

**Behavioral  
Health  
Workforce  
Development**



# Behavioral Health Recruitment and Retention (BHRR)

**Request for Applications Announced**  
April 13, 2023

**Application Due Date**  
May 24, 2023  
5:00 p.m. PDT

Advocates for Human Potential, Inc. (AHP),  
funded by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)  
Community Services Division



Real World Solutions for Systems Change

# Table of Contents

- Behavioral Health Recruitment and Retention (BHRR) ..... 3**
- Funding Opportunity at a Glance ..... 3**
- Introduction..... 4**
  - Background ..... 4*
- BHRR Parameters ..... 5**
  - Purpose..... 5*
  - Goals..... 6*
  - Contract Period..... 6*
- Eligibility Criteria ..... 7**
- Funding Information and Requirements ..... 8**
  - Project Budget ..... 8*
  - Grantee Billing and Payment..... 9*
  - Allowable Costs ..... 9*
  - Funding Restrictions ..... 9*
- Grant Requirements and Mandatory Participation ..... 11**
  - BHRR Phase B BHWD Strategies Selection ..... 11*
    - Table I: Recruitment..... 12
    - Table II: Retention..... 12
    - Table III: Organizational Development for Sustainability – *required* ..... 14
  - Training and Technical Assistance..... 14*
  - Compliance with Confidentiality Regulations..... 15*
  - Data and Reporting Requirements..... 15*
- Application Instructions..... 17**
  - Preparing to Apply..... 17*
  - Application Scoring..... 19*
    - Application Priority Scoring ..... 19
  - Scoring Criteria ..... 20*
  - Application Worksheet ..... 21*
- Appendix A: Potential Phase B (Implementation Phase) Activities ..... 28**



## Behavioral Health Recruitment and Retention (BHRR)

### Request for Applications (RFA)

#### Funding Opportunity at a Glance

**Who:** Nonprofit (501(c)(3)) behavioral health (BH) provider organizations, tribal organizations, and county-operated providers authorized to do business in California that provide BH services (substance use disorder [SUD] treatment, mental health [MH] care, or co-occurring disorder [COD] programming) to adolescent and/or adult populations, including families. Priority will be given to organizations working in under-resourced, marginalized, and diverse communities and those providing substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery services inclusive of alcohol and other drugs.

**What:** The BHRR program will support BH agencies to develop a personnel framework; plan and implement comprehensive strategies for recruiting, onboarding, engaging, and retaining BH staff; and create inclusive workplaces.

**When:** Applications are **due May 24, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time (PDT)**. The period of performance will be from July 1, 2023, through January 31, 2025 (19 months).

**Where:** Throughout California, with the goal of building a competent and linguistically and culturally diverse BH workforce statewide, but especially in under-resourced, rural, and high-need areas.

**Why:** California's BH workforce is experiencing severe challenges in meeting the growing needs of our diverse state. DHCS is committed to growing the BH workforce to increase access and competence in prevention, treatment, and recovery support services for individuals with BH concerns.

**How:** Funding will be used for planning and implementing recruitment and retention strategies to create a sustainable and diverse workforce. All eligible nonprofit, tribal, or county-operated BH organizations (MH and/or SUD treatment programs) must submit their complete applications online via SurveyMonkey Apply no later than 5:00 p.m. PDT on May 24, 2023.

#### IMPORTANT DATES

RFA Released  
April 13, 2023

Informational Webinar  
April 20, 2023

Question Submission  
Deadline  
April 25, 2023

Application Deadline  
May 24, 2023

Projected Award  
Announcements  
June 23, 2023

Welcome and Orientation  
Webinar  
July 6, 2023

*\*These dates are subject to change. Attend the informational webinar on April 20 to be enrolled for updates.*



## Introduction

Community-based BH agencies often face challenges in hiring and retaining staff because of lower pay, difficult work and the accompanying burnout, and a competitive job market. The opioid epidemic and COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated the long-standing shortage of BH professionals and paraprofessionals, particularly among communities of color and in rural, geographically remote, and otherwise under-resourced communities. Many have exited the field as work demands have increased, work options in other fields have opened up, and BH organizations have often not kept pace with best practices in staff retention. Qualified personnel in BH fields may resist working in community-based nonprofit settings, for tribal organizations, or for county-run programs due to difficult working conditions, stigma, and stress related to the epidemic of overdose deaths, the housing crisis, and related BH problems that many experienced during the pandemic and that continue today.

The BHRR project is intended to address these challenges and provide BH organizations with support in creating and implementing plans to recruit and retain a qualified and sustainable BH workforce for the people of California.

## Background

DHCS is committed to statewide expansion of the BH workforce to improve access to, and productive participation in, BH services throughout the state. DHCS is simultaneously committed to supporting the diversification of California's BH workforce with regard to geographic distribution, race, ethnicity, language, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other provider characteristics to support the goal of equity in BH services throughout the state.

This funding is part of the Behavioral Health Workforce Development (BHWD) efforts of DHCS. The *Peer Workforce Investment (PWI)*, *Expanding Peer Organization Capacity (EPOC)*, and *Mentored Internship Program (MIP)* grants are the three (3) other components of the BHWD effort. The programs were originally funded in 2021 and 2022 to increase the capacity of peer-run programs and support opportunities for student interns to work in BH settings, with a focus on expanding the prevention, treatment, and recovery workforce for individuals with, or at risk of developing, opioid use disorder.

This RFA contains information about BHWD's newest program, BHRR, including background; legal, fiscal, and program requirements for applicants; eligibility criteria; and application instructions. AHP is contracted to serve as the administrative entity to implement the BHWD efforts, including the organization and distribution of funding and training and technical assistance (TTA) under the BHRR program.



## BHRR Parameters

The BHRR grant provides an opportunity for nonprofit organizations, tribal organizations, and county-operated BH providers to plan, develop, and implement comprehensive strategies to recruit, onboard, engage, and retain staff and create and establish inclusive workplace cultures. Over a 19-month period, organizations will receive TTA to identify areas of need and related evidence-based strategies and approaches to create a sustainable BH workforce. This RFA will refer to eligible entities as “BH organizations.”

