
 pennsylvania DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES	DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA		
	NUMBER: 2024-01	ISSUE DATE: June 12, 2024	EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately
SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2024-2025 County Human Services Plan Guidelines		BY:  Valerie A. Arkoosh MD, MPH, Secretary Department of Human Services	

SCOPE:

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND EXECUTIVES
COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATORS
COUNTY INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY SERVICES ADMINISTRATORS
COUNTY SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER ADMINISTRATORS
COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES ADMINISTRATORS

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide guidelines and instructions to counties for completing the consolidated County Human Services Plan (Plan), in compliance with the requirements set forth at 62 P.S. § 1404B(5).

BACKGROUND

Act 80 of 2012 (Act 80) established a Human Services Block Grant (HSBG/Block Grant) pilot program for the purpose of allocating funds to county governments to provide locally identified county-based human services that will meet the needs of county residents. Act 80 originally allowed for 20 counties to participate in the pilot program. Act 55 of 2013 provided for 10 additional counties to participate in HSBG program bringing the total to 30 counties. Act 153 of 2016 (Act 153) expanded the HSBG program to allow any county to participate in the program beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017-2018. The Department of Human Services (DHS) has developed the content required for the annual County Human Services Plan (Plan).

The consolidated planning process described in these guidelines will meet the planning responsibilities for county human services, including Mental Health Community Base-Funded Services, Behavioral Health Services Initiative (BHSI), Intellectual Disabilities Community Base-Funded Services, Act 152 of 1988 Drug and Alcohol Services, Homeless Assistance Program Funding, and Human Services Development Funds.

DISCUSSION

Section 1404B(5) of Act 153 requires counties to identify local needs, develop goals, create strategies, and identify and track outcomes that support the implementation of quality, cost-effective, and efficient services. Counties are responsible to complete the planning process and submit the required Plan which describes how services are delivered in the areas of mental health, intellectual disabilities, homeless assistance, substance use disorder, and other human services. The Plan must also describe coordination and cooperation with other critical services not directly administered by county government. For counties with a private Single County Authority (SCA), the county planning process must include appropriate representation of the SCA.

Each county should develop a county planning process that includes the establishment of a county planning team to receive input and create a plan for the delivery of human services in the county. The county planning team should be comprised of individuals in the areas of mental health, intellectual disabilities, homeless assistance, substance use disorder, and other human services. Counties should also include key stakeholders on the planning team, such as representatives of other aspects of the human services system, as well as individuals who receive services and their families. Counties who currently have leadership teams developed through System of Care, Integrated Children's Services, Community Support Programs, or other multi-system initiatives may consider using those teams as the basis for a county planning team.

Counties that participate in the HSBG program have greater flexibility in the use of state funding for the services described in the Plan. The flexibility of the HSBG program allows counties to fund traditional categorical services, as well as innovative cross-system services to meet locally identified needs. Counties in the HSBG program are encouraged to develop approaches based on a local needs assessment. These cross-system services provide the opportunity to address unique service needs by combining services previously provided by individual categorical services.

PROCEDURES

Each county should submit one (1) Plan that includes the information set forth in these guidelines, including the specifications provided in Appendices A, B, and C-1 (block grant counties) or C-2 (non-block grant counties). The Plan should be addressed to the Secretary of DHS and submitted by the designated date for FY 2024-2025. All the specifications in Appendices A and B pertain to both block grant and non-block grant counties. For FY 2024-2025, page limitations and content controls apply to specified sections of Appendix B.

Counties are encouraged to undertake a comprehensive planning process that includes all county level human service systems. Counties in local collaborative arrangements (LCA) are encouraged to collaboratively engage in the planning process. DHS will review the Plan and provide the county or appropriate entity with notice of approval or, in the alternative, identify items that must be addressed to obtain approval. If there is a 10% or more change in service expenditure from the approved Plan, Section 1404B(5) of Act 153 requires block grant counties submit a revised budget for DHS prior approval. In addition, non-block grant counties must submit a revised budget when funding is moved between cost centers or service categories for each program covered in the Plan.

Counties that have service categories (mental health, intellectual disabilities, and substance use disorder) provided by the LCA should submit the information requested in these guidelines as follows:

- **When all the counties in the LCA are block grant counties, a local decision should be made to determine the Plan and budget submission. One of the following submission options should be used:**
 - The service categories provided by the LCA are submitted separately in each county's Plan. Each county submits county-specific LCA-related expenditures using Appendix C-1.

OR

- The service categories provided by the LCA are submitted in aggregate as a part of only one county's Plan. LCA-related block grant allocations and expenditures are reported under columns 2 and 3 of Appendix C-1, respectively. Non-block grant LCA funds are reported using column 4 of Appendix C-1.
- **When all the counties in the LCA are non-block grant counties:**
 - The service categories provided by the LCA should be submitted in aggregate as a part of only one county's Plan. A local decision should be made to determine which county will include the LCA-related services in Appendix C-2 of their county Plan.
 - The county tasked with submitting the LCA information should complete the budget in Appendix C-2 for the service categories provided by the LCA. Counties that are not tasked with submitting the LCA information should NOT complete the Appendix C-2 budget for service categories provided by the LCA.

