

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name (10 words maximum):

Mendocino County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services COVID-19 Mitigation Project

Brief Summary and Purpose of Project (100 words maximum):

Mendocino County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services plans to expand and strengthen our COVID-19 mitigation efforts for our large rural client base whom we serve individually, in group settings, and through our recently opened crisis residential treatment center. We believe that our ability to provide safe in-person services to our vulnerable at-risk populations is vital to the health and safety of our rural community. We believe that engaging our clientele with these efforts can help normalize and educate mitigation strategies to the communities we serve who are hesitant or suspicious of the public health response to COVID-19.

Geography (County-level)

Please indicate what percentage of activity will be spent in which California counties (total must add up to 100). 100% Mendocino County

Population to be Served

Focus Populations (Race/Ethnicity)

For the racial and ethnic populations that will be affected, provide your best estimate of the percentage of the total people of each population (total must add up to 100).

☐ African American/Black: 1%

☐ American Indian/Alaska Native: 6%

☐ Asian-American/API: 2%

☐ Latino/Hispanic: 26%

☐ Other: 0.3% [Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone]

☐ Mixed race: 1%

☐ White: 64%

Focus Populations (Age)

☐ 12-17: 20%

☐ 18-24: 15%

☐ 25-44: 44%

☐ 45-64: 20%

☐ 65 and older: 1%

Population Reached

Please indicate the percentage of focus population to be reached from March 2022 – March 2025 (total must add up to 100).

- ☐ COVID-19 testing education: %
- ☐ Rapid onsite COVID-19 testing: %
- ☐ COVID-19 mitigation efforts: 100%

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

Organization Description

Provide a brief overview of your organization (the entity that is carrying out the project), including: a) when it was established, b) its mission, and c) whom you serve. (200 words maximum)

Mendocino County, Established in 1850, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) comprises Mental Health (MH) and Substance Use Disorder Treatment (SUDT) Services.

Mendocino County mental health cares for the people of Mendocino County whose lives are affected by mental illness—delivering services in the least restrictive, most accessible environment within a coordinated system of care that is respectful of a person's family, language, heritage, and culture. We strive to educate ourselves, individuals, families, and the community about mental illness and the possibilities of treatment and recovery. We strive to maximize independent living and improve quality of life through community-based treatment. We work to maximize the resources available and manage our fiscal resources effectively and responsibly while ensuring that productivity and efficiency are important organizational values resulting in maximum benefits for all concerned.

The SUDT program of Mendocino County is committed to providing services to residents of Mendocino County of diverse backgrounds. We offer a culturally competent, gender-responsive, trauma-informed system of care for adults and adolescents while striving to meet linguistic challenges. Utilizing holistic, person-centered recovery, we promote healthy behaviors through prevention and treatment strategies that support our community's need to address alcohol and other drug abuse, addictions, and related conditions.

Demonstration of Capacity

State why your organization has the capacity and ability to implement COVID-19 mitigation and testing services. (200 words maximum)

As a government agency, Mendocino County BHRS has the ability to quickly and effectively operationalize efforts for our already extensive client base. We serve clients in several locations across our county including our main sites in the cities of Ukiah, Willits, and Fort Bragg, as well as through our outreach activities and contracts and partnerships with community based organizations. We plan to implement quality personal protective equipment (PPE), rapid testing, training and education for our clients who require in-person appointments or group therapies. Our dedicated staff is highly skilled at providing a variety of necessary services to our client base and can fulfill these efforts. We would adjust

for 10% time of a Senior Program Specialist position to facilitate purchases and the associated logistics and outreach.

Population Description

Describe the population that will be affected by the proposed project. Include any data available on their geographic setting or neighborhood as well as demographic characteristics (age, gender, race/ethnicity), socioeconomic status, impact of social inequities on community, hesitancy around COVID-19 testing, and any other relevant information.) (200 words maximum)

Mendocino County covers a geographically expansive rural area comprising interior mountainous terrain and isolated coastal areas, resulting in challenging accessibility limitations. The county's rural population has a higher percentage of residents living in poverty than the statewide rate, and the median income is lower than the statewide average. Many of our residents live in high poverty areas with 19.1% of county residents living in poverty, compared with 13% statewide, and 10.5% nationwide.

