

Human Service Block Grant Overview

The block grant pilot program for human service funding was adopted as part of the FY 12-13 Pennsylvania budget. Allegheny County was selected as one of the 20 counties in the pilot. Counties participating in the block grant pilot will receive their funds for seven line items in categorical payments from the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) based on their current allocation formulas, but will have the ability to use the funding in a flexible manner, prioritizing funds where each locality needs them the most. This document summarizes some of the main components of the block grant pilot as discussed in the state's guidelines.

Line Items Included in the Block Grant

Block grant counties are required to fund each of the seven line items and cannot defund any of the included line items completely. Funding can be shifted between categorical areas based on local need and block grant parameters. For FY 12-13, allocations will remain in a categorical format and there will be an aggregate 10% cut. A description of the line items included in the block grant is as follows:

➤ **Mental Health Base Funds**

Mental Health Base funding is allocated to a variety of populations. A significant share is specified for people who have previously been served in state mental health facilities, or who are being diverted from that level of care. Other mental health funding is specified for, or allowed to be used for, populations such as children and adolescents. Funding is also available for mental health services for people who are uninsured or underinsured and for "non-covered" services for people who have Medical Assistance (MA) or other insurance. Services provided under the program include Outpatient Community Treatment Services and Residential Services, rehabilitation services, justice related services, and community-based services.

➤ **Intellectual Disabilities**

The primary use of the ID Community Base Program is to meet the needs of those with ID who may or may not be eligible for the waiver programs. Base dollars pay primarily for individual services such as residential, in-home supports, day programming, employment, rehabilitation, and transportation. As the ID waiver programs became larger, base funds have decreased steadily over the last 12-15 years.

➤ **Behavioral Health Services Initiative**

Behavioral Health Services Initiative (BHSI) funds are used for most mental health and drug and alcohol (D&A) services for people who are very poor, but not eligible for MA. For D&A, BHSI funds provide life-saving non-hospital detoxification services for people that do not have insurance coverage or MA. The funding source also provides D&A outpatient treatment for people who are stepping down from residential treatment and need aftercare and/or case management.

➤ **Act 152 Drug & Alcohol**

The primary use of Act 152 funding is to provide people who are MA-enrolled but who are not yet behavioral HealthChoices members access to residential treatment.

➤ **Homeless Assistance Program**

The Homeless Assistance Program (HAP) supports emergency shelters, bridge housing, rental assistance and case management programs for homeless families and individuals.

- Emergency Shelter provides refuge and care to persons who are in immediate need of housing and have no permanent legal residence of their own.
- Bridge housing is a transitional service that allows consumers who are in temporary housing to move to supportive long-term living arrangements while preparing to live independently.

- Rental assistance provides payments for rent, security deposits, and utilities to prevent and/or end homelessness or near homelessness by maintaining individuals and families in their own residences. Emphasis is placed on the prevention of homelessness for families with children.
- Case management provides activities needed by the consumer to achieve the goal of self-sufficient living, including goal setting in the areas of basic life skills, financial management, parenting skills, home maintenance, job preparation skills and/or employment skills.

➤ **Human Services Development Fund**

The Human Services Development Fund (HSDF) enables counties to deliver human services to low-income individuals who need assistance that do not qualify for categorically funded services. HSDF is a particularly valuable source of funding for disabled 18 to 59 year olds who require in-home care. The majority of persons who receive services funded under HSDF are well below 125% of Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPL), with many at 100% or less of FPL.

➤ **Child Welfare Special Grants**

Child Welfare special grants incentivize counties to conduct best practice programming through lower county match requirements. The types of services provided under the program include Family Group Decision Making (FGDM), Family Development Credentialing, Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST), High Fidelity Wraparound, the Inua Ubuntu program, Delinquent and Truancy programs and Housing Assistance for families currently involved or at risk of involvement with child welfare to prevent homelessness.

Flexibility

All pilot counties will utilize the streamlined planning and financial reporting processes that all counties will transition to in the next year. The flexibility of the Human Services Block Grant allows counties to fund traditional categorical services as well as innovative cross system services to meet locally identified needs. Pilot counties will be permitted to retain up to 3% of the aggregate of all funds within the block grant upon approval of DPW or use in the next fiscal year. Flexibility is phased in during a 5 year implementation process dictated by legislation:

- Year one FY 12/13 20% flexibility within each categorical line item
- Year two FY 13/14 25% flexibility
- Year three FY 14/15 50% flexibility
- Year four FY 15/16 75% flexibility
- Year five FY 16/17 100% flexibility

Block grant counties also have the option to submit a waiver if they want to increase the amount of flexibility above the amount dictated by the legislation. There will not be a global waiver. The state will approve waivers based on specific requests that detail which categorical line items dollars are moving from and to, the impact the waiver will have on each line item, the reason for the request supported by data, and the anticipated impact as a result. Allegheny County did not seek a waiver in FY 12/13.

FY 13/14 Submission Timeline and Public Input

- There is not yet an official date from the state, but we have heard that it will be April 2013.
- Each county must hold **two public meetings**. DHS anticipates holding public meetings in March/April 2013.
- DHS will continue to use the website to post information about the block grant.
www.alleghenycounty.us/DHS/DPW-BlockGrant.aspx