



October 14, 2022

Elizabeth Landsberg
Director, California Department of Health Care Access and Information
2020 W El Camino Ave #800
Sacramento, CA 95833

Sent via email to: Elizabeth.Landsberg@hcai.ca.gov

Re: Community-Based Organization (CBO) Behavioral Health Workforce Grant Program

Dear Elizabeth Landsberg:

The California Alliance of Child and Family Services represents over 160 community-based organizations serving children, youth and families through behavioral health, education, foster care, prevention and juvenile justice programs. Our members, like agencies across the behavioral health field, are struggling to recruit and retain the qualified staff needed to provide services to California's most vulnerable children and youth. The Alliance applauds HCAI's commitment to supporting and diversifying California's behavioral health workforce and we are excited about the Community-Based Organization Behavioral Health Workforce Grant Program. As our members review the program requirements and navigate the application process, we would like to share the following feedback:

Eligibility

- We commend the focus on CBOs as an integral part of the behavioral health landscape and encourage HCAI to define "behavioral health professionals" broadly to include the wide variety of professionals that fulfill crucial roles in the field. Could HCAI provide a definition or clarify what "other agency-determined behavioral health professionals" means? Alternatively, if programs have flexibility to define this as they see fit, that would be helpful to explicitly state.
- We reiterate the need to include clinical supervisors in this program as they are an important part of the workforce pipeline and are often difficult to recruit and retain. Could a future application cycle include clinical supervisors as eligible participants?

Retention Bonuses

- Retention bonuses provide a great incentive for employees to stay with their employer, however, we are concerned with the five-year service requirement as many staff leave their roles before meeting this threshold. Could HCAI extend the policy for registered and certified alcohol and other drug counselors to include all employees? This component of the program would be more effective if CBOs could offer retention bonuses to all eligible staff after the one-year mark.
- We appreciate the recognition that alcohol and other drug counselors provide critical services in the behavioral health field and agree that they should be eligible for retention bonuses after one year.

The Alliance is thankful for HCAI's leadership and attention to the urgent needs of the workforce. We know we cannot meet the behavioral health needs of children and youth without fully supporting and investing in the dedicated professionals who work tirelessly every day to provide these services. We appreciate the opportunity to provide this feedback and look forward to ongoing collaboration with HCAI on this issue.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paige Clark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paige Clark
Policy and Regulatory Analyst
California Alliance of Child and Family Services

CC: Caryn Rizell, HCAI
Hovik Khosrovian, HCAI
Anne Powell, HCAI