Close to one-quarter of the county population is Latino. Additionally, there are many unincorporated communities with limited access to services and nine federally recognized Native American Rancherias within Mendocino County.

Notably, rural populations, low income populations, Latino and Native American communities are among the groups who are more prone to suspicion regarding COVID 19 prevention and mitigation efforts. Our county has had difficulties and delays returning to our deeply needed in person groups and our full range of services. Being able to provide appropriate mitigation strategies of PPE and testing would both facilitate this process and provide a means to promote and normalize these strategies to the populations we already have strong service ties to.

Track Record with Proposed Focus Population

Describe your organization's experience providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services. Briefly describe 1-3 examples of your work with this community (or communities). (200 word maximum)

Mendocino County BHRS has a broad array of treatment and prevention services for people living with mental illness and for people living with substance use disorders. BHRS serves approximately 2000 beneficiaries through treatment services and approximately 6000 individuals through prevention programs and contracts, including:

1. Specialty mental health programs provide medication management, care management and linkage services for children and adults in Ukiah, Willits, and Fort Bragg
2. Outpatient Treatment Program provides substance use disorder treatment for adults through individual and group counseling in Ukiah and Fort Bragg.
3. Outreach, prevention, and early intervention services work in the community in various venues including youth leadership groups, wellness centers, culturally specific resource centers, and health and wellness fairs to bring resources and educational materials to the community.

BHRS values cultural humility and collects community stakeholder feedback regularly. We review the diversity of our programs, looking at the demographics of our service recipients and providers compared to county demographics. We strive to improve the cultural responsiveness through required annual

cultural responsiveness trainings, policies, and goals. BHRS has policies and mission statements regarding the needs of our community. Program staff are trained in the impacts of historical trauma and institutional distrust.

Mendocino County's current vaccination rate is 66.74%.

Use of Funds

Describe in detail your plan to use these funds to prevent, prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency and ensure the continuity of services to support individuals connected to the behavioral health system, particularly those engaged in substance use and co-occurring disorder prevention, treatment and recovery service activities. Share the COVID-19 mitigation strategies you will employ and list the specific activities and resources needed to carry out your proposed project, and the timeline. (350 words maximum)

Our primary goal is to ensure BHRS has healthy environments, necessary personal protective equipment (PPE), and rapid testing tools to stay open at full capacity to service our vulnerable rural populations experiencing mental health disorders and/or substance use disorders, providing greater health equity for all. We plan to maintain an adequate supply of these materials in order to provide services during subsequent COVID 19 surges.

Funding will allow BHRS to provide adequate, quality PPE to this vulnerable population that often lacks the resources to obtain or maintain own their own supply. This presents the opportunity to educate and model the effectiveness of PPE and rapid testing strategies for mitigating COVID spread. This in turn deepens the trust and relationship-building BHRS has maintained with these at-risk groups, strengthening the greater overall health equity.

Funding would allow for the purchase of PPE and testing materials, air scrubbers to improve ventilation in older buildings to mitigate droplet spread, development of outreach materials, training of staff on administering rapid tests, and the dedicated staff time of a Program Specialist to coordinate the equipment ordering, management, distribution and required reporting.

Activities/Timeline:

Timeline for Program Development

Quarter 1 3/1/22-3/31/22
Assessing types/amounts of PPE needed to provide services at our Ukiah, Willits, Fort Bragg and crisis residential treatment center locations.
Assessing the numbers of testing materials necessary to maintain an adequate supply for clients and staff.
Determining protocols for administration of rapid testing or distributing self-tests, as well as training any necessary staff on the administration of rapid tests, if applicable.
Assessing the need for air scrubbers in the older BHRS buildings in the cities of Ukiah, Willits, Fort Bragg.
Determining storage space and protocols for materials including PPE, testing materials, air scrubbers, filters, and related materials.
Developing protocols for the ordering and distribution of materials.

