

## **Guidance on Eligible Workforce Funding Activities (Community Mental Health Services Block Grant)**

The purpose of this memo is to provide information and guidance for Office of Mental Health (OMH) licensed, regulated, and designated providers who are eligible to receive funds to be used for workforce recruitment and retention activities under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) of 2021. This legislation provides supplemental funding for mental health services through the time-limited expansion of the Community Mental Health Services (CMHS) Block Grant.

OMH hosted multiple stakeholder feedback meetings with over 700 stakeholders to solicit extensive feedback regarding these funding opportunities and identified *Workforce Investment/System Capacity Building Priorities* as one of four key priority areas.

OMH will notify eligible providers of their workforce investment awards.

### **Eligible OMH entities include:**

- OMH-licensed Outpatient Treatment Programs\*\*
- OMH State Aid funded Non-Residential Community Support Programs serving persons with SMI/SED

**\*\*Clinics required to comply with OMH regulations codified at 14 NYCRR §599.15(k) are excluded and not eligible for workforce investment awards.**

Eligible OMH entities may use workforce investment awards for the activities described in this guidance and must file all required documentation. Additionally, eligible providers must commit to efforts to recruit a workforce that is representative of the people they serve and to develop cultural competency skills in their current and prospective workforce through staff development and training.

## **I. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

The following strategies comprise a list of eligible workforce development initiatives permitted under this contract for OMH-licensed providers. Contracted entities may choose to offer one or more of the following incentives to recruit and retain employees in their eligible programs. These initiatives may be implemented in a manner that meets the needs of each program within the guidelines described below. Such initiatives may include, but are not limited to:

### **A. Recruitment and Retention Incentives**

Funds may be utilized for recruitment and retention bonuses for staff titles as specified by CFR title codes 100 to 500. These incentives are limited to:

- Retention and hiring bonuses, which are limited to no more than 10 percent of an individual's annual salary, not to exceed \$10,000 per employee. Bonuses may be spread out over time;
- Longevity Pay;
- Retirement Contributions and other one-time fringe benefit payment\*;
- Differential Pay;
- Hazard Pay;
- Relocation incentives;
- Additional bonus if fully vaccinated.

**B. Educational Expenses**

Funds may be used for tuition, exam, and application fees for new and/or existing staff, as long such expenses are directly related to a job requirement or for career advancement, including courses related to cultural competency and diversity trainings. Funds may also be used for registration fees for conferences, tuition for professional development college level courses, and other professional trainings including continuing education courses. **However, funds may not be utilized for loan forgiveness.**

**C. Career Development and Training**

Funds may be used for the creation, promotion, and/or enhancement of internship, fellowship, and/or other career development programs. Providers may collaborate with academic and policy institutions to develop strategies for training staff based on needs assessments and provider interest. Funds may also be used for additional employee engagement and workforce development strategies such as developing or acquiring training curriculum, funding registration fees, and covering expenses for employees to attend or provide training events.

**\*Due to the time-limited nature of these funds it is strongly recommended that these funds are not used for on-going salary or fringe benefit increases that cannot be supported beyond the grant period. Funds awarded under this scope of work may not be transferred or used for any other project or purpose.**

**II. TIMEFRAME AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

**A. Timeframe**

- Providers will be notified of an award no later than October 31, 2021
- Providers must accept or reject the funds per instructions in award notification no later than December 31, 2021
- Completed attestation form is due by March 31, 2022
- Final summary and expenditure reports (with supporting expenditure detail) are due to OMH no later than December 31, 2022

**B. Documentation**

- Providers must respond to the Workforce Investment Award notification by completing the Federal Certification form by December 31, 2021
- Providers must complete and submit a Provider Form
- Providers must complete and return the attestation form by March 31, 2022
- Providers must submit an end-of-grant report no later than December 31, 2022.
- Providers will be required to submit a final expenditure report no later than December 31, 2022 with supporting documentation indicating how funds were spent.