The grant program will be funded in two (2) phases:

- ***BHRR Phase A (Planning Phase):*** For the first 3 months of the 19-month grant period, all grantees must complete a mandatory Planning Phase for which the BH organization will receive \$50,000 to develop a tailored BHRR Implementation Plan focused on goals for expanding recruitment and improving retention for the BH organization. To achieve these goals, grantees will conduct a needs assessment and select from a range of evidence-based strategies to put in place during the Implementation Phase. Intensive TTA, including one-on-one coaching, workgroups, and specialized TA will be provided during this time. Grantees will produce monthly deliverables, which will help ensure they develop viable plans based on identified needs, strengths, challenges, and organizational capacity to achieve their stated goals and objectives. Unspent funds from Phase A can be rolled over into Phase B.
- ***BHRR Phase B (Implementation Phase):*** Following the successful development of a BHRR Implementation Plan, including a final project budget, grantees will enter the Implementation Phase. During this phase, grantees will be supported with up to an additional \$300,000 to implement at least one (1) selected recruitment and/or retention strategy from their plan during the remaining 16 months of the grant. The breadth, depth, and reach of Phase B and the corresponding implementation budget will depend on several factors explained further in page 9 of the RFA. **All grantees are expected to be awarded Phase B funding, with the amount varying from an estimated \$100,000 to \$300,000 per organization.**

## Purpose

The purpose of the BHRR program is fourfold:

- Enable community-based BH organizations to develop comprehensive and sustainable plans to retain and recruit a diverse workforce now and in the future.
- Grow and retain the BH workforce across the state, but especially in under-resourced and high-need communities, including in programs that offer bilingual and cultural expertise and programs in rural settings.



- Create inclusive workplace cultures that honor diversity and employees' unique personal and professional experiences and contributions.
- Expand the prevention, treatment, and recovery workforce serving adults, youth, and families with MH conditions, SUDs, and CODs.

Successful BH organizations will adequately articulate the need for staff recruitment and retention support and preliminary proposed solutions to these challenges. An example of how this can be demonstrated would be a description of the BH organization's challenges with staff turnover, resignations, or staff caseloads; efforts made to address challenges; and which strategies listed in Tables I, II, and III (pages 12–15) are considered. BH organizations will not be required to implement the strategies identified in their application if the Planning Phase results in different, more fitting strategies. However, BH organizations should be able to exhibit understanding and evidence of their organization's recruitment and retention challenges.

## Goals

The four (4) goals of the BHRR program are as follows:

1. Improve BH organizations' knowledge and implementation of best practices in BH workforce development and change management.
2. Strengthen BH organizations' capacity to effectively recruit and retain skilled staff through identification and deployment of specific strategies in their organization.
3. Increase the diversity of the BH workforce through an array of strategies to better reflect the individuals in need of service.
4. Increase BH organizations' sustainability and their ability to respond to changing environments by supporting their development of and adherence to longer-term strategic plans.

## Contract Period

### What is the contract period?

The contract period is 19 months, beginning July 1, 2023, and ending January 31, 2025. **All funds must be expended by January 31, 2025.** BH organizations will be supported during the 3-month Planning Phase to develop realistic BH recruitment and retention plans that can be successfully implemented to achieve their prioritized objectives during the 16-month Implementation Phase. Awarded BH organizations and AHP will jointly determine the appropriate additional funding needed to implement the BHRR Implementation Plan and fully expend the grantee's budget within the overall 19-month grant period.



## Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for funding, an applicant BH organization must meet all the criteria below:

- Be physically located in and able to provide evidence of delivering BH services in the state of California.
- Be a current nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, tribal organization, or county-operated provider authorized to operate in California.

**Please note:** All awarded BH organizations must be able to process a contract for final execution/approval within six (6) weeks of notification of their grant award as a condition of funding. Newly awarded organizations will be eligible to submit an invoice for 50 percent of their first quarterly payment upon contract execution. Additionally, newly awarded organizations must be able to prepare a Phase A Work Plan within one (1) month of the grant start date of July 1, 2023.

### What is “behavioral health,” and what are “behavioral health services”?

For purposes of this RFA and based on Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) definitions, “behavioral health” refers to a person’s emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being. BH services specifically include treatment for MH, SUDs, or CODs.

There are two (2) overall types of BH disorders:

- *MH disorder:* According to the World Health Organization, an MH disorder “is characterized as a clinically significant disturbance in an individual’s cognition, emotional regulation, or behavior. It is usually associated with distress or impairment in important areas of functioning.”<sup>1</sup>
- *SUD:* The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines SUDs as “treatable, chronic diseases characterized by a problematic pattern of use of a substance or substances leading to impairments in health, social function, and control over substance use. It is a cluster of cognitive, behavioral, and physiological symptoms indicating that the individual continues using the substance despite harmful consequences.”<sup>2</sup>

### What is required of BH organizations that are selected for funding?

Selected BH organizations are required to adhere to the legal, fiscal, reporting, and programmatic requirements as described in the “Funding Information and Requirements” section below.

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. (2022, June 8). [Mental disorders](#).

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, October 5) [Substance use disorders](#).





## Funding Information and Requirements

### Project Budget

BHRR programs have two (2) budgets: Phase A and Phase B.

**Phase A (Planning Phase) Budget, July 1–September 30, 2023:** BH organizations *must* apply for \$50,000 for the Planning Phase (the first three [3] months of the award) and use the budget guidelines to complete a budget. The budget must be used to pay for necessary operating and technology costs, such as space, rent, software, computers, internet services, etc., as well as staff salaries and/or consultant support to conduct an organizational assessment using analytic tools and methods such as an environmental needs assessment; strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis; asset mapping; employee surveys; sustainability plans, and others. Unspent funds from Phase A can be rolled over into Phase B.

**Phase B (Implementation Phase) Preliminary Budget, October 1, 2023–January 31, 2025:** In their application, BH organizations must put forth a *preliminary* budget request for up to \$300,000 for the Implementation Phase, which is in addition to the mandatory Planning Phase budget of \$50,000. This budget should be based on the organization’s projected BHRR Implementation Plan described in the planning section (Section III) of the application (see Application Worksheet, page 24). The final budget for Phase B will be developed as part of the Phase A three (3)-month Planning Phase and will be approved and awarded with a budget augmentation and revised scope of work (SOW) via a subcontract modification at the close of Phase A in September 2023. Please note that BH organizations must complete a sustainability plan during Phase A.

