

**FY 2021-22 CHESTER COUNTY
DRAFT HUMAN SERVICES
BLOCK GRANT PLAN
SUMMARY**

May 2021

CHESTER COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DRAFT BLOCK GRANT (HSBG) PLAN

SUMMARY

Posted: 5/17/21

Public Hearing Notice

Chester County, Department of Human Services, scheduled two Public Hearings to gather public input on our FY 2021-22 Chester County Human Services Block (HSBG) Grant Plan. The Public Hearings were advertised in the Daily Local News as required by the Sunshine Act. In addition, stakeholders were notified by e-mail of these meetings through all of the human services departments' Advisory Boards, committees and websites, Chester County Department of Community Development's E-Newsletter, and Access Services, the contracted provider of our family engagement activities. A proof of publication will be included in Appendix "D" of the Plan.

The first Public Hearing will be held on Monday, June 7th, 2021 from 2:00 – 3:30 PM and will be held virtually. To register, please go to www.chesco.org/hsbg.

The second Public Hearing will be held on Tuesday, June 8th, 2021 from 5:30 – 7:00 PM and will be held virtually. To register, please go to www.chesco.org/hsbg.

The opportunity for public input is to obtain feedback on the draft plan summary to be used in developing the final plan and help guide the initial budget as well as mid-year reallocations.

County Planning Process

The Chester County Department of Human Services (DHS) has set in place mechanisms that lay a foundation for involving internal and external stakeholders in the planning process for the FY 2021-22 Chester County Human Services Block Grant (HSBG) Plan. We continue to integrate our System of Care approach along with the Recovery Oriented System of Care, which is built on engagement with families, youth, and adult consumers in all categorical areas, inclusive of all ages, all human services, as well as juvenile delinquency and adult probation, into our planning efforts. The philosophical concepts of System of Care includes cross systems, single plan, engagement, accessibility, person-centered, member driven, youth guided, strengths based, culturally competent, community-based services, least restrictive setting, and fiscally responsible services, which are used to guide the planning process in Chester County.

Our planning is cross-system and multi-leveled. Data and input is gathered at department/discipline specific as well as cross system levels. Cross systems includes across human service categorical areas as well as broader county cross system efforts.

The Policy Leadership Team continues to provide leadership and guidance for the FY 2021-22 Human Services Block Grant (HSBG) planning. The HSBG Policy Leadership Team is comprised of the Directors of all the categorical human services departments, the Director of the Department of Community Development, Deputy Human Services Director of Managed Behavioral Health Care, and the Fiscal Officer and Program Specialist from Human Services. We continue to acknowledge throughout our planning efforts that HSBG funds are not newly acquired funds, but comprised of

the historical allocations for, Mental Health, Intellectual Disability, Drug and Alcohol, Human Service Development Fund, and Homeless Assistance. Therefore, we prioritize maintaining essential services in, and across, these critical areas.

The FY 2021-22 HSBG plan is informed by a variety of stakeholder groups. These groups include advisory boards and community committees, including but not limited to: Department of Drug and Alcohol Services (D&A) Advisory Board; Mental Health Adult Subcommittee of the Mental Health/Intellectual and Developmental Disability (MH/IDD) Advisory Board; Intellectual Disability Committee of the MH/IDD Advisory Board; Recovery Oriented System of Care (ROSC) Leadership Team, ROSC Action Committee, Chester County Partnership to End Homelessness Committees, and ongoing mental health, drug and alcohol and in-home provider meetings. Consumers, individuals in recovery and families are key participants in these groups.

Chester County Partnership to End Homelessness continues to inform our HSBG planning as well. A number of committees have evolved from these two planning processes that include county staff from all of the Human Services departments, Health Department, Department of Community Development, provider agencies, United Way, the business community, and various other community stakeholders. The broad based representation on these committees has provided continuity to all our county's planning efforts, including HSBG planning.

