



INNOVATION PLAN APPROVAL SUMMARY

San Bernardino County Innovation

Total Requested for Innovation: \$6,311,400

Staff Recommend: APPROVAL

Review History

County Submitted 2010-1011 Annual Update with new Innovation Program: 5/13/2010
MHSOAC Vote regarding Plan Approval: 6/24/2010

San Bernadino County

Encompassing 20,105 square miles, San Bernardino County is geographically the largest county in the continental United States. The County includes urban centers and large, sparsely populated mountain and desert areas, where physical access to mental health services is limited. The County median household income is significantly lower than the California average. A culturally diverse population enriches San Bernardino County. Latinos constitute 51% of the population, and African-Americans are 9.4%. There is a growing and diverse population of Asian-Pacific Islanders (5%), and a small but active population of Native American/Tribal communities (1%). Through Community Program Planning, the County identified the LGBTQ community and military veterans and their families as un-served, underserved or inappropriately served. The County's work plan cites San Bernardino Children and Family Services Department (CFS) statistics that currently African-Americans are overrepresented in foster care at 27.3%. San Bernardino County has requested funding for one new Innovation Program.

Interagency Youth Resiliency Team

Summary Information

An extensive County stakeholder self-study that included foster youth, caregivers, child welfare and mental health professionals identified unresolved grief, loss, traumatic stress, exposure to violence, and loss of significant supportive relationships as key contributing factors to problems faced by youth involved in foster care and juvenile justice proceedings. According to the County's stakeholders, the current approach to serving these youth lends itself to confusion, duplication, inappropriate service delivery, and youth not receiving all of the services they require, or experiencing a prolonged delay in receiving needed services. San Bernardino County community planning for Innovation prioritized the need to increase early identification of trauma and mental

health issues, improve access to services that foster wellness and resilience, and coordinate services for these at-risk youth.

San Bernardino County's Innovation program intends to improve service delivery for diverse children and youth who are dependents of the County of San Bernardino Children and Family Services Foster Care program or Wards of the Court supervised by the Probation Department. A key focus of the Innovation is to utilize the "invaluable expertise" of youth who have been involved in these systems to plan, implement, and evaluate services for youth in the County of San Bernardino. The Interagency Youth Resiliency Team's innovative approach will bring together the knowledge and expertise of former dependents and wards of the court and of diverse professionals from the mental health system, the child welfare system, the Probation Department, courts, foster youth agencies, local faith-based organizations, and resource providers. The purpose is develop, deliver, and evaluate a program to address unresolved grief and loss, the effects of environmental trauma, and issues stemming from exposure to violence and gangs to help these youth achieve a successful, self-sufficient adulthood.

Expected Contribution to Learning and Development of New/Improved Mental Health Approaches

Some key goals for this program are to learn about:

- The impact of grief and loss, exposure to violence, and environmental trauma in diverse youth.
 - If and how the reality of being part of the dependency/ward "system" is a contributing factor and/or exacerbates youth's issues of grief, loss, and trauma.
- What team strategies are most effective? If and how the model:
 - Addresses issues of grief, loss, exposure to violence, and environmental trauma
 - Allows the County to identify and address behaviors that manifest themselves in diverse youth at an earlier point in their exposure to the "system"
 - Helps build connections for diverse youth served, including positive relationships developed with resource providers and peer counselors
- Identification and development of methods and skill sets necessary for resource providers and youth to address unresolved grief and loss as well as environmental trauma in a culturally inclusive manner
- What happens with youth and resource providers who have received mentoring from diverse peer counselors that is different from youth and resource providers who have not received mentoring?
 - If the provision of mentorship help these youth address their unresolved issues, including identification of most effective forms of mentorship
 - Did the program and its services improve youth's transition to adulthood?
- In what ways is the program making a difference for the community?

Anticipated Challenges (if applicable)

- Expectation is to serve a large number of people with relatively small staff

Example Reviewer Comments

- Appreciation inclusion of Spanish translations of materials and availability of interpretation in Spanish, Vietnamese, and American Sign Language for community planning activities
- Appreciation for work plan's sensitivity to cultural variations in diverse regions of San Bernadino County
- Very strong emphasis on peer support; youth contribute in key roles to development and assessment of model
- Budget expenditure categories are consistent with program description and learning/model development goals
- Five years will give sufficient time to develop and program and provide adequate training and support, especially for peer staff
- It would be useful to develop specific measures of improved access and strengthened coordination

Duration of Innovation Program: five years

Amount of Funding: \$6,311,400

Similar Focus to other MHSA Innovation Programs: Butte (not yet approved by MHSOAC), Humboldt, Monterey, San Francisco