State Applications for Children's Behavioral Health Policy Convening

Applications now being accepted

HMA in partnership with national membership organizations the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD), the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), National Association of State Medicaid Directors and the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) have been exploring the opportunity of a shared state learning lab. With the addition of the generous support Annie E. Casey Foundation, Casey Family Programs, and other funders including Health Management Associates and Centene, we have finalized plans for an in person State Policy Learning Lab that will be held in February 2024.

The purpose of the policy lab is to convene state interagency teams - including child welfare, juvenile justice, behavioral health, Medicaid, and K-12 public education- to collectively strategize, learn from innovators in the field and promote cross system alignment to drive outcomes for children, youth and families, strategically layering on missing components.

We have secured full funding for 8 selected state teams to come together at Annie E. Casey Foundation Offices in Baltimore, Maryland from February 7-9, 2024. Applicants must submit the full application no later than 5 pm on December 20, 2023. If you have any questions as you are working through the application, please submit your query to the email address cbhpolicylab@healthmanagement.com.

Background of the Opportunity

COVID has exacerbated long-standing challenges around system collaboration across state child welfare, behavioral health, and Medicaid that lead to unsatisfactory outcomes for the most children who are vulnerable in our communities. Most worrisome is the exacerbation of behavioral and physical health challenges and trauma because of uncoordinated [or fragmented] care. This fragmentation and lack of coordinated strategy and policy also lead to higher costs of treatment as hospital emergency departments, detention and voluntary and involuntary placement in foster care have become the de facto system of care for children and youth with complex behavioral health needs in many states The gaps in system alignment increasingly exposes states and local jurisdictions to threats or class action lawsuits and settlements on these lawsuits, or settlements resulting from Department of Justice investigations. Fortunately, federal and state efforts and investments to address the youth systems of care – including schools, community, delivery systems, and community-based child placing agencies – are in motion. These actions align with the surgeon general's recommendation of a "whole-of-society effort," including a focus on mental health education and prevention, early identification, and access to high-quality mental healthcare. The recent Bipartisan Safer Communities Act has committed $1.7 billion for mental health support in schools and communities via an array of methods including grant programs.

Health Management Associates (HMA) believes that the current crisis presents an opportunity to address long-term challenges and divisions and build a truly comprehensive approach by bringing together key partners within a state and across states to address key topics. The following are examples of what could be co-designed with partners:

- Build a shared strategic vision for a comprehensive continuum of care that ensures access to the "right service, at the right time based on individual and family need". This vision can strengthen prevention initiatives as well as ensure the full array of evidence-based community-based interventions including the use of crisis response and stabilization models.
- Develop policies and strategies for improving the engagement of children, youth and families with lived experiences to the "right part of the system for the right level of care," agnostic of the door through which they enter any coordinated child serving system, while ensuring that all aspects of this system are anchored in equity.

Review Process:

All applications will be reviewed by an external independent review panel using a standardized rubric that will cover the following domain areas:

- Gaps and opportunities analysis
- Intent of collaborative partnerships
- Approach to engagement of youth and adults with lived experience
- Imminent risks to public agency operations as a result of poor outcomes for children, youth, and their families

The Learning Journey will include:

- *Learning Group:* The Policy Lab with kick off with a two-day convening in February 2024 with participating state teams. Subsequently, we will continue to create avenues for the group to come together in a learning collaborative that will create a virtual space to continue peer support and learning.
- *Technical Assistance:* After the policy lab, the partners who are hosting the event are working to identify resources or to partner with states to identify resources to provide assistance through a pool of subject matter experts and consultants to: (1) conduct an assessment to identify gaps in policy, payment, benefit design and delivery system, as well as opportunities to layer on additional promising approaches; (2) develop and implement an action plan for development and launch of additional approaches; (3) engage with patients, families, and community leaders to inform program design; (4) work with payer partners on contracting/reimbursement strategies; and (5) monitor progress/impact and adapt approaches as warranted. Action plans would focus on internal and external alignment, stakeholder engagement, business case development, implementation of established best practices, community partnerships, and monitoring and evaluation. As stated earlier these TA resources will be made available to States pending additional funding and/or state ability to contribute towards technical assistance costs.