Applicants are required to adhere to the budget guidelines included in this RFA and must submit the Phase A budget and Phase B preliminary budget using the budget tab in the online application. Applicants should use the BHWD budget template included in the Application Worksheet (Section VI, page 25) to draft the proposed budgets prior to transferring this information to the online application for submission.

Applications that do not conform to this template or exceed the \$50,000 Phase A award or the maximum \$300,000 Phase B award will **not** be considered. All items budgeted must be inclusive of all costs, including taxes and fees, in U.S. dollars. The budget and budget narrative explanation will assist the application review team in establishing cost reasonableness and the applicant BH organization’s understanding of the BHRR tasks and realistic appraisal of the organization’s capabilities with regard to implementation of a BHWD plan at this time. All award agreements are subject to the approval of AHP as authorized by DHCS.





## Grantee Billing and Payment

Contingent on funds being made available to AHP by DHCS, grantees will be awarded a hybrid deliverable-based contract for BHRR base funding, plus a cost-reimbursement-based contract for purchase of equipment and durable goods. Grantee invoicing and payments will be based on contract-specified deliverables (not itemized invoices) for the BHRR base funding; grantees will receive payment upon demonstrating completion of grantee quarterly deliverable tasks at the end of each quarter. Invoice payments will be made at the end of each quarter after invoices are received and approved by AHP. Payment for allowed durable goods, such as information technology (IT) equipment, will be made upon AHP's receipt of evidence of purchase (paid receipt and inventory description) at the end of the quarter in which the purchase was made.

Deliverable-based contracts mean that grantees must demonstrate progress on agreed-upon tasks in the SOW and the data reporting of process measures on a quarterly basis to have quarterly invoices approved for payment. No itemized invoices are required for base funding payments. However, programs must maintain auditable financial records demonstrating that grant funds were appropriately used *only* on funded grant work. Grantees will be eligible to submit their first invoice for half (50 percent) of the first quarter invoice amount upon execution of the subcontract with AHP in order to facilitate the receipt of funds as quickly as possible to start the work of the BHRR.

## Allowable Costs

Funding may be used to pay staff working directly on the project and to pay for related business expenses, equipment, and durable goods. Please note that BHRR does not fund the employment of direct service staff.

## Funding Restrictions

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) funds were granted to DHCS to support this RFA, and all funding restrictions are applicable to this funding opportunity and all grant contracts. Questions about allowable costs should be addressed to AHP, and final answers will be determined by DHCS.

Funded programs must adhere to [Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\): Title 45 Part 96 – Block Grants](#). The HHS codified the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards, [45 CFR Part 75](#). All components of 45 CFR Part 75 are applicable to all subgrantees. In Subpart E, cost principles are described and allowable and unallowable expenditures for HHS fund recipients are delineated. Unless superseded by program statute or regulation, follow the cost principles in 45 CFR Part 75 and the standard funding restrictions on the following page.



BHRR funds must be used for purposes supported by the program and may not be used to exceed the salary limitation. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 ([Pub. L. 117-103](#)) signed into law on March 15, 2022, limited the salary amount that may be awarded and charged to SAMHSA grants and cooperative agreements. Award funds may not be used to pay the salary of an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II of the Federal Executive Pay Scale. Effective March 15, 2022, the salary limitation for Executive Level II is \$203,700. 's base salary exclusive of fringe and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties as an employee of the applicant. This salary limitation also applies to subcontracts/subgrants under a SAMHSA grant or cooperative agreement.

Funds will not be used for services that can be supported through other accessible sources of funding, such as other federal discretionary and formula grant funds, (e.g., from HHS, CDC, Health Resources and Services Administration, and SAMHSA), Department of Justice (Office of Justice Programs/Bureau of Justice Assistance) and nonfederal funds, third-party insurance, and sliding scale self-pay, among others.

DHCS will *not* fund the following:

- Debt retirement.
- Operational deficits.
- Partisan activities.
- Religious organizations for explicit religious activities.
- Activities that exclusively benefit the members of sectarian or religious organizations.
- Purchase or lease of vehicles.
- Purchase or improvement of land.
- Purchase, construction, or permanent or minor remodeling of any building or other facility or purchase of major medical equipment.

Only organizations using the de minimis rate of ten percent (10%) of modified total direct costs, as defined in 45 CFR Part 75, will be selected for this funding opportunity. This means that indirect costs may not exceed ten percent (10%) of direct costs. Travel costs must fall within the [California travel guidelines](#).



## Grant Requirements and Mandatory Participation

Grantees must participate in coaching and training opportunities to build capabilities and competence in recruitment and retention and enhance organizational capacity.

Organizations will be required to submit various deliverables each month during both Phase A and Phase B of the project. These deliverables may include but are not limited to SWOT analyses, needs assessments, sustainability plans, and goal plans. Applicants who are selected for funding will be expected to spend additional time preparing and compiling documents related to their organization's capacity upon award.

### BHRR Phase B BHWD Strategies Selection

Applicant BH organizations must select one (1) category from **Table I: Recruitment** and one (1) category from **Table II: Retention** to work on during Phase B (Implementation Phase) of the project. Applicants must then select up to three (3) corresponding strategies from these categories. Applicants are encouraged to review possible related activities listed in [Appendix A](#) but are not required to select, identify, or commit to any of these activities in their applications. Grantees must participate in the activities shown in **Table III: Organizational Development for Sustainability**, unless the BH organization can demonstrate they conducted these activities within the last two (2) years.

The corresponding strategies in Tables I, II, and III, below, are intended to serve as guidance for organizations to develop the proposed Phase A Work Plan within the first six (6) weeks of grant award *before* developing the final BHRR Implementation Plan. Selecting these categories and strategies now *does not* commit a grantee to implementing them during Phase B. Due to the limited grant period, awarded grantees may wish to hire consultants to provide support with all identified strategies.

