



**Greater Bay Area Regional Partnership  
Workforce Education and Training**

**Contra Costa Behavioral Health Services Loan Repayment Program  
Application and Program Guide**

**Application Submission Deadline Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 11:30pm**

## Executive Summary

Contra Costa Behavioral Health Services (CCBHS) as a member of the Greater Bay Area Regional Partnership, and through the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Workforce Education and Training (WET) component has developed a Loan Repayment Program (LRP) opportunity. CCBHS, in collaboration with other counties in the Bay Area region, have partnered with the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) and the California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) formerly known as Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) to make this funding available to the public behavioral health system workforce. In Contra Costa County, this includes staff providers in specific classifications working under CCBHS, including Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Services; as well as CCBHS contracted Community Based Organizations (CBOs) staff working in specific classifications.

This program will award up to \$10,000<sup>1</sup> in eligible educational loan repayment to qualified providers working within the Contra Costa public behavioral health system, which commit to a minimum 12-month service obligation in a recognized hard-to-fill or hard-to-retain position within the Contra Costa County public behavioral health system for a maximum of up to thirty-six months.

CCBHS anticipates that there will be a large volume of questions and interested individuals and therefore all interested individuals are highly recommended to read this entire document prior to connecting with County Site Point of Contact to understand application and eligibility criteria as response time to questions may be delayed.

This program seeks to support diversity, equity and inclusion of qualified providers under the public behavioral health system which serve the most vulnerable populations within Contra Costa County in hard-to-fill/retain positions.

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<sup>1</sup> Only applicable towards qualifiable educational loans. See D. Qualifying and Non-Qualifying Educational Loans (page 5).

## Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Executive Summary .....   | 1         |
| <b>Section I: Application Guide .....</b>                                       | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>A. Eligible Professions .....</b>  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>B. Eligibility Requirements .....</b>  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>C. Application to Program.....</b>   | <b>4</b>  |
| Application Dates.....  | 5         |
| Application Software .....  | 5         |
| General Eligibility Criteria .....  | 5         |
| Applicant Information .....   | 5         |
| Employment Verification.....  | 5         |
| <b>D. Qualifying and Non-Qualifying Educational Loans .....</b>                 | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>E. Post Application.....</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| Initial Completeness Review.....  | 6         |
| Evaluator Selection Process.....  | 6         |
| Application Review and Employment Verification .....                            | 6         |
| Establish Individual Contracts & Begin Service Obligation .....                 | 6         |
| <b>F. Service Obligation.....</b>   | <b>7</b>  |
| General Service Obligation Information and Requirements .....                   | 7         |
| Bi-Annual Service Verification .....  | 7         |
| Worksite Absences and Employment Interruption .....                             | 7         |
| Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave.....   | 8         |
| Breach Policy .....   | 8         |
| <b>Section II: Program Guide .....</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>G. Program Information .....</b>   | <b>8</b>  |
| Program Timeline .....  | 8         |
| Program Background.....   | 8         |
| Available Funding and Amounts.....  | 9         |
| <b>H. Communication Requirements .....</b>                                      | <b>9</b>  |
| Leaving an Approved Job Site/Provider Role Prior to Completion of Service ..... | 9         |
| Transfer Request to another Approved Job Site/Position .....                    | 10        |
| Unemployment During Service Obligation.....                                     | 10        |
| Cancellation of Loan Repayment Obligation .....                                 | 10        |
| <b>Section III: Additional/Supplemental Information .....</b>                   | <b>10</b> |
| <b>I. Contact Information .....</b>   | <b>10</b> |
| <b>J. Resource Links .....</b>  | <b>10</b> |

## Section I: Application Guide

### A. Eligible Professions

Eligible provider roles/classifications/positions for the program are:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensed or License Eligible Clinical Social Worker</li> <li>• Licensed or License Eligible Marriage and Family Therapist</li> <li>• Licensed or License Eligible Professional Clinical Counselor</li> <li>• Licensed or License Eligible Psychologist</li> <li>• Certified Substance Use Counselor</li> <li>• Substance Use Counselor Trainee</li> <li>• Registered Nurse</li> <li>• Mental Health Specialist</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Provider is someone providing behavioral health services (mental health or substance use treatment services) AND having personal lived experience. Personal lived experience is personal experience or having a close family member which at any point in their life has had mental health and/or substance use challenges, or systems involvement experience to include experience in the public behavioral health system, foster care system, or at any point in their life has been homeless.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