The Draft FY 2021-22 HSBG Plan is a product of all the planning processes described above. A summary of the draft is presented and discussed at the two Public Hearings. The draft plan was posted on the Chester County Department of Human Services website for review and comment. Following the public comment period, a final Plan is presented to the Chester County Commissioners for approval, prior to submission to the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services.

Needs Assessment

We continue to track the goals and priorities developed for all of the categorical areas of the Human Services Block Grant. We also track data for each of the human service departments that have been used in our Block Grant planning. In addition, we utilize trend and unmet need/demand data from across the systems and a variety of sources, including community based information and referral agencies and the categorical departments.

This past year provided many new challenges for the County as well as our contracted agencies. These challenges have included d staffing needs, technology resources, safety concerns, and other problems that were caused by COVID-19.

Workforce challenges are continuing across the human services. The expansion of telehealth services for mental health and substance use disorders has been extremely beneficial and we are hopeful the expanded ability to use this resource will be maintained by the Commonwealth post pandemic. We are also concerned about potential post pandemic increases in need in the areas of mental health, drug and alcohol and, family supports.

Some past challenges also continue and include transportation, especially for people living outside the limited public transportation service area in the county; need for more global outreach and education for the community at large; a continued focus on opioids including overdose prevention and; the need for meaningful community employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. We are also continuing our joint efforts with the Department of Community Development, our sister agency, to address the needs of individuals who are experiencing homelessness, particularly those with mental health and drug and alcohol disorders.

We will continue to monitor and endeavor to respond to these challenges to best meet the needs of our citizens.

Human Services Narrative

The organizational design of the County of Chester incorporates all the human service categorical departments (Aging, Children, Youth and Families, Drug and Alcohol, Mental Health/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Veterans' Affairs and the Youth Center) reporting to the Human Services Department Director. In addition, HealthChoices, the Human Services Development Fund, and state food programs are administered directly out of the Department of Human Services (DHS). The Homeless Assistance Program is overseen by a sister county department, the Department of Community Development, which works very closely with the Department of Human Services on joint projects including those specifically addressing individuals who are homeless with significant mental health and substance abuse issues.

This structure assists the County of Chester in continuing to implement our Human Services Block Grant Plan because we have the infrastructure and organizational design to be successful. The County of Chester has had this organizational design for almost twenty five years. In this design, the Department of Human Services does not have a vested interest in any one categorical area and therefore can ensure the plans and funding decisions are fair from the broad perspective.

The flexibility of the block grant funding helps support Chester County's System of Care and Recovery Oriented System of Care (ROSC) philosophy, that is incorporated throughout all of the human services categorical departments. As a result of the county's human services' organizational design and our commitment to embracing a System of Care philosophy across all human service departments, we are able to support a strong evidence based, evidence informed and trauma informed community system that helps to provide a broad array of services for residents of all ages that best meet the needs of those we serve.

A Look Back at the Human Services Block Grant in Chester County:

Looking back at the Human Services Block Grant (HSBG) process after ten years of participation, we recognize that the flexibility accorded through the Block Grant allows us to look at planning, including financial, across the human services and not just individual within the categorical departments. It has also helped us to make mid-year decisions to reallocate funds to address unexpected and unmet needs. As a result, the HSBG process has worked extremely well in Chester County because of our continued emphasis on cross-system collaboration, planning and decision-making.

The feedback we have received through our planning meetings and Public Hearings over the past ten years has been very important to us and has been used to guide our programming and services across all of the human service systems. The following list are highlights of some of the programs or initiatives that have been created over the ten years of the HSBG.

- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) for Youth and Adults Trainings through various providers with more than 4140 certified as Mental Health First Aiders to date.
- Hiring of a Mental Health Diversion Specialist to serve as the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Coordinator and support and progress our work around the “Stepping Up Initiative.”
- Increased education and awareness efforts and funding to address the opioid epidemic in the county, especially regarding Narcan and its availability and Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT).
- Significantly increasing access to permanent housing resources such as Continuum of Care Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Housing Choice and Mainstream Voucher programs through the Chester County Housing Authority. Referrals for these resources now happens in Case Conferencing which has reduced application processing time as well as how long it takes clients to find and lease permanent housing.
- Established the use of the 211 Coordinated Entry System as a single point of access for those at or near experiencing homelessness to streamline referrals for services ranging from emergency shelter to homeless prevent (diversion, emergency rental assistance, emergency utility assistance).
- Increased the access to warm handoff services for individuals who survived an overdose.
- Developed a guide to assist families in selecting a residential provider for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Expanded training relative to suicide prevention to include QPR trainings in Chester County Schools, with more than 3,200 trained in schools and in the community, in collaboration with our partners at the Chester County Suicide Prevention Task Force and the Chester County Intermediate Unit and established Valley Creek Crisis Center as an affiliate with the Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which resulted in an increase in the numbers of calls by approximately 700 calls a month.
- Concluded a Transportation Study Assessment and are developing a Request for Proposals based on the findings.
- Implemented a project to assess our current Information and Referral system and develop a model and initial implementation plan that will best support our citizens.

Programming Priorities – FY 2020-21

Human Services Block Grant (HSBG) Review Meetings were facilitated routinely throughout the 2020-21 fiscal year to monitor the spending and discuss changes and modifications, if necessary. These meetings allowed us to track service needs and areas that were projected to be under spent or over spent, as well as to consider new needs as they were identified. This fiscal monitoring, in addition to our routine monitoring of productivity, quality and outcomes, informed changes in programming and funding.

A variety of programmatic and funding enhancements were implemented or furthered. In some case this was in response to needs resulting from the pandemic and in some cases these advancements were despite the pandemic. Below is a summary of the programmatic changes and funding enhancements that have been made during our tenth year of HSBG implementation (FY 2020-21). Some of these changes did not involve funds being spent, but were resource intensive and are noteworthy because they reflect our comprehensive planning and collaborative efforts across all systems.

- Issued an RFP, hired a consultant and implemented a study of the Information and Referral system within the County. His findings will help direct the future planning of our I&R services.
- Supported providers who offer evidence-based programs with increased funding with an emphasis on those who have bilingual staff.
- Enhanced our Recovery Oriented System of Care (ROSC) to address and implement strategies for people with co-occurring disorders including continued Crisis Intervention Training for law enforcement.
- Expanded the programs, such as Rapid Re-Housing, homeless case management, Family Unification, Transition Age Youth, and Mainstream Voucher programs that are available to address the chronically homeless individuals in an effort to maintain safe and affordable housing.
- Expanded a cross-system Plans of Safe Care (POSC) Leadership Team, which includes staff from the Departments of Health, Drug and Alcohol, Children Youth and Families, Human Services, and Health and a community-based provider to address infants who are substance exposed and their families. The Leadership Team works with the new position that was hired to manage the POSC.
- Concluded the transportation assessment which led to development of an RFP to be issued for our paratransit system.
- Pivoted to Telehealth and other Virtual formats to deliver important services while maintaining a high level of safety.
- Responded to and implemented outside funds to assist with needs addressed in the HSBG and arising from the pandemic, including but not limited to food distribution, mental health initiatives, resource guides, and other concerns that addressed emergent needs.
- Establishment of a First Episode Psychosis program.
- Establishment of a Transition Aged Youth supported living program.

Programming Priorities – FY 2021-22:

We anticipate at this point that any funds that may be carried over from FY 2020-21 would be used for the priority areas identified in our FY 2021-22 HSBG Plan. Below is a summary of the Human Services Block Grant Planning that summarizes the priorities, common themes, and goals of the categorical departments included in the Block Grant. Goals and priorities are not listed for the Department of Aging Services or Children Youth and Family as they are not included in the Human Services Block Grant (HSBG). The Department of Aging has their own Five-Year Plan that details their goals and priorities. Prior to the finalization, the elements of

this plan summary will be incorporated into the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services' format when the guidelines are released.