Developing data collection protocols for all necessary quarterly, yearly, and final reporting.
Ordering, storing, and distributing materials.
Creating and distributing related outreach materials.
Collect and report data.

Timeline for Maintaining Program

Remaining Quarters 2-13
Ensure staff have necessary supplies of PPE/test kits.
Ensure staff have appropriate data collection tools.
Disseminate any outreach materials.
Maintain inventory of PPE/tests and re-order as necessary.
Collect data and submit all required reporting.

Outreach

Describe how your organization would implement COVID-19 testing education and outreach (200 word maximum).

Mendocino County BHRS regularly participates in outreach events such as community events, health fairs, and farmers markets, as well as having extensive partnerships with community organizations, school programs, and healthcare services providers throughout the county. The program specialist will leverage these existing partnerships and outreach networks to educate on testing, and develop strategies to address consumer hesitance around testing, ensuring access for specific community populations to address long-standing systemic health and social inequities that have put some consumers at increased risk of getting COVID-19 or having severe illness.

Expected Outcomes

List 3-7 expected direct outcomes of the proposed activities. (300 words maximum)

1. Returning to full capacity for in-person group meetings and therapies
2. Build confidence among the populations served in the effectiveness of COVID mitigation strategies including quality PPE and rapid testing.
3. Create spaces where members of the communities served who have co-morbidities or are immunocompromised can safely attend in-person services.
4. Create safe working environments for those serving these greatly at-risk communities.

Evaluation Process

Describe how you will document or evaluate project activities and progress toward the outcomes. (300 words maximum)

BHRS will track a number of data points that will be reviewed regularly for the quarterly reporting to determine whether we are meeting our objectives and goals. We will review any necessary adjustments to service delivery to achieve better efficiency. Data points will include:

- 1) Outreach and presentations for external stakeholders including number of meetings and attendees
- 2) Amount and type of PPE distributed during in-person meetings and individual services
- 3) Numbers of rapid tests administered or self-tests distributed to clientele attending in-person services
- 4) Outreach materials developed and distributed

Partnerships

Describe partnerships that are already in place or will be established to support implementation of your program goals. If no partners are needed, please explain. (200 word maximum)

Though BHRS has extensive partnerships with the many non-profit and governmental service providers throughout Mendocino County, we plan to implement this towards our already existing services and do not plan to engage any partnerships for this effort.

Organizational Capacity

Describe the qualifications of the project leaders and key staff on the project. Specify which positions have staff in place and which will need to be hired. Explain how these qualifications demonstrate an ability to be culturally responsive in carrying out the activities identified above. (200 words maximum)

The project will be implemented under the overall guidance of the BHRS Director. Jenine Miller, Psy.D., a clinical psychologist with experience in mental health and SUD treatment. She currently oversees mental health and SUD services and has worked with BHRS since 2008. Karen Lovato, Senior Program Manager for mental health programs, will serve as supervisor for the grant related activities. BHRS will hire or assign a qualified Senior Program Specialist to serve as the COVID-19 Mitigation Project Coordinator and carry out proposed project activities.

Technical Assistance

To help us plan a technical assistance strategy, please tell us what technical assistance your organization would benefit from in implementing this project? (Your response to this question is not considered in decisions about funding.) (150 words maximum)

Mendocino County always appreciates technical assistance related to identifying and accessing best practices, evidence-based practices, and culturally specific community promising practices specific to rural communities, small counties, COVID education and outreach to medically complex /MH/SUD populations. We would like technical assistance and information sharing from similar projects on how to better collect statewide data, county data, and prevalence data to more accurately reflect the needs of the community. We will also appreciate any sharing of information related to networking with other counties, agencies, and grantees regarding resources available.