### B. Eligibility Requirements

**Eligibility Requirement 1:** Applicants must meet all the criteria identified below in Eligibility Requirement 1 AND must meet at least one of the criteria identified in Eligibility Requirement 2 (page 4) to be eligible to apply.

| <b>Eligibility Requirement 1 – Direct Service Staff</b>  |
|--|
| <p><b>Work Hours &amp; Location</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If working within the Contra Costa Behavioral Health Services (CCCBHS) system, an individual must work be working 40 hours per week in an eligible role/classification/position AND be providing at minimum 20 hours per week of direct service to clients/consumers/peers. This includes staff under both Mental Health AND Alcohol and Other Drug Services (AODS).</li> <li>• If working within a CCBHS contracted community based organization designated as part of the public behavioral health system providing services in Contra Costa County, either under Mental Health or Alcohol and Other Drug Services (AODS), an individual must be providing at minimum 20 hours per week of direct service to clients/consumers/peers to be eligible to apply.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Any provider providing services to clients in a locked facility is not eligible to apply.</b></p> <p><b>Employment Status</b><br/>           Must be employed in an eligible role/classification/position as identified in the application.<sup>2</sup></p> <p><b>Total Weekly Hours of Direct Service</b><br/>           All applicants must provide at minimum 20 hours per week of direct service<sup>3</sup> to clients/consumers/peers in an outpatient or community setting.</p> |

<sup>2</sup> Change of jobs to a different organization during the application or award period may be cause for disqualification, as it may void the minimum length of time and or service obligations. It is recommended that you contact the identified individual prior to any changes in scheduling, position, or employer, as this may affect your ability to meet service agreements and eligibility. In certain circumstances, a change of position/ employer may not affect eligibility, if this information is communicated to CCBHS prior to the change and falls under a CCBHS eligible position/ program.

<sup>3</sup> Direct Service is defined as any of the following: services that generate units of service, opening or closing cases, crisis intervention, assessments, individual/family/group therapy, rehabilitation services, medication evaluation/consultation, integrated behavioral, evidence based practice interventions, as well as community defined practices.

**Eligibility Requirement 2:** Apart from meeting all the criteria identified in Eligibility Requirement 1, all applicants must also meet at least one of the criteria identified in Eligibility Requirement 2, to be eligible to apply.

| <b>Eligibility Requirement 2 – AND at Least One of the Following Criteria</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| Priority for providers who are fluent in English and at least one of the identified languages and/or who identify with cultural and linguistic capacity of communities served. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be fluent in English and one of the following languages: Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Punjabi, Farsi, Portuguese, Dari, Arabic or Tagalog.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>and/or</i></p> <p>Have lived experience as a client/consumer/peer (personal or family member experience). This may be defined as having personal experience or being a family member of someone who has had mental health/substance use challenges, or may have had at any point in their life systems involvement experience; such as having personal experience or had a close family member with experience in the public behavioral health system, foster care system or has at any point been homeless.</p>                    |
| <b>OR</b>  |  |
| Providers in hard-to-fill/retain positions, or those who possess experience or expertise in hard-to-fill/retain positions. <sup>4</sup>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers who work in programs delivering services to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Children and Transition Age Youth (Ages 0 - 25)</li> <li>2.LGBTQIA2S+</li> <li>3.Clients in forensic behavioral health/or who are justice-involved. Clients may not be in a locked facility and should be receiving services through outpatient treatment or in a community based setting.</li> <li>4.Providers who have proven experience serving Latina/Latino/LatinX/Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, African American/Black and indigenous communities.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Providers with integrated care experience/expertise (i.e. integrated primary care/behavioral health care experience/expertise).</li> </ul> |

### C. Application to Program

The first step to applying is to submit an initial application for the program through the California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), formerly known as the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD). This section of the ProgramGuide will outline how and where a user can access application information and what information applicants will need before and during the application process.

There are four distinct parts to the application:

1. General Eligibility Criteria
2. Applicant Personal Statements
3. Applicant Information
4. Applicant Employment Verification (this document is issued outside of the standard application)

As part of the requirements of the program, awarded applicants may not serve multiple service obligations concurrently and must be in service of the program during the agreed upon 12-month service obligation within. In summary, applicants must ensure they are not participating in any other educational loan repayment program

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<sup>4</sup> To receive credit, your will be asked clearly to identify your qualifying program, job functions direct service hours, and employer information on a later issued “Employment Verification,” form in the Loan Repayment section.

from any federal, state, or local agency during the same period as this loan repayment program.

