

Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Innovative Programs Workgroup

What is the task of the MHSA Innovative Programs work group?

The tasks of the Workgroup are to:

1. Initiate a planning process that involves getting input from stakeholders.
2. Adhere to State requirements for the Plan.
3. Develop and present proposal to the MHSA Steering Committee, including proposed priorities for the Plan.

What is MHSA?

In 2004 California passed Proposition 63, known as the Mental Health Services Act. It imposes a tax on California's millionaires and the money is used to provide Mental Health Services. The Department of Mental Health, along with the Oversight Accountability Commission and the California Mental Health Directors Association, provide guidance for the Counties for the MHSA requirements. Three components of MHSA focus on direct clinical services (Prevention and Early Intervention, Community Services and Supports, and **Innovative Programs**), and three focus on infrastructure (Workforce Education and Training, Capital Facilities, and Information Technology).

What is an Innovative Program?

An Innovative project is defined as one that contributes to learning rather than a primary focus on providing a service. Innovative Programs are available for a range of approaches, including, but not limited to:

- Introduction of a new mental health practice;
- Substantial change of an existing mental health practice, including significant adaptation for a new setting or community. *Note: Approaches that have been successful in one community cannot be funded as an Innovative Program in a different community even if the approach is new to that community, unless it is changed in a way that contributes to learning.*
- New application to the mental health system of a promising community approach or an approach that has been successful in non-mental health contexts or settings.

Proposed Innovative projects that have previously demonstrated their effectiveness in a mental health setting and that do not add to the learning process or move the mental health system towards the development of new practices/approaches may be eligible for funding under other MHSA components. However, an Innovative project may include a Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) strategy if it were distinct from the PEI requirements, such as targeted to a group not listed as a "priority population", and/or being of longer duration.

Voluntary Participation

Innovative projects must be designed for voluntary participation.

What are the priorities of the Innovative Programs component?

The funds for this component must be used for one of the following purposes:

- To increase access to underserved groups;
- To increase the quality of services, including better outcomes;
- To promote interagency collaboration;
- To increase access to services.

Time Limit

Innovative projects are similar to pilot or demonstration projects and are subject to time limitations to assess and evaluate their efficacy.

What are the Essential Elements of MHSA as they apply to Innovation?

- Community Collaboration: initiates, supports and expands collaboration and linkages, especially connections with systems, organizations, healers and practitioners not traditionally defined as a part of mental health care.
- Cultural Competence: Demonstrates cultural competency and capacity to reduce disparities in access to mental health services and to improve outcomes.
- Client Driven Mental Health System: Includes the ongoing involvement of clients (and participants in prevention programs) in roles such as, but not limited to, implementation, staffing evaluation and dissemination.
- Family Driven Mental Health System: Includes the ongoing involvement of family members in roles such as, but not limited to, implementation, staffing, evaluation and dissemination.
- Wellness, Recovery and Resiliency: Increases resilience and/or promotes recovery and wellness.
- Integrated Service Experience: Encourages and provides for access to a full range of services provided by multiple agencies, programs and funding sources for clients and family members.

What is the Scope of Innovation?

Innovative projects may address issues faced by children, transition age youth, adults, older adults, families, neighborhoods, communities, counties, multiple counties, or regions. As long as the Innovative project contributes to learning and maintains alignment with the MHSA Essential Elements it may affect any aspect of mental health practices or assessment of a new application of a promising approach to solving persistent, seemingly intractable mental health challenges.

Possible Innovative Projects (outside of practices/approaches currently considered part of mental health) proposed projects might have an impact on:

- Administrative/governance/organizational practices, processes or procedures
- Advocacy
- Education and training for service providers (including non-traditional mental health practitioners)
- Outreach, capacity building and community development
- Planning
- Policy and system development
- Public education efforts
- Research
- Services and/or treatment interventions