



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Behavioral Wellness
Department No.: 043
For Agenda Of: January 24, 2023
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time: N/A
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Antonette Navarro, LMFT, Director
Director(s) Department of Behavioral Wellness 805-681-5220
Contact Info: Natalia Rossi, Mental Health Services Act Manager
Department of Behavioral Wellness 805-681-5220
SUBJECT: Behavioral Wellness – Mental Health Services Act Innovation (INN) Project Plan
Application FY 22-27: Housing Assistance and Retention Team (HART)

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- A. Approve and authorize the Director of the Department of Behavioral Wellness or designee to submit a FY 2022-27 **Mental Health Services Act Innovation (INN) Project Plan** application to the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC), for the Housing Assistance and Retention Team (HART) project which serves to increase retention within the County’s permanent supportive housing programs, requesting a total of **\$7,552,606** from the MHSOAC over the estimated period of February 1, 2023 through June 30, 2027; and
- B. Determine that the above action is a government funding mechanism or other government fiscal activity, which does not involve any commitment to any specific project that may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment, and is an organizational or administrative activity of the government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment and is therefore not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to section 15378(b)(4) and (b)(5) of the CEQA Guidelines.

Summary Text:

This item is on the agenda to request Board of Supervisors approval of the Department of Behavioral Wellness’ FY 2022-27 **Mental Health Services Act Innovation (INN) Project Plan** application to the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC). The project, the Housing Assistance and Retention Team (HART), is a three-prong approach to increase retention within the

County's permanent supportive housing program by assisting clients as they transition into independent living, educating and training Housing Authority and other property management staff on how best to serve this vulnerable population, and creating data collection methods to drive decision making and identify emerging trends. This project is anticipated to begin on February 1st, 2023 and end on June 30th, 2027. The Department of Behavioral Wellness is requesting **\$7,552,606** from the MHSOAC over the period of four-and-a-half years to fund this project.

Approval of the recommended actions will allow the County to increase retention within our permanent supportive housing programs by assisting clients as they transition into housing, facilitating tenant skill-building and independent living skills, and providing holistic services that are strengths-based and needs-driven, including Peer Support, intensive case management support, intensive social service benefits counseling, independent living skills curriculum, and a twenty-four-hour-a-day "warm line".

Background:

Mental Health Services Act INN:

The Department of Behavioral Wellness (BWell) provides specialty mental health services to individuals with specialty mental health needs, and to the extent resources allow, to uninsured children with Serious Emotional Disturbances (SED) and adults with Serious Mental Illness (SMI). The Mental Health Services Act, passed by California voters in 2004, levied a 1% tax on annual incomes over \$1 million to increase funding for new and expanded mental health services.

The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) requires the delivery of programs and services, such as Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) and Community Services and Supports (CSS), that have demonstrated effectiveness and shown positive outcomes. However, it also recognizes the need to expand the set of programs and practices recognized as effective. The Innovation (INN) component of the MHSA funds exploration of new or adaptive approaches in community mental health. Five percent (5%) of total funding for each county mental health program for Community Services and Supports (CSS) and Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) is reserved for Innovation (INN). The Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) approves Innovation project spending. Once provided with MHSOAC approval, BWell can begin expending funds on the project.

Innovation can occur in virtually any aspect of the community mental health system, including administration, governance, and advocacy. Innovations should result in one (or more) of the following:

- Increase access to mental health services to underserved groups.
- Increase the quality of mental health services, including measurable outcomes.
- Promote interagency and community collaboration related to mental health services or supports or outcomes.
- Increased access to mental health services.

Housing Assistance and Retention Team (HART):

Over the past two years, we have increased housing capacity by 61 units and BWell has been awarded funding for an additional 76 units. These will come online during the next four to five years, thereby expanding our permanent supportive housing capacity to 126 units in less than six years. Some MHSA and No Place Like Home (NPLH) tenants are being evicted or facing charges of housing infractions, even though we currently provide twenty hours a week of onsite supportive services at our new housing sites (The Residences at Depot Street, Homekey Studios, and West Cox Cottages). After talking with tenants, clients, and onsite staff, we have discovered that not enough support is being provided for tenants, many of whom have not successfully lived independently for years. Tenants would benefit from holistic services

that are strengths-based and needs-driven, including Peer Support, intensive case management support, intensive social service benefits counseling, independent living skills curriculum, and a twenty-four-hour-a-day “warm line” that all tenants can call and reach a peer for any supportive services, housing questions, or social unease that they are feeling. Housing management and providers are also in need of additional training, including Mental Health First Aid, Trauma-Informed Approaches, Housing First policies and Housing Rights for Tenants.

The HART team will consist of a Housing Program Manager, two Peer Team Supervisors, peer case workers and peer recovery specialists. The case workers and peer recovery specialists will work with consumers to help them maintain and strengthen their independent living skills and connect them to mental health and substance use services. They will provide necessary transportation for tenants, have flex funding available to make sure tenants have the necessary items they need when they first move in, and be available on the “warm line” to provide twenty-four hour a day peer support.

Case worker and peer recovery specialists will directly serve all MHSA, Homekey and NPLH housing sites and will work with BWell-supported tenants, particularly with individuals who are transitioning to housing after being unsheltered for extended lengths of time. The population served will be anyone living in a MHSA, Homekey or NPLH funded unit. Tenants will not have to be actively engaged in services with BWell to receive services from the HART team.

Tenant skills-building activities may include creating a structure and routine in their daily lives to get their needs met; coordinating care with community-based agencies providing services/supports to the consumer; linking consumers to physical and mental health services; coordinating care and problem solving with landlords; learning how to work collaboratively with family members; developing coping strategies; learning and practicing activities of daily living; participating in onsite community building activities like gardening, yoga and cooking; involvement with the local Resource Learning Center, and many more activities designed to assist tenants to be successful community members.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Yes

Staffing Impacts:

Legal Positions:

N/A

FTEs:

N/A

BWell intends to secure a subcontractor for direct services project staff. BWell will return to the Board in the future for approval of any new Board Contract or amendment of an existing Board Contract for this staff.

Fiscal Analysis:

Funding Source	FY 22/23	FY 23/24	FY 24/25	FY 25/26	FY 26/27	TOTAL
MHSA Innovation Funds	\$ 740,714	\$1,661,430	\$1,685,048	\$1,718,279	\$1,747,135	\$7,552,606
Medi-Cal Funding	\$ -	\$-	\$ -	\$-	\$-	\$-
	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-
Total	\$740,714	\$1,661,430	\$1,685,048	\$1,718,279	\$1,747,135	\$7,552,606

Special Instructions:

Please return one (1) Minute Order to Bethany Le at bethle@sbcbswell.org and to the BWell Contracts Division at bwellcontractsstaff@sbcbswell.org.

Attachments:

Attachment A: MHSA INN Project Plan Application FY 22-27

Authored by:

Bethany Le