### **Application Dates**

The open application period for the program run from Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022 and close Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 11:30pm. Upon completion and initial review of the application by HCAI, CalMHSA will receive the applicant data from HCAI. Once received, CalMHSA will process for the secondary steps of the application, which may include requesting applicants to submit a supplemental application/questionnaire that assesses additional county-level eligibility criteria.

### **Application Software**

All WET Loan Repayment Program applicants will be utilizing HCAI's Central Application portal to submit their applications. The application portal is web-hosted and will be utilized to collect all applicant information except applicable county-level eligibility criteria, loan and lender information, and employment verification. The portal is located here: [HCAI WET Central Application](#).

CalMHSA will be utilizing DocuSign to facilitate the process of acquiring an employment verification form from all applicants. DocuSign is a secure and simple online tool that allows electronic transmission of documents that require review and electronic signature from recipients while maintaining the security of the information transmitted.

### **General Eligibility Criteria**

The first section of the application will establish that applicants meet the basic necessary eligibility standards set by the Regional Partnership for this program.

### **Applicant Information**

CalMHSA will be collecting all information provided by HCAI. Based on this data, CalMHSA will work with your county to facilitate any further information gathering needed to support your application.

### **Employment Verification**

Once CalMHSA has received the applications from HCAI we will require applicants that meet all eligibility criteria to complete an employment verification and lender/loan information form.

This employment verification will require completion and signature by the applicant, then review and signature by the applicant's immediate and direct supervisor via DocuSign. The employment verification form will be sent to the applicant's email submitted in the Applicant Information segment of the online application. DocuSign will be utilized to ensure secure transmission of information.

Additionally, CCBHS may require a verification letter from the applicant's employer, if further needed to determine eligibility.

## **D. Qualifying and Non-Qualifying Educational Loans**

Government and commercial educational loans obtained for behavioral health care professional degrees or closely related fields, which are in current good standing, qualify for the Bay Area Regional Partnership Loan Repayment Program. Qualifying commercial lending institutions are those subject to examination and supervision by an agency of the United States, or by the state in which the institutions have their place of business.

The following types of debt are **not** eligible for loan repayment under the program:

- Loans in default
- Loans repaid in full
- Credit card debt
- Primary Care Loans
- Personal lines of credit
- Residency loans

The applicant must have obtained the eligible education loans in their own name. Eligible educational loans consolidated with loans owed by any other person, such as a spouse, are ineligible for repayment. For loans to remain eligible, applicant/awardees must keep their eligible educational loans separate from other debts.

## **E. Post Application**

### **Initial Completeness Review**

Once the application period has closed, CalMHSA will be conducting a completeness review of all the applicant and application materials submitted. This will serve as a cursory review to ensure that all requirements were met. All materials including the employment verification documents will need to be submitted no later than two calendar weeks after receipt to be considered eligible and reviewed.

If CalMHSA identifies issues with any applications, it will be at the discretion of the administrator and participating county to decide whether applicants will be given the opportunity to correct or modify their submissions. If CalMHSA and the participating County extends this opportunity, they will attempt to communicate with applicants through their supplied contact information.

### **Evaluator Selection Process**

The independent review panel is comprised of individuals with varied backgrounds, to include professional expertise, lived experience, and personal knowledge. Panelists' information will not be disclosed as a matter of confidentiality. CalMHSA is committed to ensuring the Evaluation Panel is representative of California's racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.

Details regarding the specific process of selecting evaluators as well as the results of the evaluation process will not be shared as a matter of confidentiality.

### **Application Review and Employment Verification**

Once all applications have been checked for completeness and reviewer personal statement scores have been submitted, representatives of the participating counties will perform their verification of employment. During this process, the County representative may contact applicants and/or their designated supervising body to identify discrepancies encountered during the verification process. It is at the discretion of the County to determine their process for resolving discrepancies.

### **Establish Individual Contracts and Begin Service Obligation**

Once the final review is complete and the selected applicants are identified, CalMHSA will communicate with all applicants and inform them of the decision made and any next steps.

Chosen applicants (awardees) will have until two weeks to respond to next steps. If an applicant does not confirm acceptance of their award and submit the completed contract, CalMHSA may take this as a forfeit of

their interest in this program.