Objectives:

The Policy Lab will support participating state teams to co-create an actionable roadmap related to:

- Cross sectoral governance around children's behavioral health
- Identify multi-sectoral financing strategies
- A plan to expand service array for children's behavioral health in their state in partnership with participating agencies

Requirements:

- Completed application within the word limits provided
- Attestation of a form with all partner signatures
- Required attachments

Formal acknowledgement of Governor/Cabinet level support and expectations that key agency leaders and staff are committed to implementing strategies:

- States must identify current and proposed state investments that demonstrate fiscal commitment to sustainable solutions for children, youth and their families with complete behavioral health needs.
- State team must have pre-identified state-level goals and clear articulation of current barriers and challenges.
- States should identify any multi-sectoral work aimed at improving outcomes for children and youth with complex behavioral health needs and any partners/consultants currently involved.
- States should be prepared to come to the convening with some data to support understanding of state picture around children, youth and families who are connected to multiple system to address their safety and wellbeing needs (HMA will provide selected states with data packets that include Medicaid utilization data as well AFCARS/NCANDS data where available).

HMA

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS FORM CHECKLIST:

__ Completed RFA General Information

__ Completed RFA Narrative Questions

__ Completed RFA Additional Attachments

__ Attached additional RFA background information

RFA General Information:

Submission Date:	12/20/2023
Program(s) submitting RFA Request:	
Program Lead Name:	
RFA Name:	State Children's Behavioral Health Policy Lab
RFA Method:	Open to all States
Start Date of RFA (Full Proposal):	11/14/2023
End Date of RFA (Full Proposal):	12/14/2023
Convening Dates	February 7-9, 2024
Convening Location	Baltimore, MD
Additional Notes	

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING:

Organization Contact Information	
Organization Name:	
Email:	
Phone Number:	
Organization Type:	
State:	

Partner Contact Information	
Required Partners - Child Welfare, Medicaid, Children's Behavioral Health, State Department of Education, Juvenile Justice where appropriate, Governor's Office or Intergovernmental children's services coordinating entity or another public agency partner where appropriate.	
Name of Contact:	
Email:	
Phone Number:	
Department:	
Role Description:	
Level of Decision-Making authority:	
A brief description of why this role and person are important to the team:	

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RFA NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

Please enter all RFA narrative questions in the table below.

#	RFA Question	Does this question require an answer to submit the application? (Y/N)	Page Limit
	Provide data and describe the community, city or region that is the focus of your work, including its demographics, history, health and social challenges, assets to overcome those challenges and overarching aspirations. Include the primary population served by your collaborative (eg – if your group is focused on youth or children under five or population of children and youth placed in PRTF's out of State or Transition Age Youth, others) and each participating agency's experience serving this population.	Y	2 Paragraphs to frame the current state (Up to 5 attachments allowed. To see your attachments or to remove, click the left toolbar arrow and click the paperclip icon.)

#	RFA Question	Does this question require an answer to submit the application? (Y/N)	Page Limit
	Describe the Governor/Cabinet level support and expectations that key agency leaders and staff have committed to implementing strategies. How would the team define the shared outcomes to improve outcomes for children, youth and families?	Y	2 Paragraphs (Up to 5 attachments)
	Describe how your state engages youth and adults with lived experience and clients you serve.	Y	1 Paragraph (Up to 5 attachments)

#	RFA Question	Does this question require an answer to submit the application? (Y/N)	Page Limit
	What opportunities and barriers exist in your state to achieve your desired outcomes for children, youth and families?	Y	3 Paragraphs
	What prior or current examples do you have of successful or developing cross-sector partnerships in your state related to services for children, youth and families?	Y	Bullet points with details.

#	RFA Question	Does this question require an answer to submit the application? (Y/N)	Page Limit
	What are your expectations for a successful Policy Lab?	Y	2 Paragraphs
	What type of technical assistance would be most valuable to move this work forward? The answer to this question will inform our technical assistance strategies and will not affect the review of your proposal.	Y	3-5 Recommendations

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