

## Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG): COVID-19 supplemental and enhancement funding

### Overview

The Community Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG) supports states in reducing their reliance on psychiatric inpatient services and facilitates the development of effective community-based mental health services and programs. The MHBG also supports critical services that Medicaid or state funds do not cover, such as homeless services, housing assistance, crisis outreach, peer-operated programs including mental health clubhouse services, help lines, and education, training, and support for individuals seeking services and their families.

Supplemental MHBG COVID-19 Enhancement Funding was provided to prevent, prepare for, and respond to serious mental illness (SMI) and serious emotional disturbance (SED) needs and gaps due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted people with mental illness. Public health recommendations, such as social distancing, are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19. However, these public health recommendations can at the same time negatively impact those with SMI/SED. The COVID-19 pandemic can increase stress, anxiety, feelings of isolation and loneliness, the use of alcohol or illicit substances, and other symptoms of underlying mental illness.

SAMHSA recommends that states use the COVID-19 relief supplemental funds wherever possible to develop and support evidence-based crisis services and to increase access to evidence-based treatment and coordinated recovery support for those with SMI and SED.

States acquire grant funds through an application process, which details how the state will spend the federal funds.

MHBG COVID-19 Enhancement Funding is available from March 15, 2021 through March 14, 2023.

In Fall 2022, Health Care Authority (HCA) applied for a No Cost Extension to continue the programs and services funded through the MHBG COVID-19 Enhancement Funding. An extension was approved through September 30, 2023.

### Waiver provisions

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has allowed additional flexibilities and suggested priorities within the MHBG COVID-19 Enhancement Funding. In addition to meeting the standard goals and objectives of the MHBG to provide evidence-based services to individuals with SMI/SED, COVID-19 Relief Supplemental Funds can be used for:

- Operation of an “access line,” “crisis phone line,” or “warm lines” to address any mental health issues for individuals.
- Training of staff and equipment that supports enhanced mental health crisis response and services.
- Mental Health Awareness training for first responders and others.
- Hire of outreach and peer support workers for regular check-ins for people with SMI/SED.
- Prison and jail re-entry and enhanced discharge from inpatient settings to reduce risks of COVID-19 transmission.
- COVID-19 related expenses for those with SMI/SED, including testing and administering COVID vaccines, COVID awareness education, and purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE).

### Authority

- Title XIX of the Public Health Service Act as amended by Public Law (P.L.) 102-321 and P.L. 106-321 (Children’s Health Act of 2000).
- Definition of adults with serious mental illness and children with serious emotional disturbances, as published in the Federal Register May 20, 1993 (Volume 58, No. 96).
- The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) 2 CFR Part 200.

## Budget

Federal fiscal year 2021-23: \$19,222,372

### Total MHBG Covid supplement budget

Budget topic	Dollar amount
FED Set-Aside	\$2,307,000
Treatment	\$7,303,372
Recovery Support Services	\$6,344,000
Tribal	\$961,000
Crisis Set-Aside	\$1,346,000
Administrative	\$961,000
<b>Total budget</b>	<b>\$19,222,372</b>

## MHBG COVID American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funding

Supplemental MHBG ARPA funding was provided to support states through block grants to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic for Americans with substance use disorders.

States acquire grant funds through an application process, which details how the state will spend the federal funds.

MHBG ARPA funding will be used to extend projects planned for and implemented via the MHBG COVID-19 enhancement awards. Funding for MHBG COVID-19 enhancement projects end September 30, 2023. The MHBG ARPA funding will allow projects to extend through September 30, 2025.

## Authority

- Title XIX of the Public Health Service Act as amended by Public Law (P.L.) 102-321 and P.L. 106-321 (Children's Health Act of 2000).
- Definition of adults with serious mental illness and children with serious emotional disturbances, as published in the Federal Register May 20, 1993 (Volume 58, No. 96).
- The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) 2 CFR Part 200.

## Budget

Federal fiscal year 2022-25: \$33,202,279

### Total MHBG ARPA supplement budget

Budget topic	Dollar amount
FED Set-Aside	\$3,984,273
Treatment	\$13,229,639
Recovery Support Services	\$6,308,433
Tribal	\$1,660,114
Crisis Set-Aside	\$3,320,228
Technology Infrastructure	\$3,039,478
Administrative	\$1,660,114
<b>Total budget</b>	<b>\$33,202,279</b>

## For more information

Contact Janet Cornell, Federal Block Grant Manager, [via email](#) or phone at 360-725-0859, or [visit our website](#).