### **In addition to expending funds in Phase B for some of the possible related activities (Appendix A), all awarded grantees must budget for the following:**

- A Project Coordinator (at least 50 percent full-time equivalent [FTE]) to manage all deliverables, ensure that the grantee organization meets reporting and invoicing deadlines, follow through with assigned tasks, serve as the point of contact for AHP, ensure that the organization's executive leadership is consistently engaged, and provide approval for BHRR program activities and progress.
- Support and involvement of organization's executive leadership, including governance board involvement if required, including declared commitment to enact strategies selected by the organization.

Please note that BHRR does not fund the employment of direct service staff.



**Table I: Recruitment**

Category	Corresponding Strategies
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Belonging+ (DEIJB+)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives to attract a more diverse workforce.</li> </ul> <p><i>*While DEIJB+ is called out as a separate strategy focus, all grantees must ensure that an equity approach is infused within all strategies.</i></p>
Marketing and Branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build a strong employer brand with a clear mission, values, and unique inclusive culture affirmation.</li> <li>▪ Develop a marketing strategy to advertise and broaden reach among qualified candidates, e.g., using professional job boards, attending job fairs, and leveraging social media.</li> <li>▪ Revamp organization website and include an employee value proposition that highlights the benefits of working for the organization.</li> <li>▪ Market organization’s active engagement with the BHRR project as a demonstration of commitment and excellence in evidence-based practices (EBPs) regarding recruitment and retention.</li> </ul>
Leveraging Technology for Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Calculate cost to hire, retention rates, and other data to support recruitment and retention planning.</li> <li>▪ Track and monitor progress on the above.</li> </ul>
Human Resources (HR) Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use data to justify compensation increases, such as cost to hire/cost of turnover rates.</li> <li>▪ Create a clear and transparent salary structure with knowledge, skills, and abilities criteria to support salary and positions.</li> <li>▪ Create clear job descriptions.</li> </ul>
Pipeline Creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bring recently exited workforce back in by offering part-time roles, mentorship, or training and education jobs.</li> <li>▪ Partner with local educational institutions and offer internships to allow pipeline candidates to become familiar with organization.</li> <li>▪ Actively support staff with lived experience to promote within the organization.</li> </ul>

**Table II: Retention**

Category	Corresponding Strategies
DEIJB+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a DEI plan that includes input from staff at all levels.</li> <li>▪ Establish collaborative management and shared governance models.</li> <li>▪ Evaluate the diversity of leadership at the organization and commit to increasing representation of those historically marginalized in leadership and decision making.</li> <li>▪ Diversify staff training and development to meet the needs of specific cultures.</li> <li>▪ Require training on cultural responsiveness, cultural humility, and implicit bias for all staff.</li> <li>▪ Increase belonging by starting employee resource groups.</li> <li>▪ Review background/clearance requirements to ensure they are not unnecessarily exclusionary.</li> <li>▪ Establish a DEI officer at the top level of the organization.</li> </ul>

Category	Corresponding Strategies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Actively support staff with lived experience to promote within the organization.</li> <li>▪ Review existing policies and create new policies that help support staff in recovery.</li> </ul>
Workplace Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Solicit and implement employee feedback from “stay interviews.”</li> <li>▪ Examine staff workloads and adjust as necessary.</li> <li>▪ Actively address burnout with structured support, such as open-door hours for all staff to engage with leadership on a weekly basis.</li> <li>▪ Provide regular feedback, employee performance evaluations, “360 evaluations,” and recognition opportunities.</li> <li>▪ Survey staff to determine a baseline of psychological safety, employee satisfaction, and engagement.</li> <li>▪ Increase workload/productivity expectations in phases to avoid burnout.</li> <li>▪ Establish a peer mentorship program to improve team cohesion and retention.</li> </ul>
Improving Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adjust earnings for staff as they attain licensure.</li> <li>▪ Expand reimbursement for SUD counselors.</li> <li>▪ Increase the use of loan forgiveness, scholarship/tuition reimbursement, and stipend programs.</li> </ul>
Workforce Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offer health benefits and wellness programs to support recovery (e.g., nutrition and exercise programs).</li> <li>▪ Designate and create a quiet space/well-being room for employees, such as meditation and/or culturally sensitive prayer rooms.</li> <li>▪ Implement on-site peer recovery groups.</li> </ul>
Workforce Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish transparent career ladders (upward mobility) and lattices (horizontal mobility and skillset enhancement).</li> <li>▪ Offer educational support, tuition reimbursement, incentives, one-time retention bonuses, and other supports to help peers and other staff move up in the workforce via credentials.</li> <li>▪ Educate workers on the resume benefits of longevity and promotions at workplace.</li> <li>▪ Allow flexible schedules and clinical autonomy for skilled workers.</li> <li>▪ Provide supervisor training.</li> <li>▪ Provide mentorship opportunities to established staff.</li> </ul>
Leveraging Technology for Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leverage improved technology to benefit any of the above strategies.</li> </ul>



**Table III: Organizational Development for Sustainability – required**

Category	Corresponding Strategies
Organizational Development	Sustainability Planning
<p><b>Possible Activities (<i>all required, unless conducted within last two [2] years</i>)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct organizational needs assessment</li> <li>▪ Conduct SWOT analysis</li> <li>▪ Conduct community asset mapping</li> <li>▪ Complete program sustainability assessment tool</li> </ul>	

### Training and Technical Assistance

In addition to funding, the BHRR grant provides TTA, with an emphasis on addressing DEI, strategic planning, workforce development strategies, and strategies to strengthen recruitment and retention efforts. Grantee organizations will have opportunities to get tools and templates and create work products that they can implement in their organization to help them achieve their organizational recruitment and retention goals. Grantee organizations will participate in coaching and training opportunities to help successfully implement the strategies they have selected, with a goal of promoting sustainability after the conclusion of the grant period. The TTA opportunities will be specified by AHP throughout the grant period with DHCS authorization. At a minimum, TTA will include the following:

#### Learning Collaborative Meetings

Grantees will participate in online regional and statewide Learning Collaborative (LC) sessions. LCs are expected to occur quarterly and will be specified after grantee awards are issued.

#### Webinars and Coaching Calls

In addition to the LC meetings, grantee organizations will participate in individual and/or regional coaching calls and webinars no more than once per month. AHP may also schedule in-person site visits.