## **F. Service Obligation**

### **General Service Obligation Information and Requirements**

The service obligation is an agreement whereby applicants maintain their position and responsibilities servicing the communities they have identified in their application. Aside from performing bi-annual service check-ins with CalMHSA, an applicant will only need to maintain their employment, hours outlined and position at their specified job site throughout the length of the service obligation period and remain in good standing on the loan.

Refer to the section on [Worksite Absences and Employment Interruption \(page 7\)](#) for information on disruptions in employment.

### **Bi-Annual Service Verification**

In addition to agreeing to the length of the service obligation, applicants must agree to bi-annual employment verifications (EVs) throughout the length of their service obligation.

Every awardee must submit employment verification documentation (EVs) during the length of their service obligation, which include the initial Employment Verification, the Bi-Annual Employment Verification, and the Final Employment Verification. These EVs serve as check-ins and are intended to ensure program eligibility requirements are being maintained and that circumstances requiring loan repayment do not change, such as loans falling into default.

The EV form will be communicated during the establishment of the contract with the awardee and must be completed and electronically signed by the awardee. Once completed by the awardee, it will be forwarded to CalMHSA who will confirm with the applicant's practice site. By completing and electronically signing the EV form, the awardee and the practice site are certifying the awardee's compliance or noncompliance with the clinical practice requirements. The Bi-Annual and Final EVs will additionally record the time spent away from the service site during the preceding six - month period to identify personal time off, medical and/or parental leave, or other disruptions in employment.

While CalMHSA will take steps to alert both the awardee and the site to the due date for an SV submission, it is the awardee's responsibility to ensure that their approved service site completes the verification in a timely manner and that it is accurate.

Awardees who fail to ensure that their EV forms are completed and submitted on time risk not receiving service credit and being recommended for default. Awardees who do not submit EVs or who are consistently late in submitting them may become ineligible for future programs.

If an awardee works more than the minimum number of hours per week, then the awardee only needs to report absences (or time spent away from the site) that will impede them from meeting the minimum weekly service requirement. This time should be deducted from the awardee's bank of allowable absences, which is 35 workdays per service year.

### **Worksite Absences and Employment Interruption**

It will be the general policy of the program to defer to the allowable job site policies in relation to interruption in



service and duties at the job site. Changes in job site, changes in hours worked or hours of direct service to clients/consumers/peers per week, or classification may be cause for disqualification, as it may void the minimum service requirements. An awardee must connect with the County identified point of contact any time there is a change in the site, hours worked, hours of direct service to clients, or change in population served. This should be done in advance whenever possible, or as soon as known as this may disqualify applicant.

A detailed allowance for job site interruptions will be articulated in an awardee’s service contract upon intent to award.

**Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave**

If an applicant needs to request maternity, paternity, or adoption leave, they must contact CalMHSA. CalMHSA will defer to the preferences of the participating County to determine whether an extension will be allowed to accommodate for approved leave within the boundaries of current job site policies.

**Breach Policy**

CalMHSA reserves the right to recover monies for the awardee’s failure to perform the obligations set forth in the program agreement.

Section II: Program Guide

**G. Program Information**

**Program Timeline**

| Event   | Key Dates                                |
|---|--|
| Open Applications   | Tuesday, March 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2022   |
| Close Applications  | Saturday, April 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2022  |
| Awardees Selected & Applicants Contacted  | Tuesday, May 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2022     |
| Applicant Contracts Generated, Lender Information Requested   | Monday, May 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2022      |
| Service Obligation Period Begins  | Friday, July 1, 2022                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Period Check-In 1(Initial)</li> <li>• Service Period Check-In 2 (Final)</li> </ul> | Friday, January 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2023   |
|   | Monday, June 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2023     |
| Service Obligation Period Ends  | Friday, June 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2023     |
| Funds Dispersed   | Thursday, August 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2023 |

**Program Background**

The program was developed through the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Workforce Education and Training (WET) component and in collaboration with the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA).

The purpose of the program is to provide financial incentive to retain current qualified, eligible employees in hard-to-fill/ hard-to-retain positions in the public behavioral system. A limited number of awards will be available of up to \$10,000 towards repayment of educational loans in exchange for a 12-month service obligation. Eligible applicants must work in an outpatient setting or in contracted, community-based organization in a hard-to-fill/ hard-to-retain position, as defined by the county’s public behavioral health system.

The Loan Repayment Program is a financial incentive strategy that is included in the Statewide Mental MHSA WET Five Year Plan. It is designed to retain public behavioral healthcare professionals which reflect the cultural and linguistic needs of the population’s served. Through this program the County’s public behavioral health

system seeks to support qualified employees who meet eligibility requirements and commit to a 12-month service obligation.

