet the growing need for student mental health advocacy.

Contract Goals and Scope of Work

In alignment with the MHSA and the work of the Commission, these contracts will assist consumers of mental health services, family members of mental health consumers, and community members to ensure state legislature, state and county agencies, mental health professionals and service providers, and peer support workers give full consideration to concerns about quality, structure of service delivery, or access to services.

Additionally, all work conducted will support and ensure that the perspective and participation of diverse community members reflective of California populations and others suffering from severe mental illness and their family members is a significant factor in all the decisions and recommendations of the Commission.

The overarching goal of these contracts, through this project is to ensure the meaningful statewide participation of those with lived experience and their families at all levels through a broad range of activities, messages, and supports to empower, build capacity, reduce stigma, educate, and create awareness to diverse populations and unserved communities. Activities and strategies should encourage systems change, increased access, linkage, and inclusion of clients, consumers, and their families and contribute to the development of a robust stakeholder network.

Scope of Work (SOW)

The statewide contractor will conduct statewide and local level activities that advocate for the critical mental and behavioral health needs of the Population. The Contractor will be responsible to represent the needs of the Population through state-level advocacy, representation, and policy engagement. The Contractor will work in conjunction with local level entities, where applicable, which serve the Population to conduct training and outreach activities, and advocacy meetings at the local level.

The SOW of the advocacy contracts have changed and evolved with each contract cycle as the landscape of mental health policy and available funds changes. However, every contract has three common objectives (deliverables) of meeting the needs of advocacy populations through (1) Advocacy, (2) Training and Education, and (3) Outreach and Engagement.

- ***Deliverable 1: Advocacy -Statewide and Local***
- ***Deliverable 2: Training and Education***
- ***Deliverable 3: Outreach and Engagement***

Effective implementation of this contract will require regular reporting, meetings, and updates between the Contractor and the Commission Staff.

Current Advocacy Contracts (as of 7/25/2024)

ORGANIZATION	CONTRACT NO.	POPULATION	CONTRACT TERMS
BOAT PEOPLE SOS	21MHSOAC070	Imm/Ref Local (Cohort 1)	Awarded: 5/2022 Start: 6/2022 End: 6/30/2025 \$402,500
THE CAMBODIAN FAMILY	21MHSOAC071	Imm/Ref Local (Cohort 1)	
CENTER FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS	21MHSOAC072	Imm/Ref Local (Cohort 1)	
LEVEL UP NORCAL	21MHSOAC073	Imm/Ref Local (Cohort 1)	
CALIFORNIA PAN-ETHNIC HEALTH NETWORK (CPEHN)	21MHSOAC074	Imm/Ref State	Awarded: 5/23/22 Start: Jun 2022 End: 6/30/2025 (Original) End: 9/30/2025 (Amendment) \$400,000 (Original) \$800,000 (Amendment)
HEALTHY HOUSE WITHIN A MATCH COALITION (HEALTHY HOUSE)	22MHSOAC012	Imm/Ref Local (Cohort 2)	Awarded: 9/2022 Start: 9/2022 End: 9/30/2025 \$402,500
HMONG CULTURAL CENTER OF BUTTE COUNTY	22MHSOAC013	Imm/Ref Local (Cohort 2)	
ORANGE COUNTY ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITY ALLIANCE (OCAPICA)	22MHSOAC014	Imm/Ref Local (Cohort 2)	
VISION Y COMPROMISO	22MHSOAC015	Imm/Ref Local (Cohort 2)	
CALIFORNIA YOUTH EMPOWERMENT NETWORK (CAYEN)	22MHSOAC023	Transition Age Youth	Awarded: 12/29/2022 Start: 4/13/23 End: 6/30/26 \$2,010,000 total
CAL VOICES	23MHSOAC027	Consumers	Awarded: 1/2024 Start: 3/11/2024 End: 5/31/2027 \$2,010,000 total \$670,000 year
MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF CALIFORNIA (MHAC)	23MHSOAC028	LGBTQ+	
CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF VETERAN SERVICE AGENCIES (CAVSA)	23MHSOAC029	Veterans	
CALIFORNIA PAN-ETHNIC HEALTH NETWORK (CPEHN)	23MHSOAC030	Diverse Communities	
UNITED PARENTS	23MHSOAC031	Parents/Caregivers	
NAMI CALIFORNIA	23MHSOAC039	Families	
JAKARA MOVEMENT	23MHSOAC066	K-12	Awarded: 6/2024 Start: 6/27/2024 End: 5/15/2026 \$970,000

Key

Imm/Ref = Immigrant and Refugee

Awarded = Commission announces highest scoring applicant from RFP process

Start = Contract was executed: signed by both organization and MHSOAC

End = End date on the contract. Organization is no longer contractually obligated to complete deliverables or receive funding