#### Affinity Groups

Grantees will be offered the opportunity to interact virtually in facilitated small groups with other BH organization grantees focusing on similar issues. These groups are *optional* and will be venues for shared problem-solving, collaborative regional work, and innovation hubs to enhance grantees’ exposure and engagement in building out California’s BH workforce.

**At least one (1) representative from each organization must attend ALL LCs, webinars, and coaching calls hosted by AHP.**



## Compliance with Confidentiality Regulations

Selected applicants will comply with the regulations set forth in 42 CFR Part 2, to ensure maintenance of the appropriate data protocols as part of business development and staff training, including the responsibility for assuring the security and confidentiality of all electronically transmitted patient material. Applicants should review the [42 CFR Part 2 privacy and the SAMHSA confidentiality rules](#). Programs selected for funding must commit to operating in compliance with the regulations.

## Data and Reporting Requirements

Grantees will comply with any federal or state data reporting requirements. Grantees must submit quarterly progress reports documenting progress in completing the activities in their SOW, including accomplishments, barriers encountered, and next steps to further achievement. Additionally, AHP/DHCS will request additional data reports with regard to grantees' staff and community demographics and outreach to under-resourced communities as needed.

Potential performance measures may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Develop workforce and retain existing staff.
  - Percent of staff that attend professional development sessions.
  - Percent of staff who report feeling satisfied in their roles.
  - Onboarding plan developed and implemented.
  - Percent of job descriptions redesigned for clarity and to support salary and positions.
  - Percent of staff with lived experience who receive promotions.
- Develop a plan for recruitment of staff representative of the communities they serve.
  - Amount of time vacant roles remain open.
  - Number of partnerships created with community organizations and educational institutions to strengthen the recruitment pipeline.
- Conduct systems management and operations.
  - Sustainability plan developed and implemented.
  - Percent of BHRR Implementation Plan strategies completed.

Performance measures may be revised to address current situations and high priority challenges as needed.





Progress reports will follow the timeline below:

<b>Quarter</b>	<b>Reporting Period</b>	<b>Report Due</b>
1st Quarter	7/1/2023 – 9/30/2023	10/15/2023
2nd Quarter	10/1/2023 – 12/31/2023	1/15/2024
3rd Quarter	1/1/2024 – 3/31/2024	4/15/2024
4th Quarter	4/1/2024 – 6/30/2024	7/15/2024
5th Quarter	7/1/2024 – 9/30/2024	10/15/2024
6th Quarter	10/1/2024 – 12/31/2024	1/15/2025
7th & Final Quarter	1/1/2025 – 1/31/2025	2/15/2025



## Application Instructions

### Preparing to Apply

Below are suggested steps to help potential applicants determine whether to apply and how to prepare an application.

1. Print the RFA and the Application Worksheet on page 22.
2. Consider these questions:
  - a. Does the BH organization meet all the eligibility criteria?
  - b. Is the BH organization able to effectively use these funds and TA opportunities?
3. If the answers are “yes,” identify who is going to work on the application and develop a timeline for how to respond to the RFA and submit on time. **DO NOT WAIT TO APPLY UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE!**
4. Attend the informational webinar on April 20, 2023 (registration information will be made available by AHP) or listen to the recording.
5. Identify any questions and submit no later than April 25, 2023.
6. Be sure the application and budget plans fit within the scope and funding restrictions described in this RFA.
7. Use the Application Worksheet in this RFA to prepare. (Start early!) Copy and paste your responses from the worksheet, within the character limit, into the online application. The application autosaves work. Do NOT press “submit” until the application is complete.
8. **Submit the online application no later than 5:00 p.m. PDT on May 24, 2023.** Please allow time for unexpected technical difficulties. Do *not* wait until the last minute; late applications cannot be accepted.
9. **If you have questions about the application,** contact [CA\\_BHRR@ahpnet.com](mailto:CA_BHRR@ahpnet.com).

An authorizing letter from each BH organization’s leadership committing support to the BHRR project, including from the governance board if legally necessary, is required with each application. Applicants should obtain this *before* applying.

**Note:** Awarded applicants will have one (1) month from the beginning of the period of performance (July 1, 2023) to finalize a Phase A Work Plan. This should describe how the awardee expects to use the initial 3-month Planning Phase to prepare for the 16-month Project Implementation Phase. To maximize the efficacy of grant funding and promote timely progress during Phase A, applicants are encouraged to use this application preparation process to actively engage the organization’s executive leadership. Leadership support and buy-in beyond the official commitment to the grant upon signatory acceptance of the award will be essential to a project’s overall success.



The entire BHRR application is contained in an [online fillable form](#), hosted by SurveyMonkey Apply. Instructions to complete the fillable form are included in the online application. The online application must be completed in full and submitted by **5:00 p.m. PDT on May 24, 2023**.

It is the applicant's sole responsibility to ensure that an application has been successfully submitted and received. Applicants are able to work on an online application, save work, and return to it later. However, once the application is submitted, no further changes can be made. Upon submission, applicants will receive an email confirming the receipt of the application.

### **Application Components**

The online application includes six (6) components, five (5) of which are scored (Sections II-VI) for a total of 100 possible points. Item I is not scored but must be completed accurately and truthfully in order to submit an application. Responses to these application components will be used in the application scoring and selection process. The scoring criteria is described in this RFA under "Scoring Criteria," pages 21–22.

**Section I.** Application Organization Form *(no points)*

**Section II.** Who Is the Applicant Organization? *(20 points)*

**Section III.** BHRR Planning Goals *(30 points)*

**Section IV.** Current Staffing and Management to Direct and Engage with BHRR *(20 points)*

**Section V.** Priority Funding Areas (see page 20) *(10 points)*

**Section VI.** Budgets for Phase A and Phase B *(20 points)*

**NOTE:** There are character limits for each section. It is acceptable to use bullets, lists, and incomplete sentences to simplify the application process.

### **Application Budget Review**

Following an eligibility review and scoring of each application, budget plans for Phase A and preliminary budget proposals for Phase B will be reviewed to assess understanding of the fiscal implications of the applicant's Phase B strategies selection and the applicant's awareness of the costs associated with recruitment and retention needs at the outset of the BHRR program.

No variation in award amounts will be granted for awardees in Phase A. Every grantee will receive \$50,000 for this Planning Phase.