### **Issuing Body**

The California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) is a Joint Powers Authority, an independent government agency created by California counties and cities, focused on the efficient delivery of California mental health projects for its members. CalMHSA collaborates with the Member Counties/Cities to implement mental health services, project, and educational programs across the state, regionally, and locally.

CalMHSA will perform contract oversight and maintenance for this program. In this role, CalMHSA will serve as point-of-contact between awardees and County Behavioral Health agencies in issues regarding the Program. CalMHSA will also maintain contact with all recipients of awards and their educational loan providers.

### **Available Funding and Amounts**

Individual awards will not exceed \$10,000 for each applicant per 12-month service obligation. CalMHSA and participating Counties may award full, partial, or no funding to an applicant based on a combination of application eligibility criteria, strength of personal statement submission, and available funding.

## **H. Communication Requirements**

Awardees must email CalMHSA and the County site point of contact within these specified timeframes for the following reasons:

- a. Prior to or immediately:
  - If you are no longer employed by the approved job site or will become employed elsewhere during the period of the award. This will assist CalMHSA and Counties to identify if an awardee may still be eligible at the new place of employment.
  - Will be changing your position within your organization
  - Anytime there is a change that would affect the minimum eligibility requirements
- b. Prior to, immediately or within 30 calendar days if you:
  - Have a change to your name, mailing address, phone number, e-mail address or lending institution
  - Begin a leave of absence for any reason
  - Begin maternity/paternity/adoption leave
  - Are requesting to switch from full-time to half-time status

### **Leaving an Approved Job Site/Provider Role Prior to Completion of Service**

CalMHSA and counties expect that awardees will fulfill their obligation at the approved job site in their specified role identified in their initial application. If an awardee feels they can no longer continue working at the approved job site or in their hard-to-fill/ hard-to-retain role, the awardee must discuss the situation and/or concerns with the County site point of contact and CalMHSA contact immediately via phone or email.

If the awardee leaves their approved job site without prior communication with and approval from the County site point of contact and CalMHSA, they may be placed in default as of the date they stopped providing client care at the approved job site and become liable for any monetary damages specified in the awardee's CalMHSA

contract. Awardees who are terminated for-cause by their job site will be placed in default and will no longer be in approval of the obligations of their service period requirements.

### **Transfer Request to another Approved Job Site/Position**

Because the Program is a retention tool, transfers from one job site or provider role into another job site or provider role may not be allowed and could break the requirements of the 12-month service obligation. If an awardee requests a job site transfer due to extenuating circumstances, the awardee must contact both their County site point of contact and CalMHSA. This communication is not a guarantee of approval of the job transfer. Each potential transfer will be considered individually, and the approval of one transfer does not guarantee the approval of any additional transfer.

### **Unemployment During Service Obligation**

Awardees who voluntarily resign from their sites without prior communications and approval with CalMHSA, are terminated for cause, or are deemed ineligible for site assistance will be in violation of the 12-month requirement of their service obligation and will no longer be eligible for participation in the program. This cancellation of service obligation may have a future effect on the applicant's eligibility for future funding opportunities.

### **Cancellation of Loan Repayment Obligation**

The program obligation will be cancelled in its entirety in the event of an awardee death. No liability will be transferred to the awardee's heirs.

## **Section III: Additional/Supplemental Information**

### **I. Contact Information**

Should you have any initial questions about application for this program, please contact your County Site Point of Contact below. Wherever stated throughout this document, the County Site Point of Contact and CalMHSA Point of Contact should be contacted.

If unsure who to contact, please reach out to the County Site Point of Contact first.

County Site Point of Contact - Contra Costa Behavioral Health Services (CCBHS)  
Genoveva Zesati, Workforce Education and Training/ Ethnic Services Coordinator  
[genoveva.zesati@cchealth.org](mailto:genoveva.zesati@cchealth.org)

CalMHSA Point of Contact - California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA)  
Aileen Dizon, Training Manager  
[aileen.dizon@calmhsa.org](mailto:aileen.dizon@calmhsa.org)

### **J. Resource Links**

CCBHS MHSA WET Page: <https://cchealth.org/mentalhealth/mhsa/workforce-education.php>

BHS Homepage: <https://cchealth.org/bhs/>

HCAI Central Application Link: [https://oshpd.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8Jt1BS52a39kCdn](https://oshpd.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8Jt1BS52a39kCdn)