GOALS - The goals reflect what the Departments want to accomplish with HSBG funds:

- Maintain, enhance and develop a comprehensive system of high quality services that support individuals and family's healthy development, safety, ability to meet their basic needs and recovery. Includes supporting individuals having, opportunities to contribute and feel valued; access to natural supports and; retaining, or developing, community connections.
- Maintain and enhance prevention and early intervention efforts including community awareness and education and support for community driven/based prevention efforts.
- Ensure residents have access to accurate, easily accessible information about available resources to meet their needs.
- Maintain, expand and enhance recovery supports such as warm hand-off, housing initiatives and peer and family support services.
- Prevent and end homelessness by using the HSBG Housing Assistance Program funds to support emergency shelter and rapid re-housing, as well as integrated permanent housing solutions, including case management.
- Reduce the number of individuals with serious mental illness in jail through our Stepping Up efforts and PCCD Grant funded initiatives.
- Continue to provide existing and new training opportunities to support staff and provider agencies with the necessary information to provide successful services.
- Address the effects that COVID-19 has had on our community, provider agencies, employees, and anyone else integral to the Human Service's Departments.
- Continue to be flexible with service delivery to individuals, such as the usage of telehealth services.

COMMON THEMES FROM PLANNING INPUT- The categorical departments included in the Human Services Block Grant (HSBG) Plan coordinated many meetings of internal and external stakeholders to gather input for the FY 2021-22 HSBG Plan, as previously described. Below is a summary of the common themes (not in rank order) from the feedback:

1. Need for resources for individuals on the Prioritization of Urgency of Needs waiting list.
2. Need for increased prevention and early intervention services.
3. Service system fragility has been greatly exacerbated by pandemic.
4. Workforce needs exist across the system including needs for specialized clinical skills such as dual diagnosis (mental health and intellectual or developmental disability).
5. Increased need for emergency housing (shelter) as well as changes in how emergency housing is provided to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and case management to support obtaining and maintaining permanent housing.

6. Increased access to telehealth for mental health and substance use disorder treatment has been very beneficial and concerned this ability will not be retained post pandemic.
7. Continued support for the need for outreach, education and advocacy.
8. Continued need for increased bi-lingual services.
9. Need for accurate, easily accessible, interconnected, and well known resource for information and referral including navigation assistance.
10. Need for a continued focus on COVID-19's effects on the Human Services Departments
11. Need for increased access to technology to support the changing service delivery model

TOP FY 2021-22 PRIORITIES (in rank order) – As a result of the current planning and stakeholder input, review of current programming, unmet needs, last year's priorities, and outcomes the following priorities were identified for the FY 2021-22 Block Grant.

D&A:

1. Ensure a service system that provides quality, racially and culturally competent and impartial alcohol and (all) other drug prevention, intervention and treatment services, including bi-lingual and Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT).
2. Provide, support and participate in County, community based and other activities that focus on substance use disorder (including opioid/overdose) prevention, public awareness/education and treatment, and related services.
3. Support and provide funding for new and enhanced recovery support initiatives/services, including peer support services, Recovery supports for families, training for Certified Recovery Specialist and Certified Family Recovery Specialist, recovery housing initiatives, case management services, and hospital warm hand off services, among others.

DCD:

1. Support Emergency Shelters
2. Provide hotel vouchers for persons experiencing homelessness when no emergency shelter is available, particularly for pregnant women and/or households with infants
3. Support Case Management services

DHS:

1. Support outreach and information and referral services throughout the county. Implementing suggestions from recent Consulting project.
2. Provide parenting supports and skill development for families
3. Ensure coordination of and maximum use of all funds across all systems

ID:

1. Funding for emergent health and safety needs
2. Assuring the delivery of high quality services through enhanced monitoring activities
3. Staff training and workforce development

MH:

1. Build on results of peer initiative and enhance peer culture
2. Develop and implement a plan based upon the Children's Mental Health Service System Mapping
2. Expansion of Stepping Up Initiative

DRAFT