As described above on page 8, the funding amount for Phase (Implementation Phase) will depend on the cost of the BHRR Implementation Plan developed by the grantee and approved by AHP, with the maximum award of \$300,000. AHP will make this funding decision in September 2023, at the conclusion of Phase A, with final approval by DHCS. There is no guarantee that applicants will be awarded their full request amount at that time.

As described below, priority scoring considerations may factor into Phase B awards to help California meet its highest priority goals, including DEI in the BH workforce and optimal distribution of grantees statewide, with a focus on under-resourced and marginalized communities.

Funding awards are based on the merits of the application overall. Funding decisions are at the sole discretion of AHP and subject to DHCS approval. There is no appeal process. AHP staff are not available to discuss the merits of any proposal not recommended for funding.

## Application Scoring

### Application Priority Scoring

Priority will be given to applicants that meet the following criteria:

- Organizations providing or supporting prevention, treatment, and recovery services for individuals with, or at risk of developing, SUDs (inclusive of alcohol and other drugs).
- Organizations that serve individuals transitioning from incarceration, transitional age youth (18–25 years), and/or people who are experiencing homelessness or otherwise system impacted.
- Nonprofit organizations, tribal organizations, and county-operated BH providers operating in regions with high rates of overdose, regions with high rates of SUD prevalence, and/or in under-resourced communities.
- Culturally specific, linguistically competent, and culturally responsive organizations that address the needs of under-resourced populations.
- Applicant agencies that will recruit employees from diverse backgrounds; Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) candidates; people with personal and/or family lived experience in recovery; and those with bilingual capacities in [California's threshold languages](#).

### Informational Webinar

Join us for an informational webinar April 20, 2023, from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. PDT, to learn more about the BHRR RFA and ask questions. [Register for the webinar now!](#)

For additional questions, email [CA\\_BHRR@ahpnet.com](mailto:CA_BHRR@ahpnet.com).

All questions must be received by April 25, 2023. Answers to all questions received by then will be sent to all attendees of the informational webinar.



## Scoring Criteria

<p><b>Section I: Applicant Organization Form (0 points)</b></p> <p>This section about the applicant organization is required and <b>must</b> be complete in order for the application to be considered.</p>
<p><b>Section II: Who Is the Applicant Organization? (20 points; 4 points each)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How well does the organization describe its organizational capacity, mission, vision, and history and how BH services fit into this?</li> <li>2. Has the applicant organization committed to processing a contract for execution within six (6) weeks from the Notice of Award?</li> <li>3. How well is the availability of BH services, or lack thereof, in their catchment area described? What is the need for BH services in their community? Are they in a high-need community? For example, is the incidence of overdoses or attempts/completions of suicide high?</li> <li>4. How well does the applicant describe the population and community they intend to serve? Who are the people served? For example, do they have programs that focus on a specific age group or self-identified group at high risk (e.g., 2S/LGBTQ+, experiencing homelessness, system impacted, etc.)?</li> <li>5. Does the application provide other relevant information about their program? For example, what is the primary type of BH service provided by the organization? What types of staff provide these services?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Section III: BHRR Planning Goals (30 points; 7.5 points each)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. To what extent does the applicant clearly describe what they want to achieve from participation in the BHRR program?</li> <li>7. Does the applicant adequately describe their reasons for selecting the specific recruitment, retention and organizational development strategies and proposed activities from Tables I, II, and III? Does this demonstrate an understanding of their organization's current situation with regard to recruitment and retention?</li> <li>8. Does the applicant describe plans for baseline data collection during Phase A (Planning), including how they will use information from their needs assessment activities to inform Phase B (Project Implementation)?</li> <li>9. How well does the applicant explain how they will use the three (3)-month Phase A Planning period to develop their Phase B BHRR Implementation Plan?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Section IV: Current Staffing and Management to Direct and Engage with BHRR (20 points; 5 points each)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. To what extent does the applicant describe who will be involved in the BH workforce organizational capacity building? For example, will this primarily be existing employees, consultants, or new staff brought on for this project?</li> <li>11. How well does the applicant describe who will manage this project to ensure successful achievement of deliverables?</li> </ol>



12. How well does the applicant describe past or current efforts directed toward organizational development or to improve their BH staff recruitment and retention?
13. How well does the applicant show that they understand and have factored in staff time to participate in mandatory TTA activities, including learning collaboratives, webinars, and individual coaching calls that require at least ten (10) hours per month during Phase A and variable time during Phase B?
<b>Section V: Priority Funding Areas (10 points)</b>
14. Is the applicant characterized by one (1) or more of the state’s priorities for this funding?
<b>Section VI: Budgets for Phase A and Phase B (20 points; 10 points each)</b>
15. How well does the applicant describe plans for use of the three (3)-month, \$50,000 Phase A budget? Are possible consultants, personnel, and necessary project start-up expenses adequately explained?
16. How well does the applicant describe anticipated costs associated with their selected strategies and activities from Tables I, II, and III for Phase B of the project?

### Application Worksheet

The online application includes the following pages for the applicant to complete. **THIS IS A WORKSHEET, NOT THE REAL APPLICATION.** [SUBMIT APPLICATIONS ONLINE.](#)

#### Section I. Applicant Information. Note: ALL fields must be completed.

PART A. Applicant Organization Information	
Applicant Organization Name	
Street Address	
City, County, State, ZIP	
County/ies where organization primarily provides services (catchment area)	
Applicant Representative Name	
Applicant Representative Title	
Email Address	
Telephone Number	



Alternative Contact Name	
Alternative Contact Email	
Alternative Contact Phone Number	
Website Address (If none, write "N/A.")	
<p>Check box below to describe the organization type:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tribal</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> County</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit</p> <p>If nonprofit, provide incorporation date and state where incorporated.</p>	<p>Please provide information about the applicant organization that may support the application: (200-word limit)</p>
Nonprofit Tax ID #	
Applicant's annual budget amount over past two (2) years, including budget for 2023. (Write "N/A" for any year that the organization did not exist.)	<p>2021:</p> <p>2022:</p> <p>2023:</p>
Does applicant organization have an annual financial audit?	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<b>PART B: Attestations (complete the appropriate Attestation below)</b>	
<p>Verification of nonprofit status authorized to do business in California.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	





Is the location where the organization is requesting funds in a highly affected SUD/overdose geographic area and/or a particularly under-resourced community?

- Yes
- No

By checking this box, we attest that this statement is true.

Please describe this location's situation:

**Section II. Who Is the Applicant Organization?** (up to 4,000 characters) (20 points)

Describe the applicant organization, including history, mission, vision, and infrastructure, as well as grant management and finance departments' capacity to process and execute a subcontract within six (6) weeks. Describe the BH services in the community. Describe the population the organization intends to serve. Be sure to include the types of BH programming provided by the applicant organization. (Review items identified under the scoring criteria for this section, in the RFA. )

**Section III. BHRR Planning Goals** (up to 4,000 characters) (30 points)

Describe why the organization is applying for BHRR funding and what the organization hopes to achieve from participating. Explain the reasons the organization selected the recruitment, retention, and organizational development strategies and proposed activities, or other activities, from Tables I, II, and III to consider implementing in Phase B of the BHRR project. Be sure to include how the organization will conduct baseline data collection and incorporate the findings from this data, as well as the mandatory needs assessment activities to plan the Phase B project, and how the organization will use the three (3)-month Planning Phase A to develop a proposal for the 16-month Phase B BHRR Implementation Plan. (Review items identified under the scoring criteria for this section, in the RFA.)

**Section IV. Current Staffing and Management to Direct and Engage with BHRR**

(up to 2,000 characters) (20 points)



Describe the applicant's staffing plan for undertaking the intensive three (3)-month Phase A Planning period of the BHRR grant, including who will manage the project to ensure successful completion of Phase A, deliverables achievement, full implementation of Phase B, and what staff will participate in mandatory TTA activities associated with the grant. Please include information on any past or current efforts regarding organizational development (for example, is there a strategic plan, annual goals, etc.) and improved staff recruitment and retention undertaken by the organization. (Review items identified under the scoring criteria for this section, in the RFA.)

**Section V. Priority Areas** (up to 2,000 characters) (10 points)

Identify each of the state priority areas that describes the organization and how the improved recruitment and retention of BH personnel will help California better meet these priorities. Check all that apply:

- Provides or supports prevention, treatment, and recovery services for individuals with, or at risk of misuse of alcohol and other drugs.
- Serves individuals transitioning from incarceration, transitional age youth (18–25 years), and/or people who are experiencing homelessness or otherwise system impacted.
- Operates in a region with high rates of overdose, in a region with high SUD prevalence, and/or in under-resourced communities.
- Addresses the needs of under-resourced populations in a culturally specific, linguistically competent, and culturally responsive manner.
- Will recruit employees from diverse backgrounds, BIPOC candidates, people with personal and/or family lived experience in recovery, and those with bilingual capacities in [California's threshold languages](#).

Please describe how the applicant organization's participation in BHRR will meet the priorities selected above.

**Section VI. Budgets for Phase A and Phase B** (up to 2,000 characters) (20 points)

Please complete the budget templates below for Phase A and Phase B. Additionally, include a narrative description of the applicant organization's plans for the use of the \$50,000 award for Phase A and anticipated costs for the selected strategies to be used in Phase B (Implementation).



### Budget Template

Applicants are required to request funds under *each* budget category, including *all* personnel (i.e., including subcontractors and consultants as well as organization staff). The Phase A budget content must be consistent with and support the activities described in Section III of your application.

#### Phase A: BHRR Project Planning Phase (\$50,000 Budget for three (3) months)

Budget Description Summary Phase A (Planning)	Organization Total Budget 7/1/2023 – 9/30/2023
<b>I. Personnel Salaries</b>  (For each position, include job title, FTE, and salary.) 1. 2. 3.	
<b>II. Payroll taxes and Benefits</b>	
<b>III. Subcontractor and Consultant Costs</b>  List each projected subcontractor/ consultant separately by function (e.g., recruitment, marketing, IT, strategic planning, etc.).	
<b>IV. Other Direct Expenses</b> <b>Program Supplies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff Training</li> <li>▪ Travel (local travel mileage)</li> <li>▪ Equipment</li> <li>▪ Other (specify)</li> </ul>	
<b>V. Indirect Expenses</b> (up to 10% of direct costs)	
<b>Phase A (3-month) Grant Budget</b> <b>NOTE: \$50,000 is the pre-set budget for Phase A.</b>	
<b>Total above must equal \$50,000.00</b>	<b>\$50,000.00</b>



**Phase B Implementation Phase Budget (projected Phase B budget may not exceed \$300,000)**

*The Phase B final budget will be determined by the Implementation Plan and will only be awarded after the successful completion of Phase A (Planning) in September 2023. Development of the Phase B budget below should be consistent with the applicant organization’s selected strategies from Tables I, II, and III based on the organization’s understanding of their BHRR project goals at this time.*

Budget Description Summary Implementation Phase B	Organization Total Budget 10/31/2023 – 1/31/2025
<p><b>I. Personnel Salaries</b></p> <p>(For each position include job title, FTE, and salary.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>II. Payroll taxes and Benefits</b></p>	
<p><b>III. Subcontractor and Consultant Costs</b></p> <p>List each projected subcontractor/consultant separately by function (e.g., recruitment, marketing, IT, strategic planning, etc.).</p>	
<p><b>IV. Other Direct Expenses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program Supplies</li> <li>▪ Staff Training</li> <li>▪ Travel (local travel mileage)</li> <li>▪ Equipment</li> <li>▪ Other (specify)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>V. Indirect Expenses</b> (up to 10% of direct costs)</p>	
<p><b>Total Phase B</b> May not exceed \$300,000.00</p>	



YOU MUST GO TO [the online application](#) to complete and submit your application.  
THE PAGES ABOVE ARE ONLY A WORKSHEET. Thank you for your interest in  
becoming a BHRR grantee!



## Appendix A: Potential Phase B (Implementation Phase) Activities

The following are activities that grantees might consider undertaking during the Implementation Phase of the grant program. This list is intended to provide ideas and opportunities for possible activities related to each of the recruitment and retention categories and strategies. Applicants are not required to identify any of these specific activities in their applications.