- Counties that are not tasked with submitting LCA information should include a statement in their Plan that indicates (1) the county was included in the planning process for the service category, (2) a complete LCA information can be found in the submitting county's Plan, and (3) the county is in agreement with the information. The statement must be provided under the heading for each of the service categories provided by the LCA.
- **When the counties in the LCA are a mix of block grant and non-block grant counties:**
- Only one block grant county should include the LCA-related services in its Plan using Appendix C-1. Block grant LCA-related allocations and expenditures should be reported under columns 2 and 3 of Appendix C-1, respectively. Non-block grant LCA-related allocations and expenditures should be reported using column 4 of Appendix C-1.
 - Counties that are not tasked with submitting LCA information should include a statement in their Plan that indicates (1) the county was included in the planning process for the service category, (2) a complete LCA information can be found in the submitting county's Plan, and (3) the county is in agreement with the information provided in the Plan. The statement must be provided under the heading for each of the service categories provided by the LCA.
 - Counties that are not tasked with submitting LCA information should NOT complete the Appendix C-2 budget for service categories provided by the LCA.

Public Hearing Notice: Prior to submitting the Plan to DHS, the county must conduct public hearings pursuant to the Sunshine Act, 65 Pa. C.S. §§ 701-716. Counties are required to include a copy of the public hearing notice with the Plan and must demonstrate how the public was provided an opportunity to provide input by completing Part II (Public Hearing Notice) of Appendix B.

- Two (2) public hearings are required for counties participating in the HSBG program.
- One (1) public hearing is needed for non-block grant counties.

Minimum Expenditure Level (for HSBG counties): For FY 2024-2025, there is no minimum expenditure level requirement; however, no categorical area may be eliminated. Each HSBG county may expend funds on Mental Health Community Base-Funded Services, Behavioral Health Services Initiative, Intellectual Disability Services, Substance Use Disorder Services, Homeless Assistance Services, and other human services as determined by local need.

Technical Assistance: The individual program offices (Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Office of Developmental Programs, Office of Income Maintenance, and the Office of Policy Development) within DHS will continue to provide technical assistance to counties for their specific program areas. HSBG counties may request additional support from DHS for their efforts to plan and deliver services in an integrated fashion. Requests for technical assistance on integration efforts or questions about the planning document should be sent to the electronic resource account RA-pwhsblockgrant@pa.gov.

The following appendices constitute the components of the Plan:

- **Appendix A: Assurance of Compliance**
Local authorities approve the Plan and assure compliance with requirements by signing and submitting the document contained in Appendix A. Additional signature lines may be added to the document to accommodate the differing arrangements of those local authorities.
- **Appendix B: Plan Template**
The Plan should describe the county planning process, outline the county planning team, and detail how funds will be utilized for services. The Plan should include the service categories of Mental Health, Intellectual Disability, Homeless Assistance, Substance Use Disorder, and Human Services Development Fund.
- **Appendix C-1: Block Grant Counties - Human Services Proposed Budget and Individuals Served Spreadsheet.** In addition to proposed expenditures and individuals served, counties should enter their HSBG allocation according to the instructions in Appendix C-1. If there is a 10% or more change in service expenditure from the approved Plan, as required by Section 1404B(5) of Act 153, block grant counties must submit a revised budget to DHS for prior approval.
- **Appendix C-2: Non-Block Grant Counties - Human Services Proposed Budget and Individuals Served Spreadsheet.** In addition to proposed expenditures and individuals served, counties should enter their DHS allocation according to the instructions in Appendix C-2. on-block grant counties must submit a revised budget when funding is moved between cost centers or service categories for each program covered in the Plan.

The revised budget should be submitted to the electronic resource account RA-pwhsblockgrant@pa.gov. The deadline for submitting a revised budget is June 30 of the fiscal year. If there are questions or concerns regarding the revised budget, DHS will notify the county within two weeks of submission.

Due Date: The due date for the Plan is 60 days from the issuance of this bulletin. The plan must be submitted electronically to the resource account RA-pwhsblockgrant@pa.gov.

Appendix A
Fiscal Year 2024-2025

COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES PLAN

ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE

COUNTY OF: Dauphin

- A. The County assures that services will be managed and delivered in accordance with the County Human Services Plan submitted herewith.
- B. The County assures, in compliance with Act 153 of 2016, that the County Human Services Plan submitted herewith has been developed based upon the County officials' determination of County need, formulated after an opportunity for public comment in the County.
- C. The County assures, in compliance with Section 1404B(5) of Act 153 of 2016, that it and its providers will maintain the eligibility records and other records necessary to support the expenditure reports submitted to the Department of Human Services.
- D. The County hereby expressly, and as a condition precedent to the receipt of state and federal funds, assures that in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act of 1955, as amended; and 16 PA Code, Chapter 49 (relating to contract compliance):
 - 1. The County does not and will not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, origin, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability in providing services or employment; or in its relationship with other providers; or in providing access to services and employment for individuals with disabilities.
 - 2. The County will comply with all regulations promulgated to enforce the statutory provisions against discrimination.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS/COUNTY EXECUTIVE

<i>Signature(s)</i>	<i>Please Print Name(s)</i>	
	George P. Hartwick III.	Date:7/31/24
	Justin Douglas	Date:7/31/24
	Mike Pries	Date:7/31/24