### Recruitment Activities

#### Category: DEIJB+

Grantees that want to focus recruitment efforts on DEIJB+ strategies may consider the following activities:

- Hire a DEIJB+ consultant.
- Dedicate staff time to engage in outreach activities to educational institutions, affinity groups, professional networks, and community centers to create a pipeline for employment.
- Strategically place ads to improve job posting visibility within historically marginalized communities for hard-to-fill roles.
- Staff a table at community events to increase visibility and community ties to improve recruitment of historically underrepresented staff.
- Offer sign-on bonuses for linguistically and culturally diverse candidates.
- Put together community events to build partnerships and ties to the community.

#### Category: Marketing and Branding

Grantees that want to focus recruitment efforts on marketing and branding strategies may consider the following activities:

- Hire a company to improve your organization's career website.
- Fund advertisements to improve job posting visibility within historically marginalized communities for hard-to-fill roles.
- Staff a table at community events to increase visibility and community ties to improve recruitment of historically underrepresented staff.
- Engage marketing consultants to build organizational branding and to improve visibility to attract qualified candidates.
- Improve website and search visibility.
- Increase social media presence.
- Target recruitment efforts with specific groups (e.g., veterans, recently retired but still active former BH workers, immigrant leaders).

#### Category: Leveraging Technology

Grantees that want to focus recruitment efforts on leveraging technology strategies may consider the following activities:



- Purchase or subscribe to HR software to improve screening candidates and hiring process.
- Purchase a Learning Management System or other software to help with onboarding and training new staff.
- Use data collection tools to keep track of hiring trends.
- Train on software use to decrease inefficiency in hiring process.

### **Category: HR Improvements**

Grantees that want to focus recruitment efforts on HR strategies may consider the following activities:

- Dedicate HR staff time to develop better job descriptions and job postings.
- Dedicate HR staff time to improve the hiring process.
- Dedicate HR staff time to improve the onboarding process.
- Dedicate HR and executive team time to improve policy and procedures for recruitment strategy.
- Revamp the application process.

### **Category: Pipeline Creation**

Grantees that want to focus recruitment efforts on pipeline strategies may consider the following activities:

- Provide scholarships for BIPOC students and staff to return to school and obtain higher degrees.
- Offer one-time loan repayment help.
- Offer existing employees one-time bonuses for referring candidates who are hired by the organization.
- Offer paid internships to develop a pipeline for hard-to-fill positions.

## **Retention Activities**

### **Category: DEIJB+**

Grantees that want to focus retention efforts on DEIJB+ strategies may consider the following activities:

- Hire DEIJB+ consultants.
- Provide scholarships to existing BIPOC staff to return to school and obtain higher degrees.
- Dedicate staff time to execute DEI Plan.
- Pay for trainings.
- Pay for diversity/equity audits.

### **Category: Workplace Culture**

Grantees that want to focus retention efforts on workplace culture strategies may consider the following activities:





- Hire consultants to help with team building and creating a healthy organization.
- Fund the time and staff to do “stay interviews.”
- Develop an ongoing employee recognition program and rewards.
- Provide staff with protected time to participate in mentorship programs.

### **Category: Improving Benefits**

Grantees that want to focus retention efforts on benefits strategies may consider the following activities:

- Fund professional conference registrations (if funding the travel expenses, then travel costs must fall within the California travel guidelines: [Travel Reimbursements - CalHR](#)).
- Offer one-time retention bonuses.
- Offer one-time referral bonuses.
- Provide one-time merit increases.
- Provide one-time inflation bonuses.
- Offer student loan repayment help.
- Subscribe to childcare-finding services for staff to find childcare when needed.
- Offer financial literacy webinars for staff.
- Conduct webinar for eligible staff to learn how to apply for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF).

### **Category: Workforce Wellness**

Grantees that want to focus retention efforts on workforce wellness strategies may consider the following activities:

- Offer gym or fitness club reimbursement.
- Purchase wellness incentives such as gym membership discounts, weight management support, smoking cessation programs, coaching.
- Offer food discounts or access to farmer’s markets.
- Provide a team building day of activities to improve morale and group cohesion.
- Subscribe to childcare-finding services for staff to find childcare when needed.
- Offer financial literacy webinars for staff.
- Conduct webinar for eligible staff to learn how to apply for PSLF.
- Create a wellness room or employee “rest and recharge” room.

### **Category: Workforce Development**

Grantees that want to focus retention efforts on workforce development strategies may consider the following activities:

- Protect HR staff time to improve the onboarding process.
- Fund staff Continuing Education Units and professional development classes.
- Contract with a clinical supervisor to provide supervision for pre-licensed eligible staff to collect hours toward licensure.



- Offer a temporary 20 percent to 30 percent time buy out of a few talented clinical staff's time so they can participate in nonclinical projects and build additional skills or receive management training.
- Conduct management training to improve management skills. (Research suggests poor management is the leading cause of job dissatisfaction.)
- Pay for licensing prep courses for eligible clinical staff.
- Pay for licensing exams for eligible clinical staff.
- Pay for licensing renewal fees for eligible clinical staff.
- Pay for training in clinical language skills for bilingual staff.
- Offer tuition reimbursement for staff to receive a higher degree or obtain EBP certifications to advance in the organization.

### **Category: Leveraging Technology**

Grantees that want to focus retention efforts on leveraging technology strategies may consider the following activities:

- Invest in technology that would allow staff to complete tasks in an easier and less cumbersome fashion (e.g., subscriptions to project management software).
- Purchase better scheduling software to allow for more flexibility in scheduling and to alleviate the issue of difficult shifts always going to the most marginalized staff.
- Invest in IT and telehealth equipment, including cell phones, hotspots, provider kiosks, internet subscriptions, etc., for providers. (Client hardware may not be funded.)
- Purchase software and hardware (laptops, desktops, tablets, etc.) to enable or improve the support of personnel management.
- Invest in an electronic health record (EHR) system that better meets the needs of the workforce. (Research suggests that a hard-to-use EHR leads to lower job satisfaction and higher turnover.)
- Invest in employee evaluation software management.
- Invest in employee recognition trackers.
- Invest in data collection tools to better keep track of employee retention.
- Invest in employee job satisfaction and psychological